

ORLANDO-2016/07/11

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ORLANDO, THE MIDDLE EAST, AND THE U.S. ELECTION

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PROCEEDINGS

MS. WITTES: Ladies and gentlemen, good afternoon. It is lovely to see all of you here on an unexpectedly pleasant Washington summer day.

I am Tamara Wittes, I am a director of the Center for Middle East Policy here at Brookings and delighted to convene today's event along with my colleagues in governance studies here at Brookings and we are here to talk about Orlando, the Orlando shootings, the Middle East and the U.S. election and I think we have seen a lot of discussion, a lot of debate, a lot of rhetoric already in the presidential campaign and the broader electorate climate this year about the Middle East, about Islam, about a range of policy topics related to the Middle East but I think one question we haven't really focused on yet is how much the Middle East actually matters to the American public and in what way and we're very grateful to Shibley Telhami, our distinguished colleague, now a resident fellow at Brookings and also the Sadat chair at the University of Maryland for this regular series of public opinion polls he does, looking at the American public and their attitudes towards the Middle East and toward Islam and it's particularly timely and important, this set of data, as Shibley will explain, through the course of his polling, he identified some interesting trends related to American attitudes toward Islam and as our rhetoric has scaled up on this issue, how have public attitudes changed and if any of you saw his piece in Politico this morning, you'll see that they've changed in some unexpected ways, some ways that might even be heartening to us after a week in which our society has felt in some ways more divided than ever.

So I am not going to take any more of your time here because Shibley has a lot of great information to share with you. I am going to turn it over to him. He will give a powerpoint presentation, please follow along, tweet, if you'd like, some of the data with our hashtag, #afterorlando and then when Shibley is done with his presentation, we will invite him up on the stage together with Bill Galston, the Ezra Zilkha chair in governance studies here at Brookings and will have a conversation between ourselves and all of you, Shibley, thanks so much.

MR. TELHAMI: Well thanks a lot, Tamara, it's always a great pleasure for me to do this and those of you who have attended some of these presentations before with the new poll data know that we try to get this in as -- in a timely fashion so we rushed right to get it out so before I tell you a little bit more about this poll, let me thank a few people who helped us get this out -- this was just done a couple

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of weeks ago and we were able to analyze and get it out very quickly, particularly the second one so I want to first start with thanking my colleagues at the program for public consultation, Steve Kull, Evan Lewis and Clay Ramsey.

They have always been extremely helpful with the data and the questions and also Nielsen Scarborough with whom we do the polling, they were terrific because I went to then after Orlando and said: "Can we do a quick poll" and they got a fantastic poll out for us in a timely fashion.

Neil Schwartz is here, Jordan Evangelista, Scott Willis who also helped with this. I also want to thank particularly my assistant Brittany Kaiser who is here and has been fantastic and working weekends to try to get this data out.

Brookings staff has been fabulous. I want to mention them particularly and Beckham Rachel Slatternly and a lot of other people who helped put this together so I am grateful for them because that's the way we can get this out very quickly so now I want to just tell you a little bit more about what I am going to present today.

I am presenting the results of two polls, not one poll. Now normally, I have -- I track public opinion, American public opinion on the Middle East on a regular basis and I did one last November on issues related to Islam and Muslims, attitudes toward the Arab-Israeli issue, ranking of priorities in the Middle East, a variety of other things that we released here in November.

I aim to do another one in May which I did the end of May to be released now. Actually this was the week that we wanted to be releasing it, just before the conventions and we had that data and it was interesting data and then of course we had the horror of Orlando and since the issues that I was of course tracking related to events like Orlando, you would expect it to be affected by it so I thought before I would release it, I wanted to do another poll, right after Orlando, within two weeks and we were able to get another poll so we have really comparisons of three points of data, beginning in November all with Nielsen Scarborough and with good size samples so what I am presenting today are two polls, the one from May 2016 and the one from June 2016 before and after Orlando on a variety of issues.

You are welcome to go to the website, both at Brookings or the Sadat website at the University of Maryland for methodology. This is a national sample in both cases of a probability panel that Nielsen Scarborough has and in the first -- the main one it was a sample of 855 national sample plus

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735 oversample of millennials.

There are -- the error margin is roughly 3.4 percent and the June sample was actually a little larger, it was 1312 national sample with a margin of error of 2.7 percent and you could look at that.

So let me start with one main cluster, which is attitudes towards Islam and Muslims, something I have been tracking and those of you who have attended these events before, last December we did one in which we had identified attitudes toward Islam and Muslims and in fact I wrote an article for it that was highly circulated related to shifts in American public opinion on this issue so I wanted to repeat those questions again and basically have three questions. The first question is what is your attitude about each of the following: the Muslim people -- I say that because we have discovered that the American public differentiates "Muslim people" and "Muslim religion."

They don't identify the two in exactly the same way and they have different attitudes. They tend to have a more favorable attitude of the Muslim people and a less favorable attitude of the Muslim religion and I have written about this before we can discuss that so we break it down so the Muslim people, I want to show you the three points.

November 25, May 2016 and June 2016. Look at what we find, we have exactly the opposite of what some people are expecting. Despite the rhetoric of our campaign that has been inflammatory toward Islam and Muslims and despite the horror of terrorism and violence on our soil perpetrated in the name of Islam.

What has happened since November is actually American public attitudes towards Islam and Muslims have progressively improved and I want you to look at this because just the Muslim people, it was 53 percent favorable in November, it was 58 percent favorable in May and right after Orlando, it was 62 percent favorable.

That is the general trend. Now if you break it down by party, that's where some of the story is because you can see that Republicans didn't change at all. Basically within the margin of error. The attitudes on Muslim people remain the same, 41 percent, 43 percent, 42 percent favorable up at the top so they didn't change.

The change happened among democrats and Independents so you can see that Democrats moved from 67 percent to 72 percent to 79 percent and the same thing in Independents 43 to

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53 to 60 percent.

Independents of course are a small size at this point of the election so most of the changes happened really within the Democratic party and not much change happened in the Republican party.

Now the same thing happens with regard -- let me just see here -- I thought I had another slide. So the Muslim people again look at the political candidates so I break it down by supporters of Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton. Essentially, those people that said they would vote for those candidates if elections were held today.

If you look at the percentages, you can tell the story. Just from May to June, this is the change from May to June, just basically one month, before and after Orlando so if you look at Hillary Clinton supporters, you can see the favorable actually moved up.

For Donald Trump, you can see the unfavorable slightly moved up; it's really within the margin of error, remaining the same but you can see a huge difference between the two.

