



# Seeing Eye to Eye: A Survey of Jewish American and Arab American Public Opinion



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#### I. Executive Summary

In 2002, Americans for Peace Now (APN) and the Arab American Institute (AAI) commissioned Zogby International (ZI) to conduct the first ever side-by-side poll of Jewish and Arab American public opinion to gauge support within both communities for Arab-Israeli peace. With the region's political landscape significantly altered since the first poll was conducted—including the US war in Iraq, Israel's disengagement from Gaza, Hamas' victory in Palestinian legislative elections, and the 2006 Israel-Lebanon war—APN and AAI commissioned ZI in May 2007 to reexamine Jewish and Arab American public opinion.

The poll, which surveyed 501 Jewish Americans and an equal number of Arab Americans, confirmed that strong majorities in both the Jewish and Arab American communities remain committed to the right of both Israelis and Palestinians to live in secure and independent states; support a negotiated settlement to final status issues such as Jerusalem, refugees, and borders; and consider a resolution to the conflict in the US national interest. Accordingly, Arab and Jewish American public opinion supports an end to the occupation and a freeze in West Bank settlement construction. Respondents from both communities responded positively to Saudi Arabia's recent leadership efforts, including support for the recently reaffirmed Arab League Peace Initiative as a basis for negotiations.

The Bush Administration's handling of the Arab-Israeli conflict received overwhelmingly low marks, with both communities deeming the administration's approach ineffective. Respondents from both communities remembered President Clinton's efforts more fondly, with majorities deeming those policies effective. While both Arab Americans and Jewish Americans agreed that Bush Administration policies either leaned towards Israel or represented a disengaged approach, opinion differed on how the administration should pursue peace. Two thirds of Arab Americans felt the president should steer a middle course while Jewish American opinion was split between steering a middle course and leaning towards Israel. (Notable minorities in both communities, however, recommended disengagement.) There is, however, identical and strong support for the bipartisan Baker-Hamilton commission's assertion that "the United States will not be able to achieve goals in the Middle East unless the United States deals directly with the Arab-Israeli conflict."

It is clear from the poll results noted above that Jewish and Arab Americans not only share a commitment to peace, but largely share a common vision for what constitutes positive US engagement. In addition, both communities believe it is important for Arab Americans and Jewish Americans to work together to achieve peace. What is surprising, therefore, is that results show that both communities remain largely unaware of these common views and underestimate each other's support for the security and independence of both Israel and Palestine.

Finally, with the 2008 presidential race looming, Arab and Jewish American respondents indicated that presidential hopefuls could capture the support of both

communities by pledging an active role in bringing peace to Israelis and Palestinians and supporting Israel-Syria negotiations. This support for diplomacy also extends to policy on Iran where both communities favor sustained international diplomacy over military action.

#### **II. Narrative Analysis**

1. How closely would you say you follow the situation in the Middle East?

Table 1. Attention	to Situatio	on m me r	viluale E	asi
	Jewish A	merican	Arab A	merican
	2007	2002	2007	2002
Very Closely	55	56	55	57
Somewhat Closely	37	40	38	37
Not Very Closely	7		5	
Not Closely At All	1	4*	1	6*
Not Sure	<1		<1	

Table 1:	Attention	to	Situation	in	the	Middle	East
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\*'Not Very Closely' was not offered as a response in 2002.

- A majority of both Jewish and Arab Americans report paying very close attention to the situation in the Middle East, while nearly all pay at least some attention. These numbers are unchanged from the 2002 survey.
- 2. Would you say that you are mostly optimistic or pessimistic about Middle East peace?

•	Jewish A	merican	Arab A	merican
	2007	2002	2007	2002
Mostly Optimistic	21	17	30	34
Mostly Pessimistic	74	74	63	59
Not Sure	6	9	7	7

#### Table 2: Optimism About Middle East Peace

• Three in four Jewish Americans (74%) and two in three Arab Americans (63%) are pessimistic about Middle East peace. These numbers are unchanged from 2002.

3. Generally speaking, how would you rate President George W. Bush's handling of the Arab/Israeli conflict in the Middle East?

