

# A Deepening Crisis in Israel's Standing in the United States

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**Israel's dire standing in the United States is evident in polls showing negative attitudes among key constituencies, including younger Republicans, Evangelical Christians, and Democrats of all ages. The mounting hostility toward Israel is compounded by increasingly critical media coverage, particularly of Israel's role in the war in Iran, moves in the US Congress to condition aid to Israel, and growing scrutiny of the pro-Israel lobby's activities. If current trends continue—driven in part by Israel's actions and policies, alongside long-term demographic dynamics and currents of antisemitism—Israel may soon find itself without a reliable base of support in either party. These challenges are exacerbated by evolving trends within American Jewry and the declining political influence of its institutional leadership. Efforts by Israeli policymakers to maximize diplomatic and military gains under the current US administration may, in the prevailing context, accelerate the consolidation of these very damaging developments.**

One of the foundations of the special relationship between Israel and the United States in recent decades has been broad public sympathy toward Israel, which translated into near-unreserved support within the American political system. For many years, this support remained stable, balanced between rising Republican backing and declining support among Democrats. Since the beginning of the war in Gaza, however, American public support has [eroded](#), a process that gained further momentum during the war in Iran, partly due to the perception that Israel drew the United States into a campaign that many Americans believe does not serve US interests and that has proved costly for the American public. The process has accelerated so quickly that Israel is likely to face significant retrenchment of US support much sooner than most expected.

## **The Erosion of Israel's Standing in American Public Opinion**

A [poll](#) by the highly regarded Pew Research Center, conducted during the current campaign in Iran, found that 60% of Americans view Israel unfavorably compared to 53% in 2025 and 42% in 2022 (see Table 1).

**Table 1: Favorability Toward Israel by Year\***

Year	Group	Unfavorable (%)	Favorable (%)
2022	All	42	55
	Republican	23	75
	Democrat	52	44
2025	All	53	47
	Republican	31	67
	Democrat	65	33
2026	All	60	37
	Republican	37	62
	Democrat	71	27

\*Data courtesy of Pew Research Center

In international comparison, Israel is now viewed more similarly to countries considered hostile to the United States—such as Russia, Iran, and China—and more unfavorably than countries such as Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and Egypt (see Table 2).

**Table 2: Favorability Toward Selected Countries (2026)\***

Country	Unfavorable (%)	Favorable (%)
Russia	85	13
Iran	82	15
China	70	28
<b>Israel</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>37</b>
Turkey	58	30
Saudi Arabia	55	33
Egypt	45	45
France	23	75
Germany	20	78
United Kingdom	18	80
Canada	14	85

\*Data courtesy of Pew Research Center

Detailed breakdowns by age group, published here for the first time in cooperation with the Pew Research Center, further highlight the depth of the shift. Among Americans aged 18–29, 75% express

unfavorable views, compared to 67% among those aged 30–49. Among Democrats aged 18–29, 85% express unfavorable views, compared to 83% among those aged 30–49. Among Republicans aged 18–29, 64% express unfavorable views, compared to 52% among those aged 30–49. Although erosion had previously been evident among Republicans under age 50, previous polls (including Pew’s 2025 survey) did not report a majority of younger Republicans holding unfavorable views of Israel. That has clearly changed (see Table 3).

**Table 3: Favorability by Party and Age (2026)\***

	Age Group	Unfavorable (%)	Favorable (%)
All	18–29	75	23
	30–49	67	29
	50–64	52	46
	65+	45	52
Democrat	18–29	85	13
	30–49	83	15
	50–64	76	21
	65+	76	22
Republican	18–29	64	35
	30–49	52	45
	50–64	30	69
	65+	18	82

\*Data courtesy of Pew Research Center

A similar pattern emerges across religious groups, with particularly sharp erosion among younger cohorts. Among white Evangelicals under 50, 50% now view Israel unfavorably, compared to 47% favorably. Among Catholics under 50, 74% view Israel unfavorably, compared to 22% favorably. Among the religiously unaffiliated under 50, 80% view Israel unfavorably, compared to 18% favorably (see Table 4).

**Table 4: Favorability by Religion and Age (2026)\***

Religious Group	Age Group	Unfavorable (%)	Favorable (%)
Protestant	18–49	58	38
	50+	40	58
White evangelicals	18–49	50	47
	50+	20	77
Catholic	18–49	74	22
	50+	50	46
Unaffiliated	18–49	80	18
	50+	68	30

\* Margin of error 4-8%, data courtesy of Pew Research Center

Due to sample size limitations, it is not possible to further disaggregate religious subgroups by age. However, it is likely that younger Evangelicals would show even more negative attitudes, consistent with [broader evidence](#) of gradual erosion within this community.

These findings are particularly significant given that, for at least a decade, Israeli policymakers have focused their public diplomacy efforts on Republican audiences—especially [Evangelicals](#)—based on the assumption that they constitute a stable anchor of support. The data suggest that this strategy has reached its limits. While it contributed to close ties with the Trump administration, it also came at the cost of weakened relations with Democrats and other constituencies.

At the same time, the growing prominence of conservative Catholic figures within the New American Right—such as Vice President Vance—may increase the importance of Catholic opinion. Although current data do not provide a definitive picture of attitudes of conservative Catholics toward Israel, they underscore the need for closer analysis.

### **The Perspective of the Jewish Community**

The deterioration in Israel’s image among the broader American public is accompanied by important shifts within the Jewish community. The organized community, once a central pillar of political support for Israel, is gradually losing influence. At the same time, frustration with Israeli government policies—particularly among younger Jews—is contributing to more critical attitudes.