What is your opinion of the Muslim religion? Again, look at this, it's remarkable. It's exactly the same trend. 37 percent favorable in November to 42 percent in May to 44 percent in June.

It's still under 50 percent, keep that in mind, so opinions of Islam remain low in the American public but they have improved substantially, seven percentage points since November at a period during which we've had heated rhetoric on Islam and Muslims as well as violence in San Bernardino and Orlando perpetrated in the name of Islam.

Again, here's the same trend, look at the breakdown by party. Nothing happens among republicans, they stay very negative, very unfavorable view of the Islamic religion, really three-quarters of Republicans stay that way. They increased a little bit actually from November but still really within the margin of error and Democrats, you look at the numbers, very different, not that they are positive but they are much more favorable.

Actually by -- they start off at 51 percent favorable among Democrats, of the Muslim religion, they induct in June with 64 percent favorable of the Muslim religion and if you again break it down by candidate, you can see the difference among Hillary Clinton supporters in June, 66 percent favorable among Donald Trump, 84 percent unfavorable so it's really huge polarization on this issue.

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One final question related to this cluster of attitudes towards Islam and Muslims, we have a question -- we'll call it the clash of civilization questions where we ask them which one of those two options, stay closer to your view: Islamic and Western religions 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.

And again, look at the bottom number of people who think there is common ground; it's possible to find common ground, that percentage goes from 57 percent -- from 57 percent in November to 61 percent in May to 64 percent in June. The same exact trend and again, break it down by party and you'll find exactly the same pattern. Republicans really don't move -- look at that at the top, the people who say it's incompatible, it's as close as it can be in three polls, you know 56 percent, 55 percent, 55 percent, it just stays the same and then you look at the democrats and republicans, the Democrats and Independents, they move in a different direction.

Obviously the same holds when you look at the candidates with -- if you look at the percentage of people who say that you are compatible at the bottom, the second category, you can see that even Hillary Clinton supporters moved one -- moved from 78 percent to 85 percent saying they are more compatible whereas Trump supporters went slightly in the other direction but obviously a small shift, four percentage points, not particularly significant but still, it's moving in another direction.

So I think the bottom line on this is you can see, first of all, that we have a highly polarized American public on this issue and overall, the trend is obviously more favorable than one might have expected and really remarkably so in a short span of seven months of the political campaign. Now I want to probe Orlando specifically and that might also give us some insight as to why it didn't have as much of a negative effect as one might have expected and so we asked a number of questions about Orlando specifically.

First of all, it was a factual question. I would like to see how much the public knows so one question we asked was based on what you have heard, is it your impression that the Orlando shooter, Omar Mateen was an American citizen born in the United States, an American citizen who immigrated to the United States, a foreigner who has been living in the United States, a foreigner who came to the United States recently, so just those four options that were initially talked about in the debate.

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Well most Americans get it right, 66 percent get it right. I mean that's good actually. That tells you that people are actually paying a lot of attention because I don't -- but at the same time, you can see that roughly a third of the world -- a quarter of the population anyway -- no, it's actually more, a third of the population is not getting it right and so the discourse is having an impact and we know that there have been narratives to the country.

Again, if you look at it by Democrat, Republican and Independent, here, actually on the facts, there isn't as much of a difference as you might be inclined to expect.

We look at the people who get it right, it's roughly broken down pretty much 65 percent of Republicans, 68 percent of Democrats, 64 percent of Independents so that doesn't have much of an impact.

Based on what you have heard, please rank your impression of each of the following factors that may have contributed to the Orlando shooter's behavior.

So here, I want you to know that what we did is we gave them several factors that have been talked about in the discourse and we ask them initially to rank them from 0 to 10 on a scale and here's what we got and these are the mean of each answer.

So the number one, the most went to the hate for the LGBT community. Number two was militant Islamist ideology, number three, mental illness, self-hate and then feeling rejected as a Muslim in America didn't get a lot and then we ask them another question.

Now that they've looked at each one of these separately, which one do they assess is the most important in their own mind to choose one only of the following factors and here's what we get. We got 33 percent say militant Islamist ideology. Twenty-one percent say mental illness, 19 percent say self-hate, 16 percent say hate for the LGBT community so what's interesting here is of course, the number one answer is militant Islamist ideology but note that one-third of the American public think that's the most important factor and that tells a story about why they are not making a big connection between the event and -- those people who are making the connection, they are probably answering in the way that they've answered unfavorably of Islam and Muslims but most Americans don't think this is the most important factor.

That's really interesting I think and that tells you a story about Orlando.

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Now based on your impression, was the Orlando shooter acting under the direction of ISIS, independently but inspired by ISIS or independently for reasons unrelated to ISIS but claiming links to ISIS for boosting, as his father had claimed, for example, and so here again, 57 percent say he was inspired by ISIS.

Obviously, most people get it right, he wasn't working -- there was no evidence that he was under the direction of ISIS and this -- but it's also interesting that 1/3<sup>rd</sup> think that he wasn't even inspired by ISIS, he was just choosing it for self-posting so it's a much more nuanced view of the motives than one might expect and when you break it down, here you find more of a partisan divide where 71 percent of Republicans think he was inspired by ISIS ideology whereas 51 percent of Democrats think he was not inspired by ISIS ideology.

They think he was basically using it to boast so how much do you approve or disapprove of the following leaders' reactions to the Orlando shootings. This too is an important one because obviously we know that the president spoke out immediately after the presumed Republican and Democratic candidates spoke right after and the public was highly focused on this so most people are aware of what they said, that was the center story in our debate so here's the view, 52 percent fought -- approved of the president's reaction, 50 percent approved of Hillary Clinton's reaction, only 40 percent approved of Donald Trump's reaction.

So obviously the narrative war here was won more by the Democratic side than the Republican side. How would you rate the effectiveness of the following actions in reducing the change of an Orlando like shooting, please rate on a scale of 0 to 10 so we gave them all sorts of options that were talked about in the discourse about what might reduce the change of another Orlando like attack and here's what we got.

The number one answer is banning the sale of any weapons to people on terrorists and criminal watch lists. The second is better security at public venues; the third is fighting ISIS and similar groups abroad more effectively. Next is banning the sale of assault rifles and then the last one was closely monitoring mosques and Muslim-American groups. That got the least support among American public.

And then when we asked them directly, now that you have looked at each one of these

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separately, now which two -- I believe two or one did we say here. I think which one do you think is most important -- which one do you think is most important and so they ranked them in the following way when you ask them directly about these. Twenty-five percent say banning the sale of weapons to people on terrorist criminal lists, 23 percent say banning assault rifles and rapid burst -- that fire a rapid burst of bullets.