	Jewish American	Arab American
Very Effective	4	6
Somewhat Effective	16	15
Effective	20	21
Not Very Effective	27	21
Not At All effective	53	56
Not Effective	80	77
Not Sure	1	3

Table 3: Performan							
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• Four-fifths of Jewish Americans (80%) and Arab Americans (77%) believe that President Bush's handling of the Arab/Israeli conflict in not effective. Majorities of both groups believe his performance to be not at all effective.

4. Concerning the Bush Administration's efforts at pursuing peace in the Middle East, which of the following statements do you feel is most accurate? The Bush Administration is...

	Jewish American		Arab A	merican
	2007	2002	2007	2002
Leaning Toward Israel	41	38	59	65
Leaning Toward Palestine	4	2	<1	2
Steering Middle Course	17	30	15	14
Disengaged	34	20	21	9
Not Sure	5	10	5	10

 Table 4: Leaning of Bush Administration Efforts at Pursuing Peace

• When asked what direction the Bush administration has taken regarding Middle East peace efforts, a majority of Arab Americans (59%) believe the policies lean toward Israel. Jewish American opinion is more evenly split. The percentage reporting the Administration is disengaged jumped by 14 percent among Jewish Americans and 22 percent among Arab Americans.

5. Which of the following best describes how you feel the Bush Administration **should** pursue peace? It should...

	ministiat	ion Shoun	a i ui suc	I cucc
	Jewish A	merican	Arab A	merican
	2007	2002	2007	2002
Lean Toward Israel	44	39	6	12
Lean Toward Palestine	1	2	5	8
Steer Middle Course	40	45	66	66
Disengage	10	7	17	6
Not Sure	6	7	5	9

Table 5: How Bush Administration Should Pursue Peace	
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• When asked how the Bush Administration *should* pursue peace efforts two-thirds of Arab Americans would like the Administration to steer a middle course. Jewish American opinion is again evenly divided with almost equal numbers supporting a middle course (40%) or leaning toward Israel (44%). These numbers are consistent with the 2002 results, except the 11 percent increase in Arab Americans who would like to see the Administration disengage from the peace process.

6. Generally speaking, how would you rate President Bill Clinton's handling of the Arab/Israeli conflict in the Middle East when he was in office as U.S. President?

	Jewish American	Arab American
Very Effective	16	13
Somewhat Effective	60	52
Effective	76	65
Not Very Effective	12	17
Not At All effective	10	13
Not Effective	22	30
Not Sure	2	5

#### Table 6: Performance of President Clinton in the Middle East

• Majorities of both Jewish Americans (76%) and Arab Americans (65%) believe that President Clinton's handling of the Middle East conflict was effective.

7. If a presidential candidate promised to take an active role in the peace process between Israel and the Palestinians, would you be more likely or less likely to vote for that candidate in November 2008, or would it make no difference in your vote?

	Jewish American	Arab American
More Likely	68	64
Less Likely	3	3
No Difference	25	28
Not Sure	5	5

 Table 7: 2008 Candidates on Peace Process (Israel/Palestine)

 Jowish American

• Two-thirds of Jewish Americans (68%) and Arab Americans (64%) would be more likely to support a presidential candidate who took an active role in the Israel-Palestinian peace process.

8. If a presidential candidate promised to support peace negotiations between Israel and Syria, would you be more likely or less likely to vote for that candidate in November 2008, or would it make no difference in your vote?

	Jewish American	Arab American
More Likely	59	58
Less Likely	9	3
No Difference	28	34
Not Sure	5	6

 Table 8: 2008 Candidates on Peace Process (Israel/Syria)

• More than half of both Jewish Americans (59%) and Arab Americans (58%) would be more likely to support a presidential candidate who promised to support peace negations between Israel and Syria.

9. Do you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree that Israelis have a right to live in a secure and independent state of their own?

