

Americans Grow More Divided on US Support for Israel

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The two-month [ceasefire between Israel and Hamas collapsed](#) in March after the two parties disagreed on the terms of the truce's second phase. In addition to imposing a total [humanitarian blockade](#) on Gaza to [catastrophic](#) effect, Israel launched a [massive aerial assault](#) that killed more than 400 Palestinians and injured at least 500 more. Since then, the Israeli government approved a [broader military offensive](#) that would seize most, if not all, of Gazan territory and displace much of its population.

With a few exceptions, most political leaders on Capitol Hill have [remained steadfast in their support](#) for the US-Israel relationship throughout the ongoing Israel-Gaza war. But the American public has become much more divided in its views. Chicago Council on Global Affairs-Ipsos surveys, fielded April 18-20 and May 2-4, 2025, find a widening gap between Democrats and Republicans on the US approach to the conflict.

Key Findings

- Americans give Israel a lukewarm rating of 50 on a 0-100 scale where 100 represents the most favorable rating. This is the lowest rating Israel has ever received in Council polling dating back to 1978.
- More Americans now say Israel is playing a negative role in resolving the key challenges facing the Middle East (61%) than a year ago (54%).
- Americans are closely divided between those who say current Israeli actions are justified (27%) and those who say they are not (29%). But a plurality of Americans is not informed enough to opine (42%).

- Slightly fewer now (55%) than in 2024 (60%) say the United States should support Israel militarily until the remaining hostages taken by Hamas on October 7 are returned.
- Nearly half support continuing US military aid to Israel until Hamas is dismantled or destroyed (47%, similar to 49% in 2024).

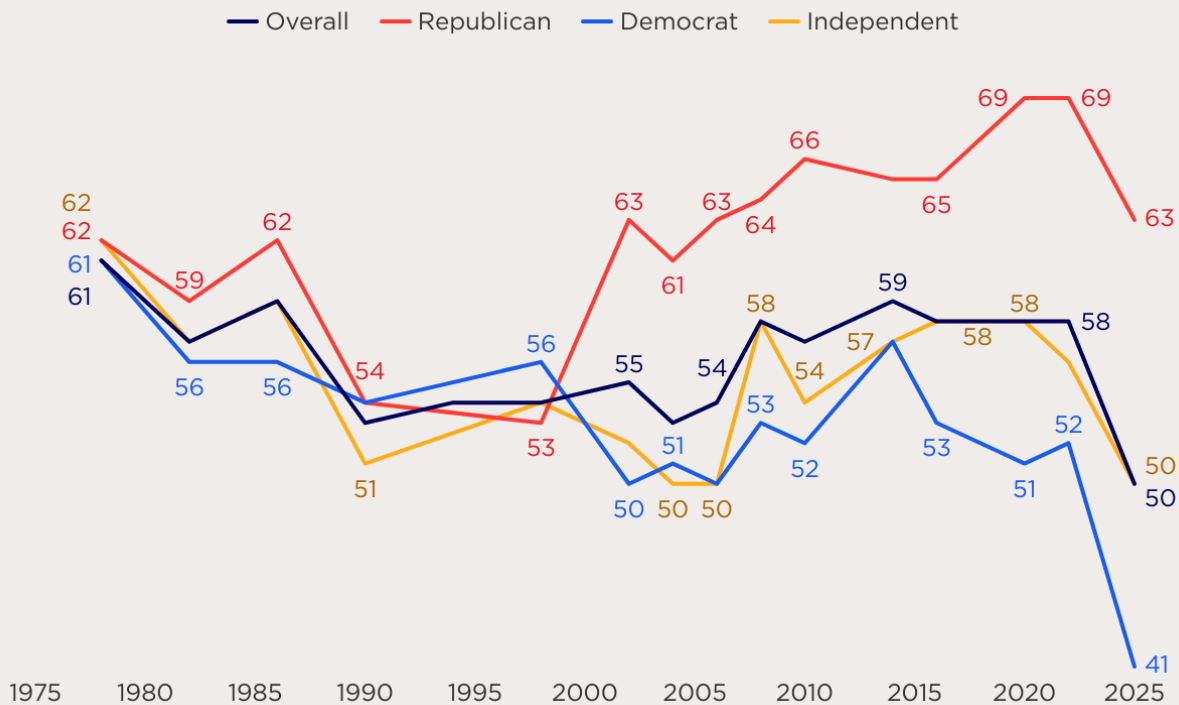
Support for Israel among Democrats Has Plunged

The events of the past [19 months following the October 7, 2023](#), Hamas attacks have affected American attitudes toward Israel, particularly Democratic Party supporters. In a Chicago Council-Ipsos poll fielded April 18–20, 2025, Americans give Israel a lukewarm rating of 50 on a 0-100 scale with 0 being the coldest, most unfavorable rating and 100 being the warmest, most favorable rating. This is down from an overall average rating of 58 in 2002 and is the lowest-ever rating for Israel in Council polling dating back to 1978.