Seventeen percent say better security at public venues and only 10 percent say monitoring mosques and Muslim American groups so again, they are not linking this so much to the issue of Islam and Muslims as such, in their own mind. I want to move very rapidly through two other issues. One is how Americans rank the Middle East in global priorities because you know, we talk about the Middle East as if it's the end of the world and obviously there are so many issues on the agenda and to have a sense of where the public ranks the Middle East in global priority and then I am going to turn very rapidly to the Arab-Israeli issue, what has changed and what hasn't before we have a discussion.

So let me start here, on a scale of 1 to 10, where 10 is very important and 1 is not important, how important are the following issues in American global priorities. Again, this is a ranking of each one so we have -- we ranked -- we asked them to rank the war on ISIS, U.S. immigration policy, war on al-Qaida, trade deficit, the rise of China, Iran, North Korea, Russia, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the Egypt-Saudi Arabia, the civil war in Libya, the civil war in Yemen so we had all sorts of issues to -- that we asked them to rank and what you notice here is that when you ask them to rank them from 1 to 10, the number one is of course the war on ISIS which is what we have had and it's not surprising particularly at this time but it's followed by U.S. immigration policy, the war on al-Qaida is also up there, we decided to split them to see if the public separates them and then the trade deficit then China, then Iran, Korea, but you can see that the Middle East is not really that high up on that list and then we're going to ask them specifically, choose now two of these as the most important so here's what we have, when they choose two on their own of all of these priorities after they have looked at them individually, ISIS gets 61 percent, remember, these will add up to roughly 200 percent because they are choosing two so ISIS gets 61 percent, top issue, followed by immigration policy, followed by trade deficit and then followed by the war on al-Qaida and North Korea but notice how even Iran is only getting 7 percent, the war on Libya and Yemen are getting 1 percent.

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The relation with Egypt to Saudi Arabia is very low and even the Arab-Israeli issue is really about the equal of the Iran issue on this list of priorities.

Now I want to turn to one final question in this cluster of world views. This is just a quick preface, the -- I generally ask a question that I tried to get at the framework that people use in their own minds when they give an answer to.

I know that this changes so I ask a question, who among -- please name a national world leader that you admire most. I don't tell them what kind of leader, it's an open ended question. They write -- and poor Brittany, she had to -- I mean we had obviously dozens of names and we have to tabulate each one.

We had 1,312 and then we have to sort it out and figure out which one so it's -- that's a think about open ended questions but of course, you get a lot of value out of them as well and so we ask that -- in November -- I am going to tell you a little bit about later on what we found in November but we asked it again this time and I want you to see this because the Middle East bumps up inevitably here as well so among Republicans, the number one answer is Benjamin Netanyahu, the Prime Minister of Israel.

By the way, he was also number one in November among Republicans but he was roughly tied with Ronald Reagan, now he's ahead of Ronald Reagan so maybe Bill will explain this to us when we sit down at conversation and then you could see Ronald Reagan obviously, even Barack Obama is popular among some Republicans, pretty interesting.

Among Democrats, it's not competition, it's really Barack Obama and then it's the pope and then it's Justin Trudeau and among Independents, you know, it's pretty close, no one really gets a lot. Nine percent for Obama, 6 percent for Merkel and 6 percent for Putin.

And by the way, Putin ranks pretty high up there among Republicans. I think he may be number four among Republicans as well but again, these are small percentages in open ended questions but still, it tells you something.

In your opinion, which one of the following two factors do you think has been more important in the emergence and growth of ISIS?

So this is another question about -- the reason I ask this question is lost in the previous poll. I had asked a question whether they thought the Iraq war, in a poll I did on refugees, I asked a

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question whether they thought the Iraq war had something to do with the creation of the Syrian refugee crisis.

Now I had actually most Americans say at least some -- in fact, the majority said a lot to do with it but there was no blame, who is to blame for the Iraq war. That was a separate question and so here I actually wanted to ask a question about the link between the Iraq war and the rise of ISIS and so I only gave them two options that are relevant for our debates because of the way the campaigns are going.

Going to war with Iraq in 2003 or withdrawing most U.S. troops in 2011 and because those are the two that are talked about, they are part of the narratives. You have people like McCain who say it's the second, you have Democrats who say it's the first and you have people like Trump who say it's both.

I mean this is all over the map actually so what we have here is 55 percent of the public says it's going to war with Iraq versus 41 who say it's withdrawing the troops from Iraq and of course, when you break it down by party, you're going to get 74 percent Democrats say it's the former and 61 percent of Republicans say it's the latter and the Independents are closer on this one to the Democrats than they are to the Republicans.

Now I want very quickly to dash through questions about the Arab-Israeli conflict. Now I invite you -- I am not going to go through every single one in detail.

I invite you to look at them online. We have posted them. They are all posted now actually, both at the Brookings website and the University of Maryland website, you are welcome to look at them but I want to just give you a couple of broad findings and then just run through them very quickly.

One is that there really isn't a huge overall shift and really in the past three polls that I did on this issue. This issue is not repeated in the June poll. It was done in the May 2016 poll, in the November 2015 poll and also a year earlier where American attitudes on most of the issues that I probe here have changed only a little and mostly within the margin of error, no huge shifts.

What has happened is more and more polarization by party where Republicans have increasingly grown more and more supportive of Israeli policies and Democrats have grown more and more uneasy about Israeli policies and this really is the finding here but I am just going to go through very

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quickly a couple of them, one about the Palestinian two-state solution versus one state solution.

There really isn't much of a shift from November to May. I mean it's pretty much the same, you know, a two state solution, about 35 in November it's 34 now. 31 to 33 for one state solution, slight increase in the one state of it within the margin of error so it's really -- I would call that just a tie and by party, you have a little more polarization actually even when you compare it in the two polls, you do have a party effect for sure and younger people, millennials, and we have a pretty large sample of millennials here by the way.

We can talk about millennials with confidence, we have a sample of over 735 -- actually 800 and some plus millennials in this sample altogether. The margin of error here is only 3.3 percent for the millennials and so the millennials tend to support one state more than the rest of the population and, you know, the same could be seen on a host of questions but I want to go quickly through this questions which is if the two state solution is no longer possible, do you favor the Jewishness of Israel more than its democracy or Israel's democracy more than its Jewishness and we spell it out so that this is just short for what it means and again you see that Americas by in large haven't changed much -- a little bit within the margin of error changed but I can tell you that across -- when you look at it by party, more democrats now support democracy more than Jewishness and slight decline in Republican support but still a majority -- it's a majority across the Board but there is not much change and that even holds, by the way, certainly if you look at it by age, 18 to 34, the black line, more people choose Israel's democracy over its Jewishness, 78 percent and even among Trump supporters, if you look at that, the majority support Israel's democracy over its Jewishness by a smaller margin, 52 percent to 42 percent versus the supporters of Hillary Clinton and Bernie Sanders, who are almost identical and by the way, it's an interesting thing, I want to say very quickly, which is that there are no huge differences between the supporters of Hillary Clinton and Bernie Sanders on almost any of these issues.