	Jewish American			Arab American		
	2007	2003	2002	2007	2003	2002
Agree	<b>98</b>	96	97	<b>88</b>	95	95
Disagree	2	2	1	10	2	4
Not Sure	<1	<1	2	6	5	1

 Table 9: Israeli Right to Secure and Independent State

• Almost all Jewish Americans (98%) and Arab Americans (88%) believe that Israelis have a right to live in a secure and independent state of their own. These numbers are unchanged from the 2002 and 2003 surveys.

10. Do you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree that Palestinians have a right to live in a secure and independent state of their own?

	Jewish American			Arab American		
	2007	2003	2002	2007	2003	2002
Agree	90	82	86	96	93	96
Disagree	9	15	8	3	3	2
Not Sure	1	3	б	1	5	2

#### Table 10: Palestinian Right to Secure and Independent State

• Almost all Jewish Americans (90%) and Arab Americans (96%) believe that Palestinians have a right to live in a secure and independent state of their own. These numbers are unchanged from the 2002 and 2003 surveys.

11. Do you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree that trying to achieve peace, security, and dignity for Israelis and Palestinians is important to U.S. strategic interests?

-	Jewish American	Arab American
Strongly Agree	87	81
Somewhat Agree	9	10
Agree	96	91
Somewhat Disagree	1	3
Strongly Disagree	2	3
Disagree	3	6
Not Sure	1	3

 Table 11: Importance of Peace to U.S. Strategic Interest

 Iowish American

• Nearly all Jewish and Arab Americans agree that trying to achieve peace, security and dignity for Israelis and Palestinians is important to U.S. strategic interests.

12. Do you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree that a majority of (Arab Americans/Jewish Americans) believe that (Israelis/Palestinians) have a right to live in a secure and independent state of their own?\* \*Arab Americans were asked if Jewish Americans believe that Palestinians have a right \*Jewish Americans were asked if Arab Americans believe that Israelis have a right

		f Other Community's Position
Jewish American	Arah American	

	Jewish A	merican	Arab A	merican
	2007	2002	2007	2002
Agree	34	34	60	50
Disagree	46	41	26	30
Not Sure	20	26	15	19

• While overwhelming majorities of Jewish Americans and Arab Americans support the right of both Israelis and Palestinians to live in secure and independent states (Tables 9 and 10), both communities, though to different extents, underestimate the support of the other. 60% of Arab Americans agree that Jewish Americans believe in the right of Palestinians to live in a secure and independent state, while 34% of Jewish American respondents agree that Arab Americans believe in the same right for Israelis.

13. How important do you think it is for Arab Americans and Jewish Americans to work together to achieve a Middle East peace where Palestinians and Israelis each have the right to live in an independent state of their own?

	Jewish American		Arab American	
	2007	2002	2007	2002
Very Important	68	67	80	80
Somewhat Important	21	20	12	14
Not Very Important	6	*	3	*
Not At All Important	4	12	4	3
Not Sure	1	1	2	3

Table 13: Importance	e of Arab/Jewish Ar	merican Collaboration in Peace Process	
	Jowish American	Arah American	

\*'Not Very Important' was not offered as a response in 2002.

• Four in five Arab Americans (80%) and two in three Jewish Americans (68%) believe it is very important for their two communities to work together to achieve a Middle East peace with an independent state for each.

14. Would you strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose a negotiated peace agreement between Israelis and Palestinians that included the establishment of an independent, secure Palestinian state alongside an independent, secure Israeli state, and resolved final status issues of Jerusalem, refugees, and borders?

Table 14: Support for Negotiated Two-State Solution					
	Jewish American	Arab American			
Strongly Support	72	87			
Somewhat Support	15	7			
Support	87	94			
Somewhat Oppose	2	1			
Strongly Oppose	5	2			
Oppose	7	3			
Not Sure	6	2			

 Table 14: Support for Negotiated Two-State Solution

• Support for a negotiated two-state solution which resolves final status issues of Jerusalem, refugees, and borders is strong in both communities with 87% of Jewish Americans and 94% of Arab Americans pledging support.

15. Next month will mark the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 1967 War, when Israel occupied the West Bank and Gaza Strip. How important do you believe it is to the interests of both Israelis and Palestinians to end the occupation?