Warmth toward Israel has declined among all partisans but most significantly among Democrats: they give Israel an average rating of 41 degrees out of a possible 100, down from 52 in 2022. This marks the first time Democratic ratings of Israel have fallen below the 50-point midline in nearly five decades of Council polling.

Feelings Toward Israel

Please rate your feelings toward some countries, with one hundred meaning a very warm, favorable feeling, zero meaning a very cold, unfavorable feeling, and fifty meaning not particularly warm or cold. You can use any number from zero to one hundred, the higher the number the more favorable your feelings are toward that country or those people. (mean score)



April 18-20, 2025 | n=1,019

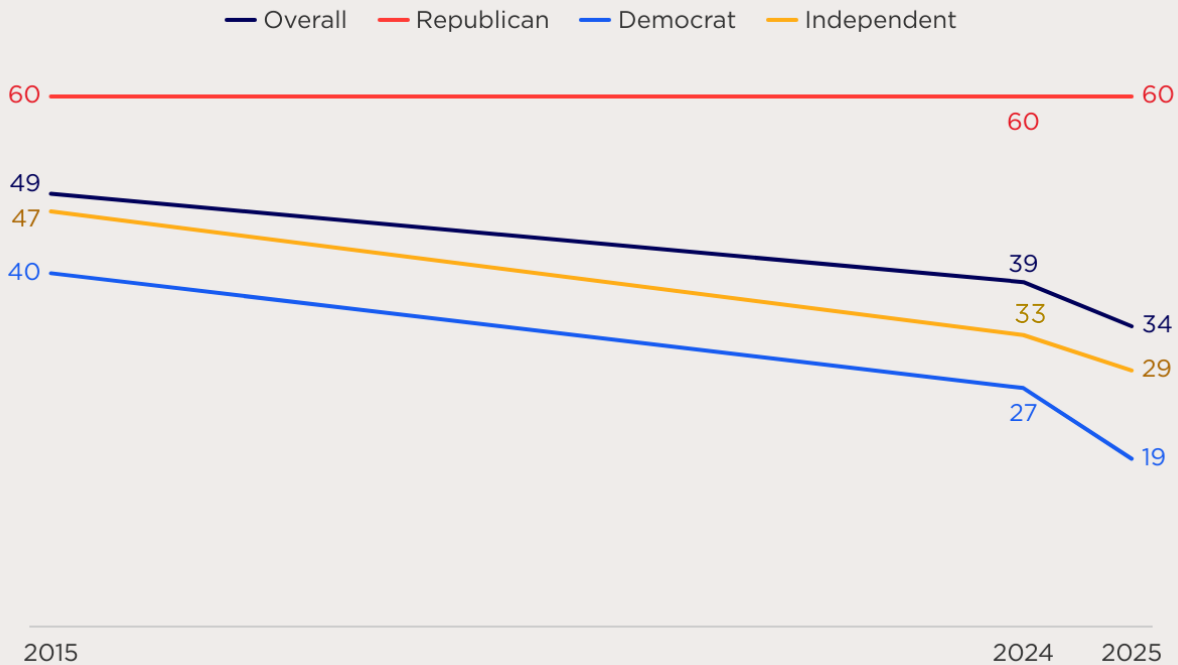
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The same April 2025 poll also finds that the majority of Americans believe Israel is playing a negative role in resolving the key challenges facing the Middle East (61%, up from 54% in 2024), while just a third believes it is a positive influence (34%, down from 39%). There are also stark partisan differences in this assessment. Six in 10 Republicans see Israel's regional role as a positive one (60%) compared to just three in 10 Independents (29%) and just two in 10 Democrats (19%).

