

JERUSALEM ISSUE BRIEF

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Polling the Importance of Israel's Rights to a United Jerusalem and Defensible Borders for Likely American Voters: A Nationwide U.S. Survey

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- The survey results clearly show that American voters, regardless of party affiliation, ideology, and religion, trust Israel in a peace agreement to protect the freedom of religion for all faiths and that Israel has the right to protect itself with defensible borders.
- Conversely, American voters don't trust the Palestinian Authority in any future agreement to protect the freedom of religion for all faiths.
- For that reason there is across-the-board support for Jerusalem remaining united under Israeli sovereignty.
- The survey results also illustrate that these key Middle Eastern issues are important presidential election issues and that the voters are more likely to support a candidate for president who stands by Israel's side in supporting a united Jerusalem and defensible borders for Israel.

Key Findings

The September 11 attacks have made the majority (58%) of American voters more sympathetic with Israel's struggle against suicide bombings and other forms of terrorism. Specifically, over three-quarters (78%) of American Jewish voters are more sympathetic towards Israel and the results clearly show the majority of all American voters, regardless of party, ideology, or religion, are more sympathetic with Israel's struggles against terrorism. In particular, this sentiment grows among Republicans, Independents, and conservatives.

Did the September 11 attacks make you more sympathetic or less sympathetic with Israel's struggle against suicide bombings and other forms of terrorism?

		Party			Ideology			Religion		
	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind	Lib	Mod	Cons	Protestant	Catholic	Jewish
More	58	61	54	60	55	54	65	58	58	78
Less	13	12	16	8	16	15	10	12	17	3
No Diff	24	22	24	27	25	25	23	25	21	11
Don't Know	5	5	6	4	4	8	3	6	4	8

When given the facts, the majority (59%) of voters don't believe the Palestinian Authority can be trusted in a future agreement to protect freedom of religion for all faiths. This majority opinion of distrust is clear across the board. Specifically, the distrust of the Palestinian Authority protecting freedom of religion for all faiths significantly increases among Republicans, conservatives, and Jewish voters.

Between 1948 and 1967 Jordan controlled the holy sites of Jerusalem and did not permit freedom of worship to all faiths. Since 1967 Israel has controlled the holy sites of Jerusalem and has permitted freedom of worship. Do you think the Palestinian Authority can be trusted in a future agreement to protect freedom of religion for all faiths?

		Party			Ideology			Religion		
	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind	Lib	Mod	Cons	Protestant	Catholic	Jewish
Yes	18	13	21	18	22	19	13	18	18	14
No	59	69	52	57	54	56	69	58	60	78
Don't Know	24	18	27	26	24	25	18	24	22	8

Nearly three-quarters (73%) of all voters agree that "under a future Arab-Israeli agreement, Jerusalem should remain united under Israeli sovereignty, with freedom of religion for Christians, Muslims, Jews and all other faiths." Only 9% disagree with that statement. Clearly, American voters trust Israel over the Palestinian Authority to protect freedom of religion.

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? "Under a future Arab-Israeli peace agreement, Jerusalem should remain united under Israeli sovereignty, with freedom of religion for Christians, Muslims, Jews and all other faiths."

		Party			Ideology			Religion		
	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind	Lib	Mod	Cons	Protestant	Catholic	Jewish
Agree	73	77	70	69	72	70	79	73	73	89
Disagree	9	7	11	8	9	11	7	8	11	8
Don't Know	18	16	18	23	19	18	14	18	16	3

After hearing the facts, 3 in 5 (60%) voters are less trusting of giving the Christian holy sites of Jerusalem to the Palestinians. This majority sentiment crosses all voter segments and reiterates the clear distrust of the Palestinian Authority.

Since the start of the Palestinian Intifada, the Tomb of Joseph in Nablus, the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem, and the ancient synagogue of Jericho were ransacked or desecrated by the Palestinians. Have these events made you more trusting or less trusting of giving the Christian holy sites of Jerusalem to the Palestinians?

		Party			Ideology			Religion		
	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind	Lib	Mod	Cons	Protestant	Catholic	Jewish
More	5	5	4	5	5	4	4	5	6	3
Less	60	68	55	60	55	60	69	60	65	69
No Diff	15	9	19	17	18	16	12	14	13	8
Don't Know	20	18	22	18	22	20	16	20	16	19

In regard to any future peace agreement, the majority (54%) of all voters believe that Israel should be entitled to defensible borders, while only 16% think Israel should be forced to return to the boundaries of 1967. The majority support of Israel's right to defensible borders increases among Republicans, conservatives, and Jewish voters.

Do you agree with the position that in any future peace agreement, Israel should be entitled to defensible borders OR do you agree with the position that Israel should be forced to return to the boundaries of 1967, when Israel was eight miles wide at its narrowest point and came under attack?

		Party			Ideology			Religion		
	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind	Lib	Mod	Cons	Protestant	Catholic	Jewish
Defensible	54	60	49	55	50	51	61	55	56	75
1967 Borders	16	12	19	14	16	19	13	16	17	8
Don't Know	30	27	32	31	33	30	26	30	28	17

The majority (52%) of all voters would be more likely to support a presidential candidate who stood by Israel's side in supporting a united Jerusalem and defensible borders for Israel. Only 13% would be less likely to support such a candidate. These results indicate that standing by Israel in supporting a united Jerusalem and defensible borders for Israel is an important presidential election issue that can garner voter support for a candidate. The voter support increases among Republicans, conservatives, and Jewish voters.

Would you be more likely or less likely to support a presidential candidate who stood by Israel's side in supporting a united Jerusalem and defensible borders for Israel?

		Party			Ideology			Religion		
	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind	Lib	Mod	Cons	Protestant	Catholic	Jewish
More	52	60	47	49	46	45	64	54	49	78
Less	13	9	16	13	16	17	9	12	14	11
No Diff	21	18	21	26	25	25	15	21	23	6
Don't Know	14	13	16	12	14	14	12	14	14	6

Methodology

This national survey of 1,000 likely American voters was conducted on February 23-24, 2004. All interviews were conducted via telephone by professional interviewers. Respondent selection was at random within predetermined geographical units, which reflect actual voter distributions in a presidential election. The accuracy of this survey of 1,000 likely American voters is +/- 3.1% at the 95% confidence interval.

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