•	Jewish American	<b>Årab</b> American
Very Important	41	75
Somewhat Important	24	14
Important	65	89
Not Very Important	6	2
Not At All Important	13	4
Not Important	19	6
Not Sure	15	5

 Table 15: Importance of Ending the Occupation

• Two-thirds of Jewish Americans (65%) and nine in ten Arab Americans (89%) believe that an end to the occupation is in the interests of both Palestinians and Israelis.

16. Israeli settlement construction in the West Bank and Gaza Strip has long been one of the conflict's most contentious issues. In 2005, Israel evacuated all settlements from Gaza and four from the West Bank. Which statement best reflects your views regarding expansion of settlements today in the West Bank?

**Statement A:** Israelis have the right to live wherever they want, including the West Bank, so settlement construction should continue.

**Statement B:** Israel should freeze settlement construction because settlements undermine the prospects for achieving peace.

	Jewish American	Arab American
Statement A	30	12
Statement B	63	77
Neither	4	5
Not Sure	4	7

#### Table 16: Settlements

• Three-quarters of Arab Americans (77%) and two in three Jewish Americans (63%) believe that Israel should freeze the construction of settlements in the interest of the peace process. Less than one-third of Jewish Americans (30%) and only 12 percent of Arab Americans feel that Israel should continue settlement construction.

17. The Arab League recently reaffirmed its commitment to the 2002 Arab League Peace Initiative. This initiative offers Israel full diplomatic relations with all Arab countries in exchange for an agreed-on comprehensive solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Do you strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose or strongly oppose this initiative as a basis for negotiations?

	Jewish American	Arab American
Strongly Support	31	57
Somewhat Support	39	25
Support	70	82
Somewhat Oppose	7	4
Strongly Oppose	12	6
Oppose	29	10
Not Sure	11	8

**Table 17: Arab-League Peace Initiative** 

• Jewish American and Arab American respondents again show support for a negotiated settlement to the conflict, with 70% of Jewish Americans and 82% of Arab Americans endorsing the Arab League Peace Initiative as a basis for negotiations.

18. In recent months, Saudi Arabia has taken a leadership role in efforts to resolve the Arab-Israeli conflict by helping to broker a Palestinian unity government agreement and reaffirming Arab commitment to the 2002 Arab League Peace Initiative in helping to resolve the conflict. Do you believe this is a positive development or a negative development or does it make no difference in helping to resolve the conflict?

	Jewish American	Arab American			
Positive Development	47	62			
Negative Development	7	4			
No Difference	39	27			
Not Sure	8	8			

#### Table 18: Leadership Role of Saudi Arabia

• Sixty-two percent of Arab Americans and nearly half of all Jewish Americans (47%) feel that Saudi Arabia's leadership in efforts to resolve the Arab-Israeli conflict is positive for peace efforts.

19. Recently a blue-ribbon, bipartisan panel looking at the Middle East situation suggested, "The United States will not be able to achieve goals in the Middle East unless the United States deals directly with the Arab-Israeli conflict." Do you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree that a serious US effort regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict will help America achieve broader goals in the Middle East?

	Jewish American	Arab American
Strongly Agree	55	65
Somewhat Agree	25	15
Agree	80	80
Somewhat Disagree	9	5
Strongly Disagree	9	9
Disagree	18	14
Not Sure	3	6

 Table 19: Importance of Arab-Israeli Peace to U.S. Goals in the Middle East

 Jewish American

• The recommendation of the bipartisan Iraq Study Group, led by former Secretary of State James Baker and former Congressman Lee Hamilton, regarding the necessity of US engagement in resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict received identical support (80%) from both Arab and Jewish Americans.

20. Which of the following two statements best reflects your view regarding US policy towards Iran?

Statement A: Diplomacy with Iran is a waste of time and the US needs to prepare now for military action.

Statement B: It is vital that the US engage in serious diplomacy with Iran and the international community which could prevent another war.