Israel's Role in the Middle East

In your opinion, are the following countries playing a very positive, somewhat positive, somewhat negative or very negative role in resolving the key problems facing the Middle East? (% somewhat + very positive)



April 18-20, 2025 | n=1,019

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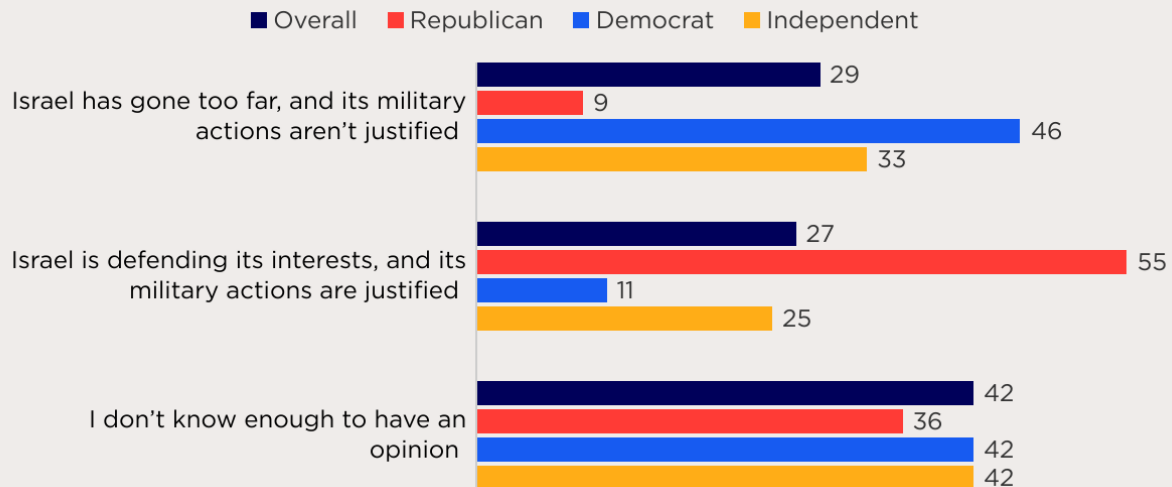
US Public Divided on Whether Resumption of Israeli Military Action Is Justified

When asked about their views on the situation in Gaza right now, a plurality of Americans say they do not know enough about it to provide an opinion (42%). The remaining portion of the US public divides fairly equally between those who say Israel is defending its interests and the military action is justified (27%) and those who think Israel has gone too far and its military action is not justified (29%).

Looking at partisan affiliation, Democrats (46%) and Independents (33%) who provide an opinion tend to say Israel is not justified in continuing its military operation. In contrast, a majority of Republicans say Israel is justified (55%).

Justification of Breaking Gaza Ceasefire

In March, the ceasefire between Israel and Hamas collapsed due to disagreements over the terms of the truce's second phase. Since then, Israel has resumed its military operations in Gaza. Which of the following statements best describes your view of the situation? (%)



May 2-4, 2025 | n=1,026

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Asked a [similar question last year](#) before the ceasefire was reached, Americans were similarly divided. Democrats said Israel had gone too far, and Republicans maintained that it was justified. The biggest shift has been in the increased percentage of Americans who say they do not know enough to give an answer.

Republicans Most Supportive of Continuing US Military Assistance to Israel

Since taking office, the Trump administration has approved [about \\$12 million in military assistance to Israel](#), reversing the Biden administration's [pause on weapons transfers](#) due to concerns over their use in violation of international humanitarian law.

