CRITICAL ISSUES POLL

Most Americans Say Israeli Elections Won't Impact Their Views of Israel

Americans See the US-Israel Relationship as More of a Liability Than an Asset – and More Than 4 Out of 10 Say It Will Impact Their Vote in the Midterms "A Lot" or "Moderately"

University of Maryland Critical Issues Poll

By Shibley Telhami

As Israelis await the shape of their next government, more Americans say that the US-Israel relationship is a liability, 39%, than say it is an asset, 26%, for American national interests, and majorities say the shape of the next Israeli government would not affect their assessments of Israel, the US-Israeli relationship, or Israeli policies. Two-thirds of Americans, including 64% of Republicans and 67% of Democrats, also say Israel influenced the US decision to wage war with Iran. And a plurality of those planning to vote say the US relationship with Israel will be a factor ("a lot" or "moderately") in how they plan to vote in the midterm elections.

These are some of the findings from the latest University of Maryland Critical Issues Poll with Ipsos, fielded October 23-25, among a sample of 1,017 adult Americans, with a margin of error of 3.2 percentage points.

The poll found that 55% of Americans say their vote in the upcoming US midterm elections will be impacted by their assessment of the US-Israel relationship, and a larger number, 68%, said the Iran war will be a factor in the way they vote. For broader context, the poll compared the assessments of the Israeli-US relationship with US relations with Saudi Arabia, Britain, and Canada. Below are five of the key findings.

ONE

In contrast with the US relationships with Saudi Arabia, Britain, and Canada, Americans see the US-Israel relationship as more of a liability than an asset for American interests. At the same time, they see the US relationships with Saudi Arabia, Canada, and Britain more as assets than liabilities. Overall, 26% say the US-Israel relationship is an asset (including 13% who say a "big asset" and 13% who say "somewhat of an asset"). Meanwhile, 39% say the relationship is a liability (including 22% who say a "big liability" and 17% who say "somewhat of a liability"). Ten percent of respondents say the US relationship with Israel is "neither an asset nor a liability," including 10% of Republicans and 13% of Democrats. Twenty-three percent of respondents say they don't know, including 18% of Republicans and 19% of Democrats.

There is a notable partisan divide on the US-Israel relationship: 46% of Republicans say the relationship is an overall asset for American interests (including 30% who say "big asset" and 16% who say "somewhat of an asset") and 15% of Democrats say the same (including 2% who say "big asset" and 13% who say "somewhat of an asset"), a 31-percentage point difference between Republicans and Democrats. Meanwhile, 25% of Republicans say the relationship is a liability (including 10% who say "big liability" and 15% who say "somewhat of a liability") and 51% of Democrats say the same (including 33% who say "big liability" and 18% who say "somewhat of a liability").

Thirty-one percent of respondents say the US-Saudi Arabia relationship is an asset (including 9% who say "big asset" and 22% who say "somewhat of an asset"). Twenty-four percent of respondents say the relationship is a liability (including 10% who say "big liability" and 14% who say "somewhat of a liability"). Fourteen percent of respondents say the relationship is neither an asset nor a liability, including 10% of Republicans and 19% of Democrats. Twenty-eight percent of respondents say they don't know, including 19% of Republicans and 28% of Democrats.

There is also a partisan divide on attitudes toward the US-Saudi Arabia relationship, but to a lesser degree than attitudes toward the US-Israel relationship. Forty-seven percent of Republicans say the US-Saudi Arabia relationship is an overall asset (including 16% who say "big asset" and 31% who say "somewhat of an asset") and 23% of Democrats say the same (including 5% who say "big asset" and 18% who say "somewhat of an asset"). Seventeen percent of Republicans say the relationship is a liability (including 7% who say "big liability" and 10% who say "somewhat of a liability") and 32% of Democrats say the same (including 13% who say "big liability" and 19% who say "somewhat of a liability").

