



TO: Democratic Majority for Israel
FROM: The Mellman Group
DATE: December 13, 2023
RE: Poll On Public Attitudes Toward The Israel-Hamas Conflict

This analysis represents the findings of a survey of 1,637 registered voters in the United States. Interviews were conducted online December 7-12, 2023 using a carefully curated panel that is accepted by media outlets and peer reviewed academic works. The margin of error is +/-2.42% overall at a 95% level of confidence, and higher for subgroups.

Our just completed poll reveals voters in general, and Democrats in particular, feel favorably toward Israel and overwhelmingly side with the Jewish state in its conflict with Hamas.

They understand that Hamas' goal is the eradication of Israel, while Israel's goal is security, and they fault Hamas for the current war as well as for the resulting civilian casualties.

Voters across the board reject a ceasefire that leaves Hamas in control of Gaza or hostages in their hands.

They are also convinced that, had an attack of the same relative scale been launched against the U.S., America would be responding more harshly than Israel has.

Those who profess to know most about the issues are consistently more likely to side with Israel.

Voters Have Favorable Views Of Israel And Are Hostile To Hamas

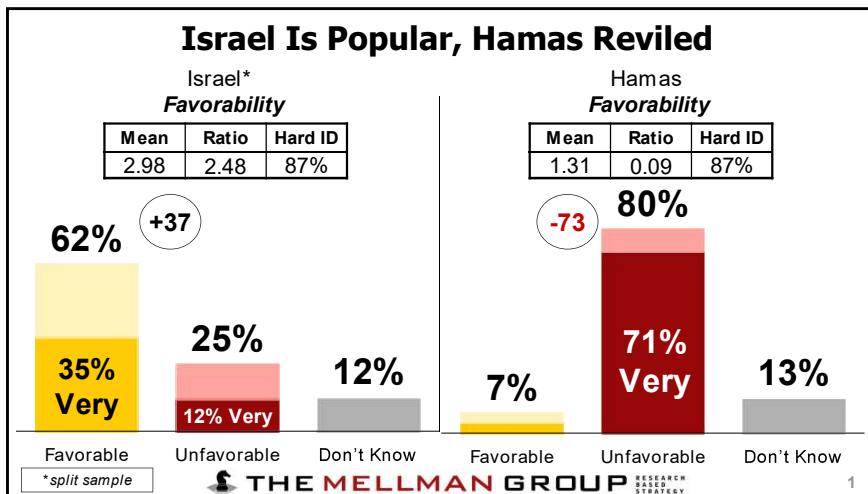
Sixty-two percent (62%) of voters hold favorable views of Israel, while just 25% offer unfavorable opinions.

By contrast, just 7% are favorable toward Hamas with 80% unfavorable. The Palestinian Authority fares only somewhat better with 14% favorable and 53% unfavorable.

Democrats are somewhat less positive about Israel, but still strongly so, with 50% favorable toward Israel and 36% unfavorable, while 11% hold favorable views of Hamas compared to 76% who are unfavorable.

With respect to the Palestinian Authority, 21% of Democrats are favorable and 42% are unfavorable.

While Israel's leader is not particularly popular, the Palestinian President is viewed more negatively when accounting for the difference in voters' awareness of both men.



Thirty-six percent (36%) hold favorable views of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu while 37% are unfavorable. Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas is less widely known, but only 9% have a favorable view of him, compared to 31% who see him unfavorably.

Many voters confess to knowing little about these issues. Just 28% profess knowing a great deal about the Israeli Palestinian conflict. Almost as many (23%) admit to knowing little or nothing.

Those who say they know a great deal are favorable toward Israel (by 74% favorable to 24% unfavorable) and more widely unfavorable toward Hamas (87% unfavorable to 10% favorable).

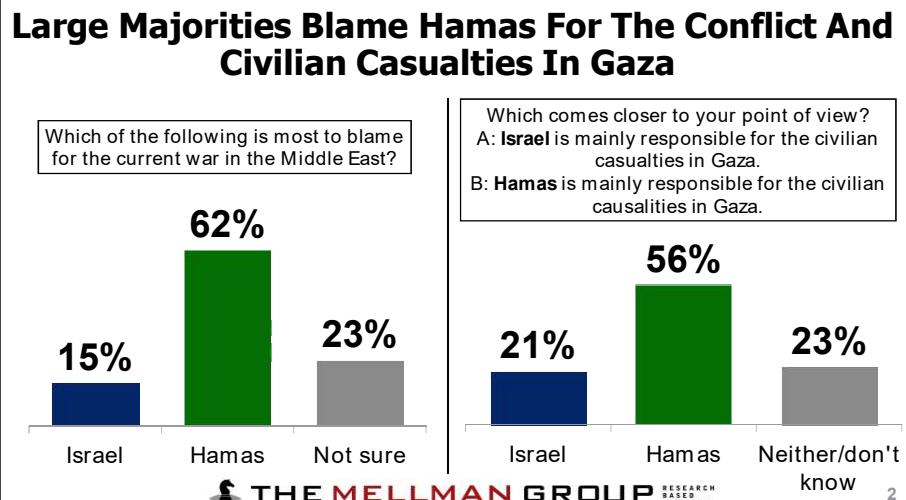
A Majority Support Israel In The Current Conflict With Hamas

By a huge 62-point margin (67% to 5%), voters believe the U.S. should support Israel over Hamas, with 28% having no opinion. Democrats too favor support for Israel over Hamas by a comparable 57-margin (63% to 6%).