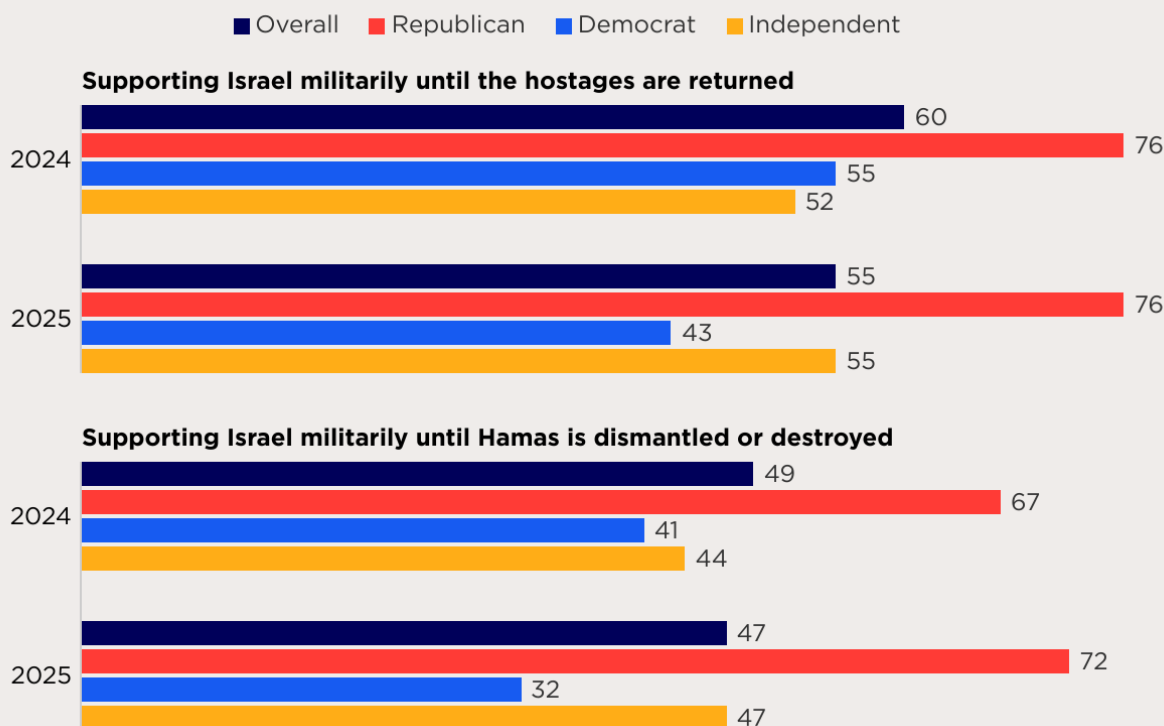
Overall, a slightly smaller majority of Americans now (55%) than in 2024 (60%) say the United States should support Israel militarily until all the hostages are returned. Nearly half support continuing US military aid to Israel until Hamas is dismantled or destroyed (47%, similar to 49% in 2024).

In line with their views that Israel is justified in its military actions, three in four Republicans (76%) favor continuing aid until the hostages are returned, as do

a narrower majority of Independents (55%). Just four in 10 Democrats agree (43%), and more now oppose supporting Israel until the hostages are returned than last year (50%, up from 40%).

US Military Support for Israel

Do you favor or oppose the United States...? (% favor)



May 2-4, 2025 | n=1,026

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Only among Republicans is there majority support for continuing US military assistance until Hamas is destroyed or dismantled (72%, up from 67% a year ago). Independents are closely divided (47% support, 49% oppose), and Democrats oppose this policy (32% support, 59% oppose).

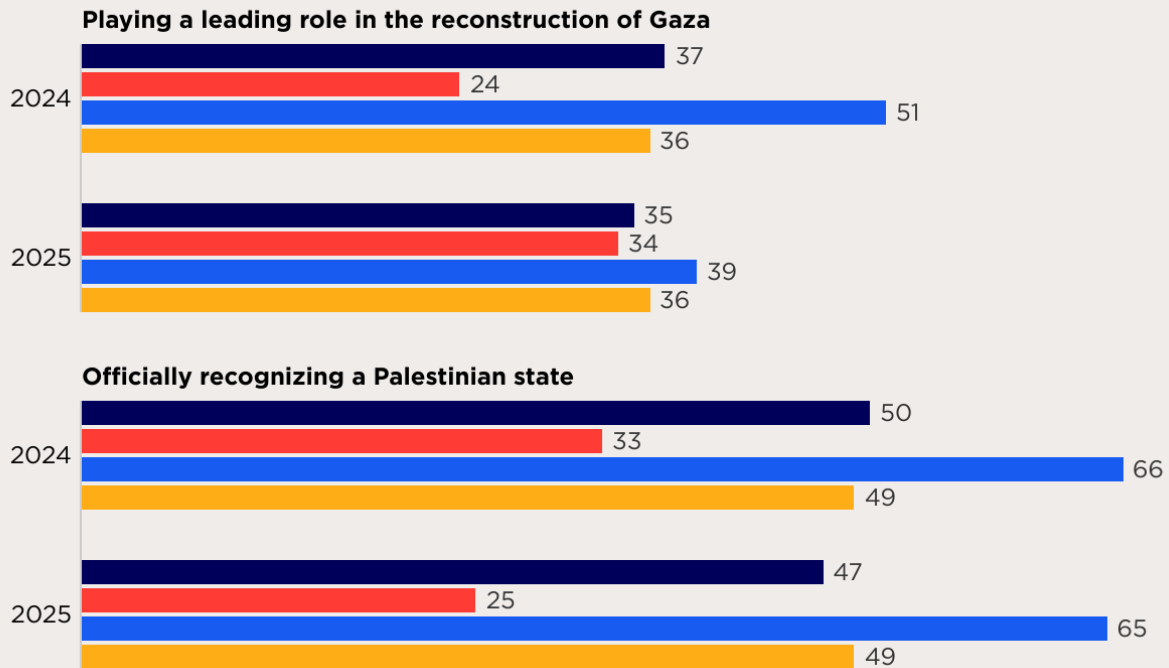
Democrats Now Oppose a Key US Role in Gaza Reconstruction