Fifty-six percent of respondents say the US-Canada relationship is an asset (including 37% who say "big asset" and 19% who say "somewhat of an asset"), while just 10% of

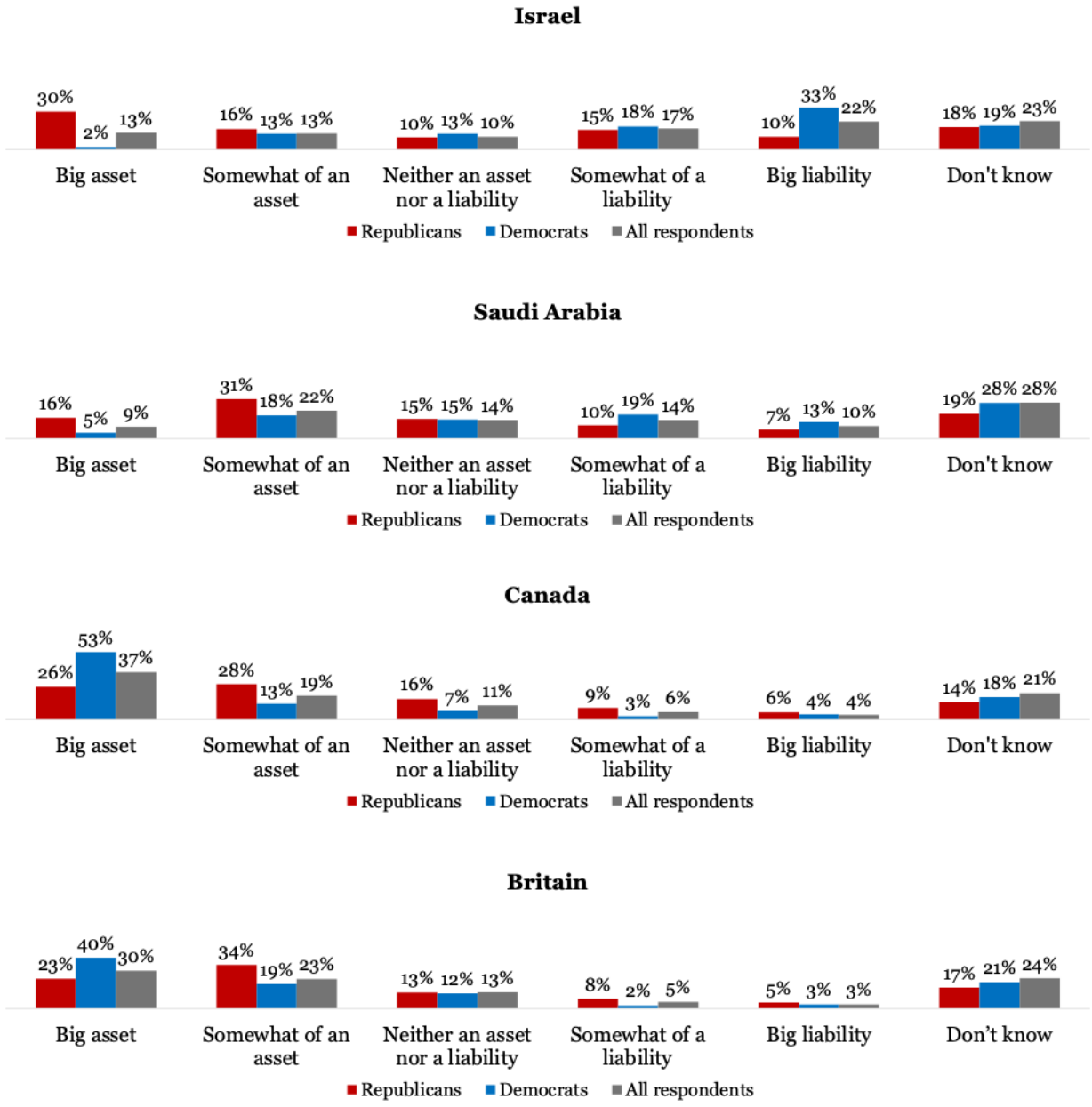
respondents say the relationship is a liability (including 4% who say “big liability” and 6% who say “somewhat of a liability”). Eleven percent of respondents, including 16% of Republicans and 7% of Democrats, say it’s neither an asset nor a liability, and 21% say they don’t know, including 14% of Republicans and 18% of Democrats.