Table 20: 0.9. Foney Toward Iran				
	Jewish American	Arab American		
Statement A	21	16		
Statement B	73	79		
Neither	4	3		
Not Sure	2	2		

 Table 20: U.S. Policy Toward Iran

• Approximately three in four Jewish Americans (73%) and Arab Americans (79%) think that the U.S. and the international community should engage in diplomacy with Iran.

21. Should the United States strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose or strongly oppose negotiations between Israel and Syria?

Table 21. 0.5. Foncy on Israel-Syria Negotiations				
	Jewish American	Arab American		
Strongly Support	57	67		
Somewhat Support	24	17		
Support	81	84		
Somewhat Oppose	1	2		
Strongly Oppose	8	7		
Oppose	9	9		
Not Sure	10	7		

Table 21: U.S. Policy on Israel-Syria Negotiations

• Four in five Arab Americans (84%) and Jewish Americans (81%) think that the US should support negotiations between Israel and Syria.

#### **III. Methodology and Sample Characteristics**

#### Methodology: Arab Americans

#### Survey Methodology Arab Americans 05/22/07 thru 05/26/07

This is a telephone survey of Arab Americans nationwide conducted by Zogby International. The target sample is 501 interviews with approximately 38 questions asked. Samples are randomly drawn over national Congressional Districts using Zogby International's list of Arab surnames. Zogby International surveys employ sampling strategies in which selection probabilities are proportional to population size within area codes and exchanges. Up to six calls are made to reach a sampled phone number. Cooperation rates are calculated using one of AAPOR's approved methodologies<sup>1</sup> and are comparable to other professional public-opinion surveys conducted using similar sampling strategies.<sup>2</sup> Weighting by country of origin, religion, born in US, age and gender is used to adjust for non-response. The margin of error is +/- 4.5 percentage points. Margins of error are higher in sub-groups.

Zogby International's sampling and weighting procedures also have been validated through its political polling: more than 95% of the firm's polls have come within 1% of actual election-day outcomes.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> See COOP4 (p.38) in Standard *Definitions: Final Dispositions of Case Codes and Outcome Rates of Surveys.* The American Association for Public Opinion Research, (2000).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Cooperation Tracking Study: April 2003 Update, Jane M. Sheppard and Shelly Haas. The Council for Marketing & Opinion Research (CMOR). Cincinnati, Ohio (2003).

#### **Methodology: Jewish Americans**

#### Survey Methodology Jewish Americans 05/22/07 thru 05/23/07

This is a telephone survey of Jewish Americans nationwide conducted by Zogby International. The target sample is 501 interviews with approximately 38 questions asked. Samples are randomly drawn over national Congressional Districts using Zogby International's list of Jewish surnames. Zogby International surveys employ sampling strategies in which selection probabilities are proportional to population size within area codes and exchanges. Up to six calls are made to reach a sampled phone number. Cooperation rates are calculated using one of AAPOR's approved methodologies<sup>3</sup> and are comparable to other professional public-opinion surveys conducted using similar sampling strategies.<sup>4</sup> Weighting by region, party, age and gender is used to adjust for non-response. The margin of error is +/- 4.5 percentage points. Margins of error are higher in sub-groups.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> See COOP4 (p.38) in Standard *Definitions: Final Dispositions of Case Codes and Outcome Rates of Surveys.* The American Association for Public Opinion Research, (2000).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> *Cooperation Tracking Study: April 2003 Update*, Jane M. Sheppard and Shelly Haas. The Council for Marketing & Opinion Research (CMOR). Cincinnati, Ohio (2003).

### **Sample Characteristics**

Sample Characteristics	Jewish A	Jewish American		nerican
	Frequency	Valid Percent*	Frequency	Valid Percent*
Sample Size	501		501	
East	253	50	186	37
South	59	12	107	21
Central/Great Lakes	75	15	140	28
West	115	23	68	14
Did not answer region				
Very Likely to Vote	485	98	442	93
Somewhat Likely to Vote	11	2	25	5
Democrat	327	66	180	40
Republican	79	16	120	26
Independent	74	15	131	28
18-29	54	11	66	14
30-49	187	38	162	33
50-64	128	26	140	29
65+	123	25	122	25
18-24	33	7	47	10
25-34	38	8	48	10
35-54	207	42	202	41
55-69	113	23	106	22
70+	101	20	88	18
Did not respond age	9	2	11	
White	480	96	N/A	N/A
Hispanic	8	2	N/A	N/A
African-American			N/A	N/A
Asian			N/A	N/A
Other	12	2	N/A	N/A
Did not respond race	1		N/A	N/A
Large City	199	40	219	44
Small City	77	15	100	20
Suburbs	172	35	154	31
Rural	50	10	24	5
Did not respond location	2		4	