There are only two issues where there is slight difference, I'll talk about one of them in a minute but you can see here, there isn't -- and I think you'll see it across the board. The same thing with the leaning towards Israel, do they want the U.S. to lean towards Israel, to lean toward neither side or to lean toward the Palestinians. We have always had roughly two-thirds who lean toward neither side.

You can see a slight decline here, 66 to 33 percent but almost all of it comes out of the

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Republican side where the number of support for Israel increased, you can actually look at it where now 52 percent of the Republicans want to take Israel's side. It was less than 50 percent last time and the Democrats leaning toward neither side actually increased so again, increased polarization is the real story here, not so much any particular shift and the same thing, you know, when you look at Sanders and Clinton supporters, if you look at this questions, they are identical there is very little difference.

The same thing for support of the Palestinian state, I want to say here that in terms of those people that support the U.S. taking action at the U.N. on behalf of the Palestinian state, 27 percent said they would favor supporting that at the U.N. in November, the exact number here in May.

The difference is that 35 percent say they would vote against it now as opposed to 25 percent -- 36 percent in November. Almost all of that comes from the Republicans shifting more in the favor of Israel, not the Democratic side.

Just one final point with regard to two questions I want to go through, which is the settlement. I asked a question about the Israeli settlements, what they want the U.S. to do about them and that one we've been tracking so in November, we had 59 to 58 percent of the public say they want the U.S. to do nothing or just limit its opposition towards. Thirty-seven percent said they want the U.S. to impose sanctions or take more serious actions so punitive action, 37 percent. If you look now, it's 39 percent that is statistically insignificant so its roughly the same but here is the interesting thing again, you know, if you break it down, Democrats or Republicans, Democrats increased a little more so now it's 51 percent Democrats want to impose punitive measures against Israeli settlements, 73 percent of Republicans want to do nothing or limit opposition towards and here is another interesting thing which is when you look at -- as you might expect also, millennials are also more supportive of taking punitive action than other groups but here is the interesting story too about supporters of Hillary Clinton and Bernie Sanders.

While there is no difference among them on the degree or -- where they want the U.S. to take sides, it's the same. On this issue, also there is no huge difference within the margin of error but it's interesting that even 54 percent of Hillary Clinton supporters say they want the U.S. to take punitive action on settlements.

This is not about pro-Israel or being against Israel, specific to settlements and 50 percent

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of Bernie Sanders supporters versus only 24 percent of Donald Trump supporters. And one final question where you will see the biggest difference between Hillary Clinton's supporters and Bernie Sanders supporters and that is how much influence do you believe the Israeli government has on American politics and policies and so what you have here is really not a big shift from last year, from last November.

Look at this, basically you had 18 percent and now 16 percent in May saying too little influence, too much influence goes up from 37 to 41 percent across the Board but then when you look at it by supporters of the candidates, look at the differences here, that's probably the biggest difference between the support of the two democratic candidates, I don't know what to make of that.

We have 48 percent of Hillary Clinton supporters saying too much influence versus 44 who say about the right level of influence versus for Bernie Sanders, 57 percent says too much influence -- 29 percent --

It's really the only thing that we found on attitudes towards the Middle East where there is a difference between the candidates. And by the way, it's interesting because there are a couple of political scientists who have written recently a very interesting article for The Washington Post (inaudible) arguing that Bernie Sanders supporters by and large are not any more liberal than Hillary Clinton supporters if you look at some of the key issues.

We find evidence of that here with some very few exceptions but I'll end with that and adjourn the conversation, thank you very much.

MS. WITTES: I am going to sit on the end actually. Well folks, thanks very much and we are just going to get my colleagues here mic'd up so that we can continue the conversation and open it up to all of you in a few minutes. There was a lot in there though that I think if I had to come up with a single headline, it would be polarization, that we see significant differences between Republicans and Democrats, between Trump supporters and Clinton supporters and Clinton and Sanders supporters seem very similar along most of these axes and Shibley, you noted in your piece for Politico this morning the polarization just on the question that you began with where we see disheartening response that actually more favorable views of Islam and Muslims and a sense that Islam and the west are not in direct conflict with one another but even on that bill we see polarization so I wonder if you can give us some thoughts on this polarized Europe.

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MR. GALSTON: Well I wish I could deliver better news. It would be wonderful if we were moving back toward an era in which political differences ended at the water's edge --

MS. WITTES: When was that?

MR. GALSTON: Well when I was in high school, it was pretty close. If you listen to the Nixon/Kennedy debates, which I was plenty old enough to do, I regret to inform you, you really couldn't -- if there was a cold warrior, it was JFK and the debates about the status of Quemoy and Matsu for the old timers in the audience. I mean it was very fine grained different so there was such a period in American history. It may have been a barret but it lasted for quite some time, it was very significant. Those days are gone and this survey I think puts a fine point on that.

I went through the survey and just pulled out a few of the most significant instances of polarization. This is a different way of cutting the data and presenting them so let me just spend a minute or two going through it.

When you ask Republicans "is your attitude towards the Muslim religion favorable?" Twenty-four percent say yes. When you put that question to Democrats, 64 percent say yes so there's a 40 point difference and when you look at the election that we're actually having, 66 percent of Hillary Clinton supporters have a favorable attitude toward the Muslim religion and I am astonished to report the figure as high as 16 percent for Donald Trump.

Those -- that 16 percent obviously has been paying too much attention or doesn't believe him so that's a 50 point dip -- 50 percentage points. Gaps don't get much bigger than that and here is another example.

The 55 percent of Republicans believe in the clash of civilizations. They insist that Islamic and Western religions and social conditions are incompatible with each other. The percentage for Democrats is 17 percent. I continue, but you are beginning to get the idea.

When you look at Clinton supporters versus Trump supporters on that question, once again, you see about a 50 point gap. Thirteen percent believe in this incompatibility when you ask Hillary Clinton supporters, 62 percent when you ask Donald Trump supporters, a 41 percent gap.