Support for officially recognizing a Palestinian state (47%) and the United States taking a leading role in the reconstruction of Gaza (35%) is broadly consistent with 2024 readings. Republicans are the least inclined to favor an independent Palestinian state, with even fewer now in favor (25%) than in 2024 (33%). A solid majority of Democrats still express support for a two-state solution (65%), as do half of Independents (49%).

Diplomatic and Humanitarian Support for Palestinians

Do you favor or oppose the United States...? (% favor)

Overall Republican Democrat Independent



May 2-4, 2025 | n=1,026

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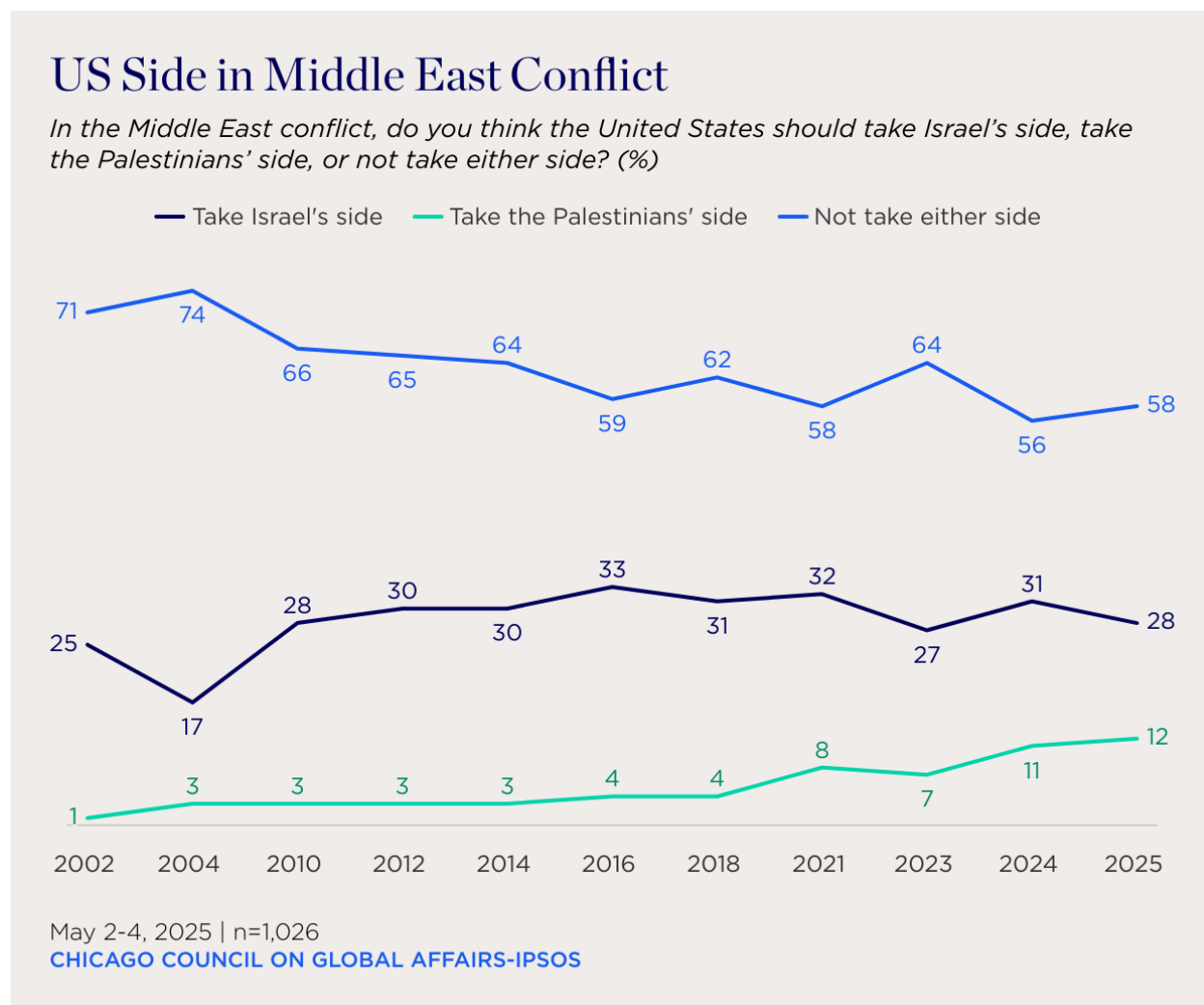