A majority of both Democrats and Republicans say the US relationship with Canada and with Britain is an asset, although a partisan divide appears over whether the relationship is a “big asset” or “somewhat of an asset.” Fifty-four percent of Republicans say the US-Canada relationship is an asset (including 26% who say “big asset” and 28% who say “somewhat of an asset”) and 66% of Democrats say the same (including 53% who say “big asset” and 13% who say “somewhat of an asset”). Fifteen percent of Republicans say the relationship is a liability (including 6% who say “big liability” and 9% who say “somewhat of a liability”) and 7% of Democrats say the same (including 4% who say “big liability” and 3% who say “somewhat of a liability”).

Fifty-three percent of respondents say the US-Britain relationship is an asset (including 30% who say “big asset” and 23% who say “somewhat of an asset”), while just 8% of respondents say the relationship is a liability (including 3% who say “big liability” and 5% who say “somewhat of a liability”). Thirteen percent of respondents, including 13% of Republicans and 12% of Democrats, say it’s neither an asset nor a liability, and 24% say they don’t know, including 17% of Republicans and 21% of Democrats.

Fifty-seven percent of Republicans say the US-Britain relationship is an asset (including 23% who say “big asset” and 34% who say “somewhat of an asset”) and 59% of Democrats say the same (including 40% who say “big asset” and 19% who say “somewhat of an asset”). Thirteen percent of Republicans say the relationship is a liability (including 5% who say “big liability” and 8% who say “somewhat of a liability”) and 5% of Democrats say the same (including 3% who say “big liability” and 2% who say “somewhat of a liability”).

Q. To what extent is the US relationship with the following countries an asset or liability for American interests?



Source: University of Maryland Critical Issues Poll fielded with Ipsos October 23-25, 2026, among 1,017 US adults with a margin of error of +/- 3.2 percentage points.

TWO

Most Americans see Israel as having influenced the US decision to initiate war with Iran, compared to minorities who say the same about the roles of Saudi Arabia, Canada, and Britain.

Overall, 62% of respondents say Israel influenced Donald Trump's decision to initiate war on Iran (including 46% who say Israel influenced the decision "a lot," 9% who say "moderately," and 7% who say "a little"). Four percent of respondents say Israel did not influence Trump's decision at all, including only 6% of Republicans and 3% of Democrats. Thirty-two percent of respondents say they don't know, including 29% of Republicans and 28% of Democrats.

Sixty-four percent of Republicans say Israel influenced the decision to go to war (including 38% who say "a lot," 11% who say "moderately," and 15% who say "a little") and 67% of Democrats say the same (including 55% who say "a lot," 7% who say "moderately," and 5% who say "a little").

Forty-one percent of respondents say Saudi Arabia influenced Donald Trump's decision to initiate war on Iran (including 11% who say Saudi Arabia influenced the decision "a lot," 14% who say "moderately," and 16% who say "a little"). Twelve percent of respondents say Saudi Arabia did not influence Trump's decision at all, including 15% of Republicans and 11% of Democrats. Forty-five percent of respondents say they don't know, including 43% of Republicans and 40% of Democrats.

Forty-two percent of Republicans say Saudi Arabia influenced the decision to go to war (including 7% who say "a lot," 12% who say "moderately," and 23% who say "a little") and 47% of Democrats say the same (including 17% who say "a lot," 15% who say "moderately," and 15% who say "a little").