Two recent polls conducted among American Jews point to broad opposition to the joint US–Israel campaign in Iran. A Mellman Group poll for the nonpartisan [Jewish Electorate Institute](#) found that 55% of Jewish voters oppose the military action, while a GBAO poll for the liberal group [J Street](#) found 60% opposition. Both were conducted in the second half of March.

More broadly, Jewish public opinion closely mirrors that of the general American public, including similar levels of opposition to the war and comparable partisan divides. For example, in the Mellman poll, 83% of Jewish Republicans supported the campaign, while 74% of Jewish Democrats opposed it.

These attitudes reflect not only partisan alignment but also strategic concerns and fears of an antisemitic backlash.

The GBAO poll also points to continued erosion in overall Jewish attitudes toward Israel. In response to a standard survey question, 30% of Jewish respondents said their sympathies lie more with Palestinians than Israelis—a figure even higher among younger respondents. Views on US aid to Israel are similarly divided: 31% support unconditional aid, 44% support conditional aid tied to US law, and 26% oppose aid altogether.

### **Warning Signs Beyond Public Opinion Polls**

Public opinion trends are increasingly reflected in elite discourse. Within the Democratic Party, critical discourse regarding military aid to Israel is intensifying. On April 15, 40 out of 47 Democratic senators [voted](#) in favor of legislation aimed at blocking the sale of military bulldozers to Israel, and 37 voted to block support of 1,000-pound bombs (although the legislation ultimately failed). Previous votes of a similar nature had [garnered](#) significantly less support among Democrats. Notably, this vote included Jewish senators and traditional supporters of Israel. Senator Elissa Slotkin (D-Michigan), for instance, [explained](#) her support for the measure by drawing a distinction between supporting the State of Israel and supporting its current government. Furthermore, citing her opposition to the “war of choice” declared by Trump against Iran, she opted to oppose this specific transfer of aid. She clarified that while she will continue to support the provision of defensive weaponry to Israel in the future, she intends to evaluate other aid proposals on a case-by-case basis.

As the upcoming elections approach and the current Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Israel and the United States nears its 2028 expiration, it is evident that calls to terminate direct assistance will continue to grow. For example, Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, who previously supported funding for some defensive systems, has now pledged to oppose all future military aid, including for air defense, and to insist that Israel finance such procurement independently. She has also emphasized the need to ensure compliance with US law governing the use of American weapons. Reflecting the growing acceptance of such positions, the pro-Israel advocacy group J Street has called for conditioning aid. At the same time, ties to AIPAC—once a political asset—are increasingly viewed as liabilities in some Democratic primaries, where candidates are now expected to justify such associations.

On the Republican side, the war in Iran triggered [open clashes](#) between President Trump and prominent supporters such as Tucker Carlson, who has expressed harsh anti-Israel—and at times antisemitic—views. Carlson and others argued that the war primarily serves Israeli rather than American interests. Despite Trump’s efforts to [counter](#) these criticisms, they have [persisted](#), suggesting growing legitimacy for such positions within parts of the Republican elite and its media ecosystem.

### **Causes and Cross-Effects**

The erosion in Israel’s standing reflects long-term demographic trends, technological changes that amplify, shape, and sometimes distort perceptions of events in Gaza and other arenas, and the growing reach of antisemitic and anti-Zionist discourse. However, it is also shaped by Israeli policy choices, including the conduct of the wars in Gaza, Lebanon, and Iran, settler violence in the West Bank, and perceptions of Israeli meddling in US domestic politics. Most recently, the perception that Israel drew

the United States into a war that caused major domestic and global disruptions, and is seeking to extend American involvement in the conflict, has proven especially damaging.

It is important to note that domestic American opinion provides only a partial picture of trends that will shape the future relationship between the United States and Israel. During the recent war against Iran, Israel demonstrated an exceptional capacity for military cooperation with the United States. Moreover, the lifting of previous constraints on overt US military cooperation with Israel in the region may strengthen bilateral security ties in the future.

However, as long as Israel is perceived as hindering efforts to end ongoing conflicts—whether in Iran, Lebanon, or Gaza—criticism within the American domestic arena is likely to intensify.

### **Implications**

The sharp deterioration in Israel's standing in the United States poses a significant threat to one of the foundations of Israel's national security. The latest data add to a growing body of evidence suggesting that no young adult cohort in the United States currently views Israel positively, while negative perceptions are also becoming more entrenched among older groups.

Even if the end of the war leads to some improvement, the current trajectory could soon produce a situation in which Israel lacks a stable political base in either party. There is a real risk that a fundamentally new equilibrium is emerging, in which Israel is viewed far more negatively than in the past. Even if some correction occurs, the current low baseline makes a return to previous levels of support unlikely.

Accordingly, without major changes, negative perceptions of Israel will likely solidify, and support will likely stabilize at a much lower level than in previous decades. Because this trend spans both parties, the strategies that Israel has relied on in the past are likely to be only partially effective. Even if Republicans retain control of Congress in the 2026 midterm elections, the political cover Israel has long enjoyed may no longer be assured.

At the same time, attempts to fully capitalize on the support of the current US administration—for example, by seeking maximalist aims across all fronts of the war and extending the fighting until they are achieved—may undermine future efforts to rebuild bipartisan support. Such a strategy risks reinforcing the perception that Israel seeks to shape US policy in ways that may not align with American interests, thereby deepening the resentment felt by many Americans. Thus, Israeli conduct based on the assumption that the American political system is destined to turn against Israel no matter what it does could, in itself, create a self-fulfilling prophecy.

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