So all this is to suggest that the election that we were actually going to have represents a greater degree of polarization between the two candidates and their supporters, if such a thing were

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imaginable, than even between the political parties that they represent so it's polarization on steroids and when it comes to the war on Iraq versus withdrawing from Iraq, polar opposites --

MS. WITTES: Almost mirror image narratives.

MR. GALSTON: Almost more important than the rise of ISIS, 34 percent of Republicans say going to war with Iraq as opposed to withdrawing perceptively from Iraq, 74 percent of democrats a 40 point gap.

There are very significant differences on the issue of the four options towards the resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian contest.

Fully 39 percent of Republicans support what I regard as one of the two non-solutions, that is to say outright annexation without the grant of equal citizenship to the people who have been annexed or simply maintaining the occupation which you might imagine the figure on the democratic side is much much lower and again, when you look at Clinton supporters versus Trump supporters, those differences are even more pronounced.

As Shibley pointed out, the Jewishness versus the Democratic character of Israel if you have to choose. What should be the role of the United States in mediating the Israeli-Palestinian conflict?

Fifty-two percent of Republicans say the United States should lean toward Israel. 15 percent of Democrats take that view. A 37 point gap on something very fundamental and the gap when you look at Trump versus Clinton is 50 percentage points, 55 percent lean towards Israel for Republicans, five percent for Clinton supporters.

I've gone on -- I have more to say on this but I think you've gotten the point, that these cleavages are remarkable even by the standards of domestic policy in the United States.

These cleavages are more significant or larger than you'd find on issues like abortion and same sex marriage. It's big.

MR. TELHAMI: You knew he was going to follow up on that.

MS. WITTES: I want to ask you about this, Shibley because this huge polarization, you know, and we've talked on this stage and many of your colleagues Bill on the fixed gov blog and so on about the way our information environment, our media environment shapes this polarization.

People are living in informational bubbles where their preexisting views are reinforced but

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of course, we are in a campaign season right now so all of those narratives are magnified and maybe it's the campaign that's driving this polarization more than the polarization driving the candidates and so I wonder, Shibley, given this is one explanation you put forward in your political piece this morning on attitudes towards Islam, do you think we'll see American gaps narrow a bit after the election season is over, will Americans revert to a mean even a little bit? Or are we stuck here?

MR. TELHAMI: Well let me break that down into two questions, one about the election season itself which is important in polarizing and then the trend which Bill talked about.

If you recall, in a poll I did two years ago, we started noticing that the gap was widening. In fact, I did a Washington Post piece called "The Widening Partisan Gap" --

MS. WITTES: On the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

MR. TELHAMI: On the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

MS. WITTES: Yes.

MR. TELHAMI: And Bill was there and Bill said something that turned out to be right and he said that if you look at these polls, the position of the public and politicians on issues related to the Middle East, it's very close to their constituents but the positions of the Democratic politicians on some of those issues were far from the constituents and I wrote a piece expecting that somebody was going to challenge them, like Bernie Sanders. I mentioned Bernie Sanders so we have been seeing this for some time but what's interesting about this poll is that it's even widening further and that was -- and the results show even from November it has widened further. One reason it has widened further is because we are in the heat of a political season, that's polarized, for sure.

And so when I am looking at the data and I am saying okay, we've had a really remarkable improvement in American public attitudes from November to now, that's like seven months and it's a short time to have measurable improvement at a time when people expect me to go the other direction anyways, well it can't be that people suddenly had a complete reinterpretation of Islam and Muslims, that just didn't happen so a lot of it has to do with the fact that we are in the Middle of a very polarized campaign where the issue of Islam and Muslims is one of the central issues of the debate and it's like you're taking side.

If you take the narrative side that Muslims are the problems, you're taking Donald

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Trump's side and so there's a countermeasures so the rejection of that view is partly a rejection -- it's partly taking sides in the political debates and the Islam and Muslim issue is somewhat of a side issue so in that sense --

MS. WITTES: So people are saying: "I don't like Trump, therefore I don't like what he says about Muslims and I think the opposite."

MR. TELHAMI: And I think that explains the degree of change but here's why I don't think that's only it. So yes, it might go down after the campaign and it's going to depend on who is going to be your next president because the president plays a role in defining the narrative and shaping the narrative for sure and I think because we are in the heat of the campaign now and that has become a central issue not only has Trump presented his case but everybody else who didn't want him to win had an incentive in building the strongest case to counter him, including the president of the United States and the presumed democratic candidate and everybody else who wants to counter him is weighing in on behalf of Muslims and Islam to prevent him from winning that point so -- but yet, there are trends that show that maybe there is something else going on, maybe that wouldn't explain the huge increase but it might explain why we are having incremental shifts so one is that we are obviously -- Orlando and San Bernardino are horrific events.

I mean the shooting in Orlando was the worst shooting in American history but we have been debating this issue since 9/11. This is not something about the connection between Islam and politics. We have been debating it for a decade and a half and I think we have had a settling of views after a decade and a half and people have developed a more nuanced understanding and that shows up even in the interpretation of the data, the interpretation of Orlando itself as I suggested earlier so that's one thing.

The second thing is that even aside from this settling, I think we are having a shift taking place in America demographically, yes, it is of course along party lines but it goes beyond party lines so we find that non-whites tend to be far more sympathetic with Muslims and Islam than whites.

We find younger people to be far more sympathetic than -- let's put it this way, less critical of Islam and Muslims than all the people.

We find that people who find a language other than English, it doesn't matter what it is, in

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addition to English have a far better view. People who have relatives overseas outside the United States, even distant relatives, doesn't matter where, and not from the Middle East, tend to have better views.

People who use the internet and are communicating in the internet more frequently with people who are not Americans or are trending in the other direction, meaning somewhat more favorable views of Islam and Muslims and that's where America is headed, you know, the millennials -- it's not just the millennials, the millennials are the globally connected millennials are the new cosmopolitan millennials so it's not just a generational issue but it's a generational issue connected to a global connection and in that sense I think there is a trend that is pushing in the other direction, just as the negative views may have settled or bottomed out after a decade and a half of 9/11.

MS. WITTES: Great so there are some political drivers but there are broader demographic shifts in the American population that are pushing the averages in a particular direction.

I want to come back on the millennials and I know, Bill, you had a great event this morning talking about millennials and the changing demographics of America so please feel free to pipe up on that but I want to just spend a minute on the public's interpretations of the Orlando attacks and it seemed to me, Bill, I'd love your thoughts on this, is this actually one place where there is a single American story or a single American view that there -- you know, that this is driven by hatred of the LGBT community, that ISIS ideology did play a role but that it wasn't ISIS itself and that gun control would help stop things like this.