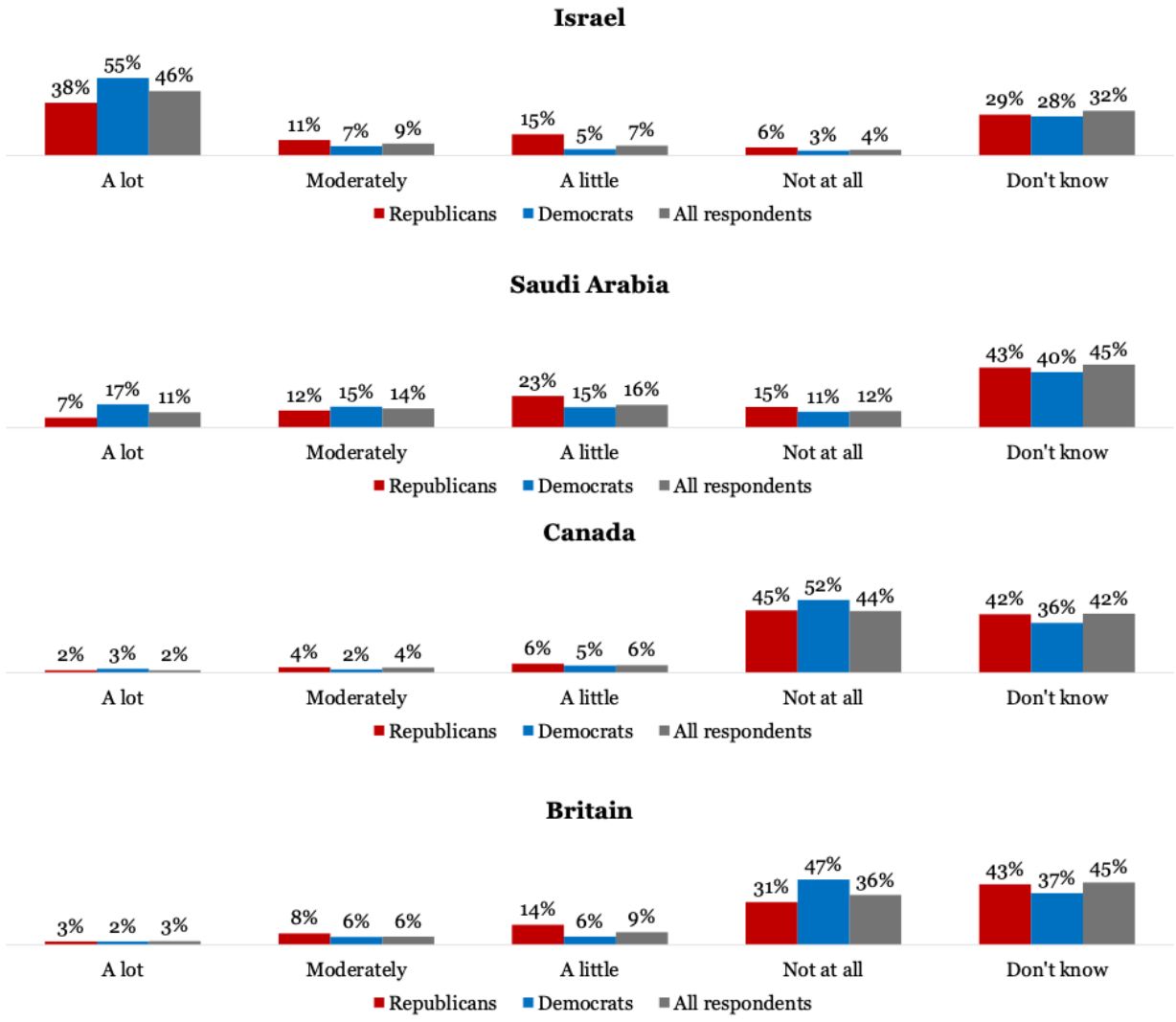
Twelve percent of respondents say Canada influenced Donald Trump's decision to initiate war on Iran (including 2% who say Canada influenced the decision "a lot," 4% who say "moderately," and 6% who say "a little"). Forty-four percent of respondents say Canada did not influence Trump's decision at all, including 45% of Republicans and 52% of Democrats. Forty-two percent of respondents say they don't know, including 42% of Republicans and 36% of Democrats.