Again, those who claim to know most are even more likely to support Israel (74%) with only 7% supporting Hamas.

Sixty-two percent (62%) understand that Hamas is most to blame for the current war, while 15% place primary blame on Israel, and 23% have no opinion.

Similarly, by a 35-point margin, 56% of voters believe Hamas is mainly responsible for the civilian casualties in Gaza, while 21% place primary responsibility on Israel for civilian casualties.



Over Three-Fifths Believe That Hamas' Goal Is To Destroy Israel

Voters also recognize that Hamas' war aims are genocidal. Sixty-one percent (61%) believe Hamas' goal is "to destroy Israel and remove the Jewish people from Israel." Only 18% believe Hamas' goal is a two-state solution.

Among Democrats,

50% believe Hamas' goal is "to destroy Israel and remove the Jewish people from Israel" and 26% believe Hamas' goal is a two-state solution.

The best informed are even more likely to believe Hamas intends to destroy Israel (70%) rather than pursue a two-state solution (20%).

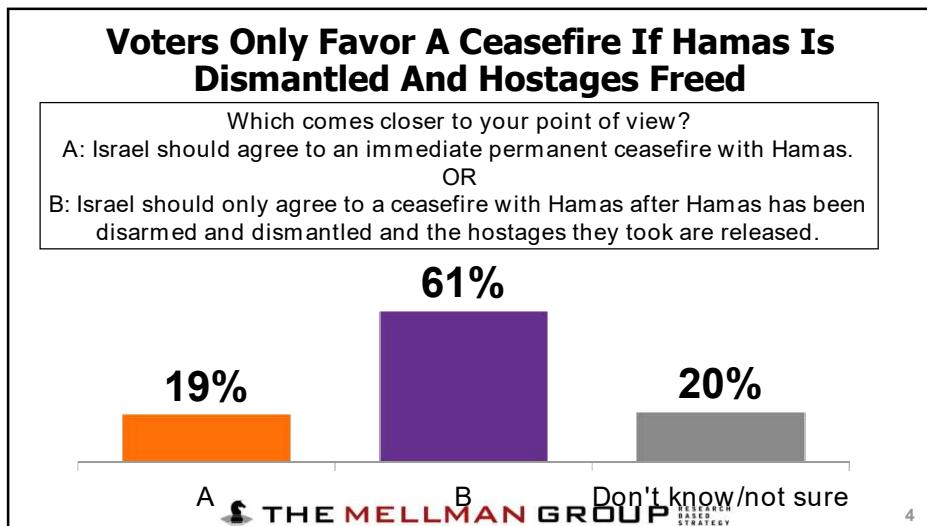
By contrast, 55% of voters overall see Israel's goal as "to dismantle and disarm Hamas, free the hostages and prevent future attacks." A far lesser 27% think Israel wants "to remove the Palestinians from Gaza and the West Bank and incorporate all that land into Israel."

Voters Oppose A Ceasefire Because It Would Leave Hamas In Control Of Gaza

While other polls have purported to show in-principle support for a ceasefire, this survey makes clear that in fact, a large majority oppose a ceasefire that would leave the hostages in Hamas' hands or Hamas in control of Gaza. Since no one has yet developed a plan that moves from an immediate ceasefire to Hamas relinquishing control, this is the only realistic scenario.

Three different sets of questions all converge on this same finding.

First, we gave voters two sides of the question. Just 19% took the position that "Israel should agree to an immediate, permanent ceasefire with Hamas," while 61% believe "Israel should only agree to a ceasefire with Hamas after Hamas has been disarmed and dismantled and the hostages they took are released." Among Democrats, fewer than a third (29%) support an immediate ceasefire, while 48% support a ceasefire only after Hamas has been dismantled and the hostages freed.



Among the best-informed group, 69% favor a ceasefire only after Hamas is eliminated, with 21% supporting an immediate and permanent ceasefire.

Another question posited two possible ways to end the war. The less popular, with support from just 17%, was "Israel and Hamas negotiate a permanent ceasefire that ends Israeli military action and leaves Hamas in control of Gaza."

Voters register far more support (60%) for "Hamas gives up control of Gaza by surrendering its leaders, its weapons and the hostages, while Israel ends its military action in Gaza." A majority (53%) of Democrats support Hamas relinquishing control, while only 22% think a ceasefire that leaves Hamas in control is the best outcome.

Finally, we asked which of two alternatives would be least palatable. A substantial 54% majority said, "any outcome that leaves Hamas in charge of Gaza is unacceptable," while just 16% said "any additional military action by Israel is unacceptable."

Even more (59%) believe “any outcome that fails to free all the hostages Hamas kidnapped is unacceptable” compared to 17% who instead believe “any additional military action by Israel is unacceptable.”

The U.S. Would Have Reacted More Harshly To Such An Attack

Our question explained “Given the difference in population, if an attack occurred in the United States of the same relative size as Hamas’ October 7th attack on Israel, 40,000 Americans would have been killed, 175,000 would have been wounded and nearly 8,800 Americans would have been taken hostage.”

We then asked, “If the United States were attacked the same way Israel was,” would the U.S. respond in the same way Israel has, more harshly, or less harshly. Fifty-five percent (55%) said the U.S. would respond more harshly than Israel has and 34% the same way. Just 11% thought the U.S. would respond less harshly if confronted with the same situation.

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