They seem to be things where there was a broader consensus? Were there other areas of consensus?

MR. GALSTON: Oh lord.

MS. WITTES: In other words, you're going to burst my balloon right now.

MR. GALSTON: I am not going to burst your balloon but, and I don't want to drill down too far into the data, there were significant differences, particularly as you might imagine in the area of gun legislation and there were also some very remarkable differences in the interpretation of the event but let me give you one.

First of all, African Americans as a group are by far the most sympathetic group to Muslims in the entire U.S. population. When I say by far, let me illustrate what I mean. When Shibley, in

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May asked what is your attitude about each of the following, white Americans report 35 percent white Americans said they had a favorable attitude towards the Muslim religion, the remainder, close to 65 percent had an unfavorable view. For African Americans, 64 percent had a favorable view an almost 40 point gap.

And by the way, this was not a simple whites versus non-whites because when you look - when you put the same question to Latinos, they were almost evenly split. Fifty-one percent had a favorable view and 49 percent an unfavorable view so this is a distinctive characteristic of African Americans.

Now, yes, Latinos were more sympathetic to Muslims and whites but if you create a spectrum with whites on one end and African Americans at the other, Latinos are right in the middle and so by the way are Asian Americans and now talk about two different views of reality, 33 percent of Americans said that radical Islamist ideology is at least contributory to Mateen's overall motive for acting.

40 percent of whites believe that. Do you know what the number is for African Americans? Three percent so one again, I don't want to pop your balloon but I want to squeeze it a little bit. I mean there are some really significant differences here that we have to pay attention to and by the way, these go to matters of fact.

Shibley pointed out that it's very important to probe respondents' grasp of certain basic facts. Sixty-six percent of Americans overall believe that Omar Mateen was born and raised in America.

That figure is 36 percent for African-Americans so there is a way in which one's priors shape one's beliefs about certain basic facts of the case and can sometimes distort them so this is a big deal and the African-American white split is not trivial in the country and it's not even trivial within the democratic party and these are some of the ways in which it's going to play out in attitudes towards Islam.

MS. WITTES: Did you see anything in this data Bill that suggests to you that there are issues of broader agreement or day we say even consensus?

MR. GALSTON: Look, I would say that there was something close to a consensus although I am using the word consensus very loosely here on a pretty fundamental question and that is do we share enough as human beings, just simply as human beings that there is the possibility of reaching common ground across these cultural and religious differences?

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MS. WITTES: A phrase we are hearing a lot this past week.

MR. GALSTON: And I think the American answer to that is yes and that's good news. We have something to work with. It's also the case that there is a very solid American majority across all sorts of lines on the question of what the top priority is of American foreign policy should be and this I think is also quite revealing.

Shibley and company tested 12 items and let's just take the one to ten on an importance scale. The top four all involved questions that directly affect the American people. ISIS, al-Qaida trade and immigration.

The middle tier were the four big ticket countries who worry us: Russian, China, Iran and North Korea and bringing up the rear were the four middle eastern questions so it's not just the president of the United States who would like to give the Middle East a little bit less emphasis in the conduct of American foreign policy. It's pretty clear that the American people as well and it would be going too far to say that the American people want to wash their hands in the Middle East, they don't but clearly if I can apply a gloss to these numbers, they are quite tired of the prominence the Middle East has played in American foreign policy over the past 15 years and would like to see it, so to speak, right sized in the content of our foreign policy.

MS. WITTES: Okay, so Shibley, I want to ask you to respond a bit to that last point of Bill's which the data supports but it's also a challenge I think to those of us who would make the argument that the Middle East still is important to America's global interest and to security and that there are links between the terrorist threat and these other Middle Eastern policy issues.

You've been doing polling on Middle East policy issues and American attitudes for a while now and you've also done the reverse, attitudes in the region toward the U.S. and what they want the U.S. to do. Is there common ground?

MR. TELHAMI: That's a great question and of course, when it comes to that, I often, as you know, go to the Middle East for regular visits and talk to people who think they are the biggest story in the world and why are they doing this to us and I say it's hard to tell people that you're not top priority for the administration, but I think a lot of people don't get it.

MS. WITTES: Mm-hmm.

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MR. TELHAMI: A lot of people think they are more important to American priorities and they really don't get it that the fact that they're not in the top three of America's priorities means that America is not going to put the kind of energy that might be required to address their issues but I want to say two things related to the priorities.

Number one is that I agree with Bill that's why I love always to hear because he adds a lot of value to this issue but I agree with the fact that the polarization is deep and it's just -- it's paradigmatic; it's not just issue specific.

Issues are actually the side story because it's a world view that is profoundly different but yet, if you put aside the divide and you look at the trajectory of America, you are still having this shift at the national level that is actually more heartening than not.

So yes, we are having one more divide but still there is the overall outcome of the national --

MS. WITTES: If you look at it in the aggregate.

MR. TELHAMI: If you look at it in the aggregate, we are moving and the results are in some ways surprisingly shifting in a different direction than one might expect but on the Middle East priorities, yes, if you look at those issues and how they are ranked from 1 to 10 just don't forget that two of the four top are ISIS and al-Qaida --

MR. GALSTON: Right.

MR. TELHAMI: Okay, so all right, ISIS and al-Qaida people don't tie them; they don't know what they mean. We haven't probed what do you want to do about fighting ISIS, what do you want to do about fighting al-Qaida, how can you do it without building alliances with the regional powers? What does it mean for our -- is the average real issue here involved -- the relationship with Saudi Arabia involved, is the -- all of that stuff of course isn't there so in real policy terms, if I am a politician and I am dealing with the priorities for the next administration, I want to see what the public wants us to deal with.

Immigration and trade obviously are up there but the biggest cluster is fighting ISIS and al-Qaida and you can't take that out of the Middle East so yes, the public at some level is very uncomfortable, doesn't want to get into the detail, they don't want to hear so much about each of the Saudi Arabia or even Israel Palestine and not even Iran and yet at the same time, they are obsessed by

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some core issues that takes them back to the Middle East.

MS. WITTES: So you're saying if a president said: "Look folks, in order to fight terrorism effectively, we have to do all this other stuff in the Middle East", that that's a colorable argument with the public?

MR. TELHAMI: It is but I think continuing my role as skunk at the garden party --

MS. WITTES: Although I will note that you predicted the shift in American public opinion in putting troops back into Iraq as a result of the terrorist threat.

MR. TELHAMI: That's true but the American people -- the American people I think if you probe the deep emotion, they want a painless solution to the terrorism problem. What they desperately want to hear is that there is a solution that does not involve a third large commitment of U.S. resources and especially ground forces.