Twelve percent of Republicans say Canada influenced the decision to go to war (including 2% who say "a lot," 4% who say "moderately," and 6% who say "a little") and 10% of Democrats say the same (including 3% who say "a lot," 2% who say "moderately," and 5% who say "a little").

Eighteen percent of respondents say Britain influenced Donald Trump's decision to initiate war on Iran (including 3% who say Britain influenced the decision "a lot," 6% who say "moderately," and 9% who say "a little"). Thirty-six percent of respondents say Britain did not influence Trump's decision at all, including 31% of Republicans and 47% of Democrats. Forty-five percent of respondents say they don't know, including 43% of Republicans and 37% of Democrats.

Twenty-five percent of Republicans say Britain influenced the decision to go to war (including 3% who say “a lot,” 8% who say “moderately,” and 14% who say “a little”) and 14% of Democrats say the same (including 2% who say “a lot,” 6% who say “moderately,” and 6% who say “a little”).

Q. To the best of your knowledge, how much did each of the following countries influence President Donald Trump’s decision to initiate war with Iran?



Source: University of Maryland Critical Issues Poll fielded with Ipsos October 23-25, 2026, among 1,017 US adults with a margin of error of +/- 3.2 percentage points.

THREE

A majority of Americans who plan to vote in the midterm elections (55%) say the relationship with Israel will impact their vote – far more than say the same about the US relationships with Saudi Arabia (42%), Canada (43%), and Britain (36%).

Overall, 55% of respondents say the US-Israel relationship will influence their vote (including 28% who say “a lot,” 14% who say “moderately,” and 13% who say “a little”). Forty-two percent of respondents say their vote will not be influenced at all, including 58% of Republicans and 28% of Democrats, a difference of 30 percentage points.

Forty percent of Republicans say the US relationship with Israel will influence their midterm vote (including 14% who say “a lot,” 12% who say “moderately,” and 14% who say “a little”) and 67% of Democrats say the same (including 40% who say “a lot,” 15% who say “moderately,” and 12% who say “a little”).

Forty-two percent of respondents say the US-Saudi Arabia relationship will influence their vote (including 11% who say “a lot,” 14% who say “moderately,” and 17% who say “a little”). Fifty-five percent of respondents say their vote will not be influenced at all, including 72% of Republicans and 45% of Democrats, a difference of 27 percentage points.

Twenty-eight percent of Republicans say the US relationship with Saudi Arabia will influence their midterm vote (including 3% who say “a lot,” 8% who say “moderately,” and 17% who say “a little”) and 50% of Democrats say the same (including 13% who say “a lot,” 20% who say “moderately,” and 17% who say “a little”).