\* Numbers have been rounded to the nearest percent and might not total 100.

Sample Characteristics	Jewish American		<b>Arab American</b>	
	Frequency	Valid Percent*	Frequency	Valid Percent*
Progressive	93	19	42	9
Liberal	167	34	103	21
Moderate	133	27	199	41
Conservative	78	16	102	21
Very Conservative	8	2	24	5
Libertarian	14	3	12	3
Did not respond ideology	8		20	
Catholic	N/A	N/A	173	35
Protestant	N/A	N/A	76	15
Jewish	100	100		
Muslim	N/A	N/A	119	24
Eastern Orthodox	N/A	N/A	62	13
Other/None	N/A	N/A	64	13
Did not respond Religion	N/A	N/A	7	
Born Again	N/A	N/A	30	6
Not Born Again	N/A	N/A	47	9
Did not respond Born Again	N/A	N/A		
Children <17	146	29	159	32
No Children <17	355	71	342	68
Did not respond Children <17				
Married	320	64	296	59
Single	90	18	134	27
Divorced/Widowed/Single	65	13	63	13
Civil Union	26	5	8	2
Did not respond status				
< \$25,000	25	6	50	12
\$25-35K	31	8	47	11
\$35-50K	37	9	45	11
\$50-75K	61	15	59	14
\$75-100K	67	17	84	20
\$100K+	182	45	140	33
Did not respond Income	98		77	
Male	241	48	251	50
Female	260	52	250	50
Did not respond Gender				

## \*Numbers have been rounded to the nearest percent and might not total 100

Sample Characteristics	Jewish American		Arab American	
	Frequency	Valid Percent*	Frequency	Valid Percent*
Less than High School	2	<1	4	1
High School Graduate	41	8	69	14
Some College	100	20	124	25
College	358	72	304	61
Did Not Respond Education	1			
Reform	222	45	N/A	N/A
Conservative	134	27	N/A	N/A
Orthodox	53	11	N/A	N/A
Reconstructionist	24	5	N/A	N/A
Unaffiliated	58	12	N/A	N/A
Messianic	4	1	N/A	N/A
Did not respond Denomination	6		N/A	N/A
Attend Religious Service > Weekly	39	19	57	11
Attend Weekly	167	34	150	30
Attend 1-2 Times per Month	133	27	78	16
Attend on holidays only	78	16	73	15
Attend rarely	8	2	93	19
Never Attend	14	3	46	9
Did not respond Religious Attendance	8		5	
Shi'a	N/A	N/A	29	26**
Sunni	N/A	N/A	59	52
Other	N/A	N/A	24	22
Did not respond Sect	N/A	N/A		

\* Numbers have been rounded to the nearest percent and might not total 100

\*\*Represents Percentage Among Those Responding Muslim

Sample Characteristics	Jewish American		Arab American	
	Frequency	Valid Percent*	Frequency	Valid Percent*
Lebanon	N/A	N/A	281	56
Syria	N/A	N/A	70	14
Egypt	N/A	N/A	55	11
Palestine	N/A	N/A	50	10
Jordan	N/A	N/A	20	4
Iraq	N/A	N/A	10	2
Other Arab	N/A	N/A	15	3
Born in U.S.	N/A	N/A	376	75
Born Overseas	N/A	N/A	125	25
English at Home	N/A	N/A	380	76
Other Language at Home	N/A	N/A	28	6
Evenly Divided	N/A	N/A	93	19

\* Numbers have been rounded to the nearest percent and might not total 100