The American people will tolerate drones for the next 100 years. They will tolerate, in effect, an offshore campaign, whether it's naval or Air Force, what they -- I think they had a very hard time -- even if a president makes a compelling rational case that you can't deal with al-Qaida without doing a lot more in Mesopotamia, broadly construed than we'd be willing to do now particularly in Syria, even if that's a compelling policy case, I think the next President is going to have a hard time selling that time to the Americans.

MR. GALSTON: And I agree with that and other polls have indicated that's true.

MS. WITTES: Okay, and of course you note that on a day when President Obama announced several hundred more troops being sent to Iraq to support the Iraqi army in its quest to take back Mosul and we've already got special operators on the ground in Syria and a total of something north of 6,000 troops operating back in Mesopotamia and an announcement also within the last week that the U.S. forces in Afghanistan would remain at a higher level than anticipated so is this already kind of pushing the envelope of what the American public are willing to count?

MR. TELHAMI: Well it would, especially if there are casualties and that comes back (inaudible) but right now I think because these don't seem like huge numbers and they are basically invisible, I think people are sticking with the candidates in the heat of the campaign and who is going to fight against that in this environment because if it's coming from the Democratic president and the

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democratic candidate is going to support them and the Republicans are really not going to take issue from the left, I think but as the new president elect takes office and things can become big problems for the next President.

MR. GALSTON: This is the classic problem with escalation isn't it?

MS. WITTES: Yes, it is. Yes, it is. Okay, I am going to open it up to all of you. We have limited time and a lot of folks in the room and I see a lot of hands up already so I am going to ask you, in fact I am going to demand of you that you be disciplined.

Number one, wait for the microphone, number two, please identify yourself and number three, if you could short, sharp questions and we'll get to as many of you as we can and we'll start right there on the aisle. Yes? Yup?

QUESTIONER: Hi, I am Masar Makati with the Washington Report on Middle East Affairs. This is something that a lot of people have opinions on, I just wanted to hear yours. After 9/11, favorability of Muslims and Islam increased, same after the Charlie Hebdo attacks. I want to say even after the Boston marathon bombings so what is your opinion on why this happens because a lot of people would expect the opposite and especially as you said, in the context of the campaign.

MR. TELHAMI: Well I have actually written about this. I addressed this a little bit on the political piece that I have today and I wrote another piece for Brookings last December so I invite you to review a little bit more of how these trends have taken place.

Actually, one of the things that happened after 9/11, the interesting thing is that for quite a while, American views of Islam as a religion didn't really get worse. They remained relatively positive, certainly the first one done by ABC news I think in two months after -- it was more favorable than unfavorable and several other polls right after, I think things didn't really start getting worse until the war in Afghanistan and then Iraq that changed the paradigm and my own view, at least as an interpretation is debatable. My own view is that we had an intense season of a lot of violence that was highly charged, painful to America, particularly the Iraq war.

We had a paradigm here that favored the class of civilization interpretation and I think the highest level I have recorded of an account of negative views of Islam by the American public was originally in 2011 which was 61 percent and that remained relatively -- I can't tell exactly at every point but

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I measured it again in November of last year and it was still 61 percent so we didn't really have -- I think it leveled off at that point and I think now we have the spike because of what I suggested earlier but I don't think it's been static, it's been -- it's definitely been dynamic.

MS. WITTES: Okay, thank you, we'll take a question right over here. And maybe we'll take a couple together if that's okay with you, folks.

QUESTIONER: Thanks very much. Shibley, as always. Gary Mitchell from the Mitchell Report and I want to come back to the -- what I think was said at that outset which is that the Middle East isn't as important in the minds of American people on foreign policy issues and yet as we have just pointed out, one could argue that when you have ISIS and al-Qaida among the top four, it seems to me that those are sort of both proxies for the Middle East and they might have been even more proxies if you had said ISIS/Syria or you know, al-Qaida/Iraq et cetera.

Having said that, the question that I have, and this goes to Bill's point about there is very little popular support for a third campaign being waged in that region. As interesting as this listing is and as telling as this is in some respects, in the final analysis, isn't it really the case that as Prime Minister MacMillan said many years ago, that what drives policy decisions is "events, dear boy, events" and if there is another ISIS or al-Qaida related thing, we can say about that chart, interesting but not relevant and that's a question actually.

MS. WITTES: Right, and this has actually been a question throughout this political season is what would be the impact of a terrorist attack on the campaign. You did the before and after around Orlando, you know, it certainly wasn't your intention going in but you had the opportunity to do that so do you see any evidence to support Gary's hypothesis that it's an attack that matters?

MR. TELHAMI: Well let's put it this way. Obviously, American priorities can shift depending on events that are outside of America's control. That's always the case. Whether there are stars or something else is happening, whether they are going to have to react in a way that is unexpected but it is not true, in my own opinion and never has been true in my own opinion that because X happens, then Y is predictable in the way that the U.S. reacts to it so the real question isn't whether there is going to be a big terrorist attack, we know they happen or whether there is going to be a big crisis, we know it's going to happen.

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There's going to be -- how the U.S. is going to react to it and I don't buy the argument, I never did that 9/11 explains the Iraq war. I never bought that. That was a war of choice. That was a choice to use 9/11 to justify an Iraq war and I don't buy the argument that any President would have taken towards an Iraq war just because of 9/11 so therefore, I think what we are talking about here about where the public is and whether they have settled and whether they have a prior (inaudible) view of the world, what the world view is matters a lot and so I don't -- I think therefore it's critical to understand where the public is after all these years and it's also critical who is the commander in chief because the commander in chief, in terms of crises, we all know -- this is not new in American politics, he or she has the opportunity to define how the public reacts -- how the nation reacts by rallying the people behind them so it's not predictable how the U.S. would react to it even if you know something like that is likely to happen.

MR. GALSTON: I would just add that there are attacks and attacks. Okay, the paradigm after 9/11 was -- attacks in effect from abroad by foreign nationals. The emerging new paradigm is one of self-radicalization on the part of people, many of whom were born here and grew up here so what you think the appropriate response is depends very much on how you interpret the source of the attacks.

So if we had a third and then a fourth self-radicalization incident, will the default position of the American people be we have to go full bore into Syria or will it be much more a domestic security which could involve some serious abridgment of what we take to be normal circumstances and civil liberties so as I say, it really depends.

MS. WITTES: Thank you, okay, Arielle, you have a microphone back too, right? Okay, so we are going to take some questions from the back and make you run back and forth, starting on this side, the gentleman in the blue jacket.