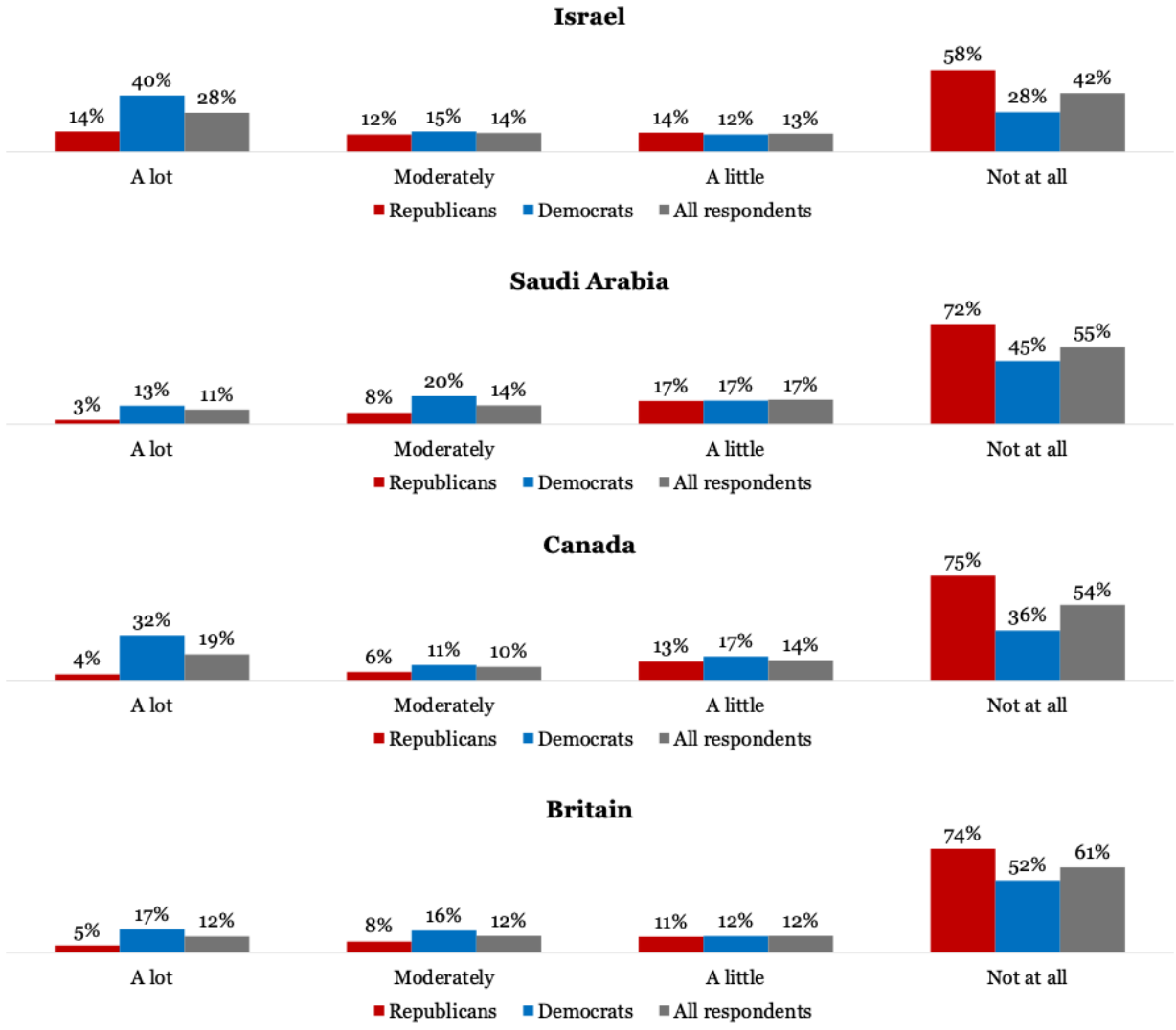
Forty-three percent of respondents say the US-Canada relationship will influence their vote (including 19% who say “a lot,” 10% who say “moderately,” and 14% who say “a little”). Fifty-four percent of respondents say their vote will not be influenced at all, including 75% of Republicans and 36% of Democrats, a difference of 39 percentage points.

Twenty-three percent of Republicans say the US relationship with Canada will influence their midterm vote (including 4% who say “a lot,” 6% who say “moderately,” and 13% who say “a little”) and 60% of Democrats say the same (including 32% who say “a lot,” 11% who say “moderately,” and 17% who say “a little”).

Thirty-six percent of respondents say the US-Britain relationship will influence their vote (including 12% who say “a lot,” 12% who say “moderately,” and 12% who say “a little”). Sixty-one percent of respondents say their vote will not be influenced at all, including 74% of Republicans and 52% of Democrats, a smaller but still notable difference of 22 percentage points.

Twenty-four percent of Republicans say the US relationship with Britain will influence their midterm vote (including 5% who say “a lot,” 8% who say “moderately,” and 11% who say “a little”) and 45% of Democrats say the same (including 17% who say “a lot,” 16% who say “moderately,” and 12% who say “a little”).

Q. In the upcoming midterm elections, how much, if at all, will the US relationship with the following countries influence your vote? (Among those who plan to vote)



Source: University of Maryland Critical Issues Poll fielded with Ipsos October 23-25, 2026, among 1,017 US adults with a margin of error of +/- 3.2 percentage points.