While only a minority, Republicans are now 10 percentage points more likely to support the United States playing a leading role in the reconstruction of Gaza (34%, up from 24%), perhaps in support of President [Trump's ideas about developing the enclave](#). For their part, Democrats are significantly less supportive of the United States playing a leading role in reconstruction efforts now than a year ago (39%, down from 51% when Joe Biden was president). Like last year, Independents are opposed to playing a role in postwar reconstruction (59%, 36% support).

Majority Thinks United States Should Take Neither Side in Conflict

Reflecting Chicago Council surveys going back to 2002, a majority of Americans say the United States should not take Israel's nor the Palestinians'

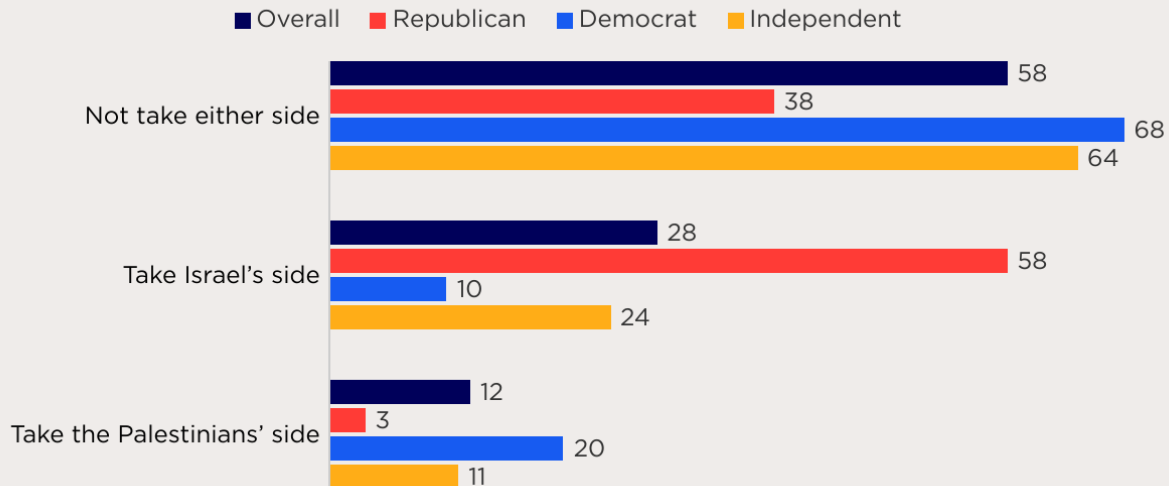
side in the decades-old conflict (58%). Three in 10 (28%) favor taking Israel's side, and 12 percent favor siding with the Palestinians. While low, it is the highest percentage supporting Palestinians yet recorded in Chicago Council polling.



As in nearly every other question on this topic, Republicans and Democrats are at different ends of the spectrum. Six in 10 Republicans (58%) say the United States should side with Israel, similar to results a year ago. Democrats are now more likely to favor not taking any side (68%, up from 62% last year), and are significantly less likely to want the United States to favor Israel (10%, down from 19%). The end result is that for the first time, Democrats are now more likely to favor siding with Palestinians over Israel (20%, the highest point yet recorded) (see appendix table 1).