QUESTIONER: Thank you. My name is Martin, I am a research assistant at Syse. This was a very interesting discussion and I might say that the kind of reading that comes to my mind is Morris Fiorina's culture word, "Myth of a Polarized America" so I don't want to take much time to actually go over his argument but I would think that you have probably -- probably would know some of his arguments and feel free to ignore my question if you don't but --

MS. WITTES: So the question is does this data support the cultural argument?

QUESTIONER: Well no, I would really appreciate just to -- if you could just engage with

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what Fiorina might potentially say and if he would actually disagree with actually your argument and actually there is more and more polarization in the U.S. and if he would actually disagree, how would you actually counter disagree with him. I mean I would appreciate that.

MS. WITTES: All right, that would be a very interesting dialogue. Unfortunately he's not in the room --

MR. GALSTON: Can I answer briefly?

MS. WITTES: Yes, please.

MR. GALSTON: Because I have engaged with his work for a decade now and to put it simply, I think he's wrong and I think these data are one further indication why I think he's wrong and so I see no conflict whatsoever with this report and what I believe to be the truth of the matter more generally.

MS. WITTES: Okay, thank you. Let's not flip over to the other side in the back, Sayeed in the tan jacket.

QUESTIONER: Yeah, thank you. My name is Sayeed --

MS. WITTES: Sorry, Sayeed, when you are done, just pass the mic to the gentlemen right in front of you, we'll take both of your questions together.

QUESTIONER: Thank you, my name is Sayeed Erikad, I am a Palestinian journalist and on the Palestinian-Israeli issue, how do you reconcile the fact that the poll shows virtually no difference between Sanders supports and Clinton supporters yet in the drafting of the platform, there was a huge difference. I mean there was a big split between the two where the Sanders camp insisted on adding an end to occupational -- if you can, thank you.

MS. WITTES: Okay, and?

QUESTIONER: Hi, my name is Diego, I am an intern at the climate institute. My question is regarding the possible motivations for Omar Mateen's actions. I was wondering if there was a question about racism or homo -- Hispanophobia because I think that can play just as important role as homophobia in this case, I don't think it's a coincidence that all of these victims were Latinesque people and even if Orlando is a predominantly Latinesque community, that does not -- I still don't think that Hispanophobia is out of the conversation so I would like to hear more about why people are not acknowledging that as a possibility or if that showed up in your survey at all, thank you.

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MS. WITTES: Thank you. It's certainly an element that hasn't been discussed as much in the public conversation around these attacks and I don't know what the cross tabs show but maybe there is some data on differential views on that as well so do you want to kick us off?

MR. TELHAMI: Yeah, I mean first of all on the Israel issue, I mean here I have an interpretation of a whole debate on this. It's complicated and needs further study. I need to study it a little bit more.

I am actually doing an article on it so I'll be probing more into the data to see what the differences are. But I am persuaded actually that at the core, the differences between the democratic party on the matter of Israel and Palestine isn't as big as it looks in principle.

When you look at, for example, what Sanders proposes in terms of a two state solution, et cetera, they are very similar and the differences are more embracing the candidate that you think would win better.

People are not choosing the candidate based on whether they are going to be good for Palestine or for Israel, let's keep that in mind so when they are choosing sanders and they are choosing Clinton, they are choosing them for other reasons.

This is a marginal issue for the American public so it's not a surprise to me that Democrats, as we see across the board have, you know, have been -- I don't want to say unified, completely unified but very close across the board and the biggest puzzle to me is not the differences between Sanders and Hillary Clinton or the -- but the fact that the public seems to be more angry with Israeli policy than the politicians are. That has been the case and particularly on settlements. Settlements really get the public and we've seen that before and particularly against democrats.

Now with that, I also want to add something that I am probing. I have been writing on what I call cosmopolitanism and I tie the millennial generation to what I call cosmopolitan identity, meaning people are more egalitarian, better connected globally, they are more for social justice, human rights play an important role.

We see all kinds of attitudes projected out of that generation connected to globalization perhaps but also connected maybe to you. It's hard to know which is which but it's there and the Arab-Israeli conflict, while it's not a priority for that generation or any generation in America frankly, it is still a

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very important prototype on a whole set of issues of human rights justice for a lot of the millennials and that's one reason I think why it became much more galvanizing to some of the supporters of Sanders who were particularly among the young and we see when you look at the divide by age how the younger Democrats were far more angry on this issue.

Now with the second question on homophobia, I didn't fully understand it that we stopped

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MS. WITTES: The question is did you probe at all whether racism against Latinos/Latinas played a role in these attacks or whether the American public sees this at all through that lens?

MR. TELHAMI: You know, it's an interesting question. I did not probe into it. I did not look into it. I didn't know if you had any thoughts on it but I haven't really reflected on that at all.

MS. WITTES: Yeah, it's an interesting -- I want to go back to the point about the millennials and this idea that of a more cosmopolitan rise in generation because we see in a lot of the questions that millennials are outliers, are on the left on a lot of answers and one way of thinking about is getting back to your event this morning Bill, that America is changing.

We are going to be a majority minority society and so millennials, representing that, come to the political table with a different set of attitudes.

Another hypothesis is that these are young people and as they get older, they will be less progressive so your thoughts on that Bill?

MR. GALSTON: Just this morning, I requested and fortunately received in the nick of time the so-called age cross tabs and there is no question about the fact that there are generational differences particularly between the millennials and everyone else.

Let me just illustrate. Attitudes towards Muslim people. Fifty-five and older, about 51 percent had favorable views. For 18 to 34, 67 percent, a 16-point gap.

When it came to religion, an 18-point gap in favor of more Muslim religion, more favorable views among young people.

They were substantially less likely to see an incompatibility between Islam and the west over and over again.

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We saw evidence of the sorts of things that Shibley was talking about.

Now, if you assume that these attitudes persist and are increasingly important into the mainstream of American politics as millennials become ever larger in the electorate, as they become full adults whenever that is. My son is almost 32 so I'll keep you posted.

I will -- I think that over time, all other things being equal, you can expect some significant shifts in these areas and that will require a lot of patience and I am not sure I will live to see it reach fruition.

MS. WITTES: Okay well unfortunately, I am afraid we are out of time.

I know there were a lot of you that we weren't able to get to today. I want to encourage you to take a look at the data.

The full results were posted on the Sadat website at the University of Maryland and engage with us on Twitter, on Facebook.

We look forward to continuing this conversation and this is an issue we will be continuing to track as Shibley does his polling in the coming months and years, so thanks.

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