FOUR

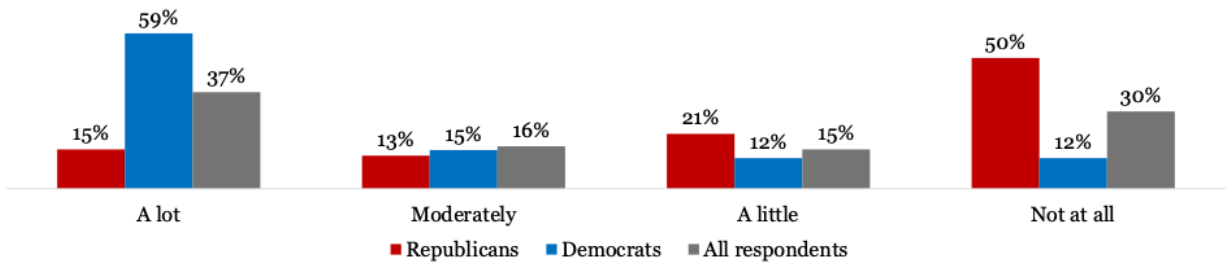
A majority of Americans (68%) say the war with Iran will impact their vote in the midterm elections (including 37% who say “a lot,” 16% who say “moderately,” and 15% who say “a little”). Thirty percent of respondents say the Iran war will have no impact at all on their vote, including 50% of Republicans and 12% of Democrats, a 38-percentage-point partisan divide.

Forty-nine percent of Republicans say the war will impact their vote (including 15% who say “a lot,” 13% who say “moderately,” and 21% who say “a little”) and 86% of

Democrats say the same (including 59% who say “a lot,” 15% who say “moderately,” and 12% who say “a little”). There is a 44-percentage-point partisan divide between Democrats and Republicans who say the Iran war will impact their vote “a lot.”

It is notable that 80% of those who say the US relationship with Israel would impact their vote “a lot” also say that the war with Iran would impact their vote “a lot”, and 61% of those who say Israel is a “big liability” also say the war would impact their vote “a lot.”

Q. In the upcoming midterm elections, how much, if at all, will the war with Iran influence your vote? (Among those who plan to vote)



Source: University of Maryland Critical Issues Poll fielded with Ipsos October 23-25, 2026, among 1,017 US adults with a margin of error of +/- 3.2 percentage points.

While we didn’t ask how the Iran war will impact midterm voters, our own polls and others show that Americans overwhelmingly say the impact of the war has been negative for Americans, and a late-September AP-NORC found nearly 80% saying the war is not worth fighting. One could thus presume that the impact of the war on votes would be mostly negative.