Partisan Preferences in Middle East Conflict

In the Middle East conflict, do you think the United States should take Israel's side, take the Palestinians' side, or not take either side? (%)



May 2-4, 2025 | n=1,026

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Conclusion

American public opinion of Israel has grown increasingly partisan over the course of the Israel-Gaza war. Democrats have long been critical of Israel's military action in Gaza, but the Trump administration's disregard for humanitarian concerns and calls for a [US takeover of the enclave](#) have further eroded Democrats' backing. In fact, for the first time, more Democrats say the United States should side with the Palestinians than Israel in the conflict. While a long-term shift in public opinion could lead to reduced US support for Israel down the line, it has yet to fully impact US policy toward its top Mideast ally.

Appendix

Appendix Table 1

Q230. In the Middle East conflict, do you think the United States should take Israel's side, take the Palestinians' side, or not take either side?

Take Israel's side (%)					
	Overall	Republican	Democrat	Independent	R-D Gap
2002	25	40	18	19	22
2004	17	32	12	15	20
2010	28	46	14	25	32
2012	30	51	17	25	34
2014	30	48	17	30	31
2016	33	57	19	30	38
2018	31	59	16	27	43
2021	32	61	12	29	49
2023	27	49	13	24	36
2024	31	56	19	27	37
May 2025	28	58	10	24	48

Take the Palestinians' side (%)					
	Overall	Republican	Democrat	Independent	R-D Gap
2002	1	2	2	1	0
2004	3	1	2	4	-1
2010	3	2	3	4	-1
2012	3	2	3	3	0
2014	3	2	4	0	-2
2016	4	4	5	4	-1
2018	4	1	7	4	-6
2021	8	2	13	8	-11
2023	7	1	11	7	-10
2024	11	2	18	10	-16
May 2025	12	3	20	11	-17

Not take either side (%)					
	Overall	Republican	Democrat	Independent	R-D Gap
2002	71	55	77	78	22
2004	74	64	82	72	19
2010	66	49	79	67	30
2012	65	46	78	70	32
2014	64	47	76	64	29
2016	59	38	73	63	35
2018	62	39	75	68	36
2021	58	35	73	62	-38

2023	64	48	74	67	-26
2024	56	41	62	60	-21
May 2025	58	38	68	64	-30

Methodology

The study was conducted May 2–4, 2025, by Ipsos using its large-scale, nationwide, online research panel, KnowledgePanel, among a weighted national sample of 1,026 adults 18 or older living in all 50 US states and the District of Columbia. The margin of sampling error for the full sample is ± 3.2 percentage points, including a design effect of 1.09.

The data for the total sample were weighted to adjust for gender by age, race/ethnicity, education, Census region, metropolitan status, and household income using demographic benchmarks from the 2024 March Supplement of the Current Population Survey (CPS).

Specific categories used were:

- Gender (Male, Female) by Age (18–29, 30–44, 45–59 and 60+)
- Race/Hispanic Ethnicity (White Non-Hispanic, Black Non-Hispanic, Other Non-Hispanic, Hispanic, 2+ Races, Non-Hispanic)
- Education (Less than High School, High School, Some College, Bachelor or Higher)
- Census Region (Northeast, Midwest, South, West)
- Metropolitan status (Metro, Non-Metro)
- Household Income (Under \$25,000, \$25,000–\$49,999, \$50,000–\$74,999, \$75,000–\$99,999, \$100,000–\$149,999, \$150,000+)

About the Chicago Council on Global Affairs

The Chicago Council on Global Affairs is an independent, nonpartisan membership organization that provides insight—and influences the public discourse—on critical global issues. We convene leading global voices, conduct independent research, and engage the public to explore ideas that will shape our global future. The Council is committed to bringing clarity and offering solutions to issues that transcend borders and transform how people, business, and governments engage the world. Learn more at globalaffairs.org and follow us on [Bluesky](#).

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Established in 2018 with a transformative gift from the Crown Family, the Lester Crown Center on US Foreign Policy is driven by the belief that the public plays a critical role in determining the direction of US foreign policy and that an informed and engaged public is critical for effective policymaking. The centerpiece of the Lester Crown Center is its annual survey of American public opinion and US foreign policy, the Chicago Council Survey, which has been conducted since 1974.