FIVE

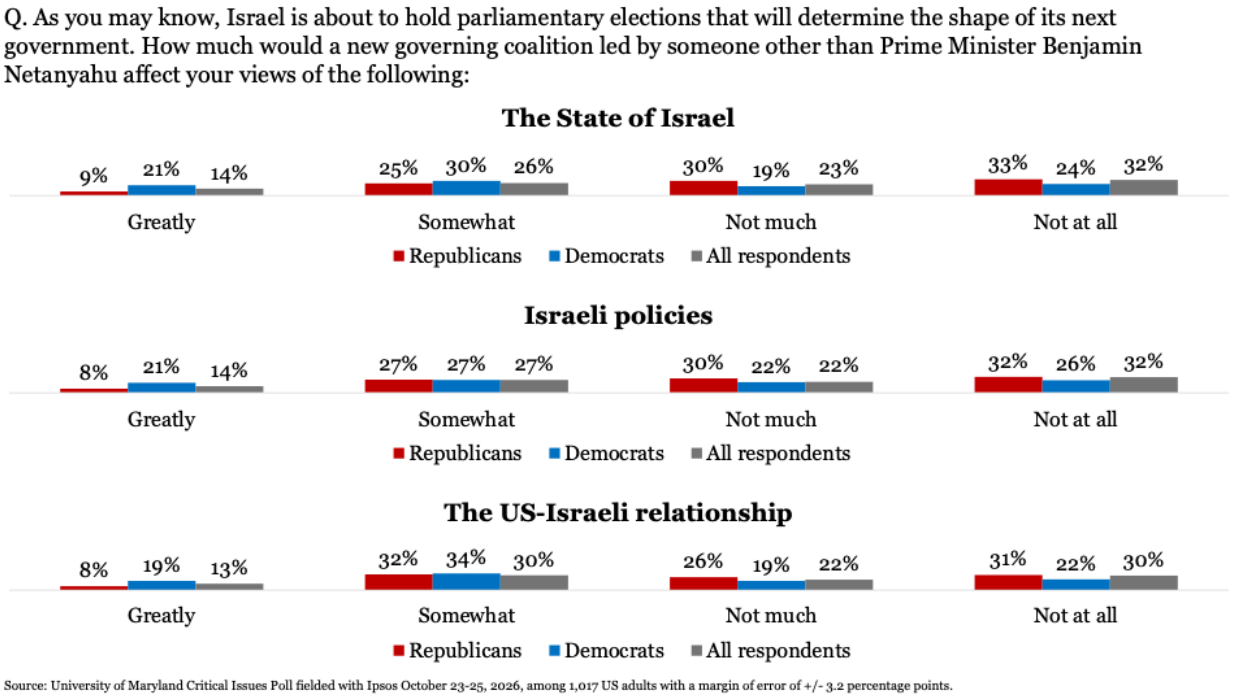
Majorities of Americans say the rise of a new Israeli government led by someone other than Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu would have “not much” or no impact at all on their views of Israel (55%, including 63% of Republicans and 43% of Democrats), Israeli policies (54%, including 62% of Republicans and 48% of Democrats), and the US-Israeli relationship (52%, including 57% of Republicans and 41% of Democrats).

At the same time, forty percent of respondents say their views of the State of Israel will be at least somewhat impacted by a new governing coalition (including 14% who say their views will be “greatly” impacted and 26% who say “somewhat”). Thirty-four percent of Republicans say their views of Israel will be at least somewhat impacted (including 9% “greatly” and 25% “somewhat”) and 51% of Democrats say the same (including 21% “greatly” and 30% “somewhat”).

Forty-one percent of respondents say their views of Israeli policies will be impacted at least somewhat by a change in Israel's leadership (including 14% who say their views will be "greatly" impacted and 27% who say "somewhat"). Thirty-five percent of Republicans say their views of Israeli policies will be at least somewhat impacted (including 8% "greatly" and 27% "somewhat") and 48% of Democrats say the same (including 21% "greatly" and 27% "somewhat").

Forty-three percent of respondents say their views of the US-Israeli relationship will be impacted at least somewhat (including 13% who say their views will be "greatly" impacted and 30% who say "somewhat"). Forty percent of Republicans say their views of the relationship will be at least somewhat impacted (including 8% "greatly" and 32% "somewhat") and 53% of Democrats say the same (including 19% "greatly" and 34% "somewhat").

Relatedly, a recent Pew poll found that the American public's view of Israel itself is about as negative (60%) as it is of Benjamin Netanyahu (59%), suggesting an emerging negative view of the State of Israel, independent of its leadership.



Conclusion

Polls have consistently shown increasingly negative views of Israel among the American public over the past several years with some evidence that these views may be

independent of the public view of the Israeli government led by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. This poll shows that Americans see the Israeli-US relationship itself as being more of a liability than an asset for American interests, even compared to the Saudi-US relationship, but especially compared to US relations with Canada and Britain. Americans also see an Israeli hand in the US decision to wage an unpopular war with Iran, with a sizable number saying both the US relationship with Israel and the Iran war itself will impact the way they plan to vote in the midterm elections. It's difficult to know how a new Israeli government without Benjamin Netanyahu would ultimately be perceived by the American public, but the polls suggest that American public attitudes go well beyond the assessment of Israeli leaders – and a new Israeli government will be facing an uphill battle to win American public support, even without Benjamin Netanyahu.

I am grateful to Karenna Sarney for her contributions to this report.