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- For American Jews, the numbers are 45% *very* important and 35% somewhat important: While not as forceful a sentiment as Israelis at the high end ("*most* important"), still, the fact that 80% of American Jews have strong feelings toward their Jewishness shows a significant sharing of fundamental cultural and/or religious values.

FLAME is the only organization that defends Israel with paid editorial hasbarah messages placed in media nationwide

Likewise, another key indication of shared values is found in answers to the question, **"Using the metaphor of a family, do you consider American Jews [or, on the other side, Israeli Jews] your siblings, first cousins, extended family, or not part of my family."**

- Israeli Jews said they regard American Jews as siblings (31%), first cousins (11%) and extended family 36%—a total of 78%—while only 23% answered "not part of my family."

- American Jews are more lukewarm toward their Israeli counterparts, but still warm, scoring 13% for siblings, 15% for first cousins and 43% for extended family—a total of 71%—while 28% answered "not part of my family."

To assess the centrality of Israel, the survey asked each group **"Do you think that a thriving state of Israel is vital for the long-term future of the Jewish people?"**

- American Jews responded with strong affirmation: 72% said yes, and "only" 25% said no.

- Israeli Jews, expectedly, responded even more emphatically: 91% said yes, and only 5% said no.

Finally, as a counterpoint to the previous question, the survey asked, **"Do you think that a thriving Diaspora is vital for the long-term future of the Jewish people."**

- Curiously, American Jews felt less strongly about their own well-being, with only 65% registering affirmative to this question; 16% said no, and 17% had no opinion (couldn't care less?).

- Most Israeli Jews expressed greater concern for the Diaspora's survival than Americans themselves, with 74% of Israelis answering yes to the question, only 20% answering no, and 6% having no opinion.

So far, so good. These results sound like we American Jews and Israeli Jews could be friends. But when we look at American and Israeli opinions about political issues, we see much more divergence . . . and, frankly, reason for alarm.

Let's start with the 800-pound gorilla in the room—Donald Trump. The survey asked each group, **"Do you approve or disapprove of the way President Trump is handling U.S.-Israel relations."** The contrast in views is clear and unnerving.

- Israelis approve of Trump on Israel strongly (48%) or somewhat (31%)—for total approval of 79%. (Only 10% disapprove.) This is clearly a vote of hearty support by an overwhelming majority of our Israeli brethren—who obviously see themselves as benefactors of Trump's decisions on the Iran deal, Jerusalem recognition, the Golan Heights, defunding of Palestinian terror and withdrawal from UNRWA.

- American Jews, in what seems a triumph of personal distaste for Trump over political logic, only 22% approve strongly and 14% approve somewhat—total approval on Israel of just 36%. Yet 45% disapprove strongly—a plurality of disapproval. A bewildered Israeli might ask, how can you disapprove of all these

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actions that *helped us*—what kind of support is that for us, what are you *thinking*?

On the question, "**Do you favor or oppose a two-state solution through the establishment of a demilitarized Palestinian state on the West Bank,**" we see a similar disconnect.

- A solid 64% majority of American Jews favor the two-state solution—either strongly (33%) or somewhat (31%). About 26% *oppose* two states—somewhat (12%) or strongly (14%).

- Israeli respondents, however, for whom the question is dramatically more consequential, only support two states by 39%—17% strongly and 22% somewhat. On the other hand, a majority of Israelis—51%—*oppose* two states, either somewhat (18%) or strongly (33%). The idea of a two-state solution is obviously dying in Israel, but American Jews, relatively disengaged as they are, still cling to the old model of land for peace (which the Palestinians never have accepted).

Another burning issue in both American and Israeli communities is the question of settlements. The survey asked, "**As part of a peace agreement with the Palestinians, should Israel be willing to dismantle all, some, or none of the Jewish settlements in the West Bank?**"

- Israeli Jews are divided on this question, but a trend is emerging: Only 6% of respondents favor dismantling of all settlements, and 37% favor dismantling some of them—a total of 43% in favor of some abandonment. On the other hand, fully half (50%) of respondents believe Israel should not dismantle any of the settlements.

- American Jews, unsurprisingly, still nurture the old model: 25% believe Israel should dismantle all the settlements, 41% believe some should be abandoned—a total of 66% supporting dismantling—and only 28% think Israel should *not* dismantle any of the settlements.

Finally, and perhaps the most telling question, the AJC survey asked, "**Do you think it appropriate for American Jews to attempt to influence Israeli policy on such issues as national security and peace negotiations with the Palestinians?**"

- American Jews by a firm majority—57%—believe it is appropriate, while only 40% believe it is not. Despite all feelings of solidarity and identification with Jewishness and Israel, American Jews represent a group that is not part of the Israeli polity, doesn't pay Israeli taxes, doesn't vote, doesn't speak Hebrew and lives thousands of miles and a world away from the Middle East. They want to influence an existential reality that doesn't affect them, but that affects Israelis profoundly? Is *arrogance* the right word here?

- Understandably, most Israelis feel otherwise. An even stronger majority—63%—feels it is not appropriate for American Jews to influence Israeli policy, whereas only 31% believe it is.

Bottom line? It clearly serves both American and Israeli Jews to have a close, supportive relationship—Israel is the ultimate refuge for the Jewish people, wherever they live, and Israel benefits mightily from U.S. financial and

international political support. Despite occasional protestations and assertions of disagreement, we are bound inextricably.

However, this profound existential connection has natural limits. Israeli Jews should not tell American Jews how they must practice Judaism—it's none of their business. Likewise, the failure of American Jews to support the obviously pro-Israel actions of a U.S. President based on party or personal disdain is unconscionable. Similarly—though every Jew is entitled to an opinion, *Baruch haShem*—the presumption that American Jews have a right to influence Israel's national or foreign policy flies in the face of justice and good sense. It's none of their business.

I hope in your conversations with friends, family and colleagues you'll emphasize the ineffable and unbreakable bond among Jews everywhere in the world, but also the rights of Israelis to elect their own government, make their own decisions about Arab relations and independently resolve questions regarding the territory of Israel.

In addition to advocating both for such Jewish brotherhood and a healthy independence among us, I hope you'll also take a minute, while you have this material front and center, to visit FLAME's lively [new Facebook page](#) and review the P.S. immediately below. It describes FLAME's new *hasbarah* campaign—a refutation of the myth of the "Palestinian territories."

Best regards,

Jim Sinkinson

President, Facts and Logic About the Middle East (FLAME)

P.S. Critics of Israel, from *The New York Times* to BDS and the United Nations, usually base their condemnation of Israel on accusations that Israel's settlements (or its "occupation of Palestinian territory") are illegal. These accusations are false and deserve to be exposed once and for all. That's why FLAME has created a new *hasbarah* message called "[What Is 'Palestinian Territory'?](#)" I hope you'll review this hard-hitting paid editorial, which will begin running in national media this month. It provides a plain-English explanation of the legal issues surrounding Israel's historical and entirely legal presence in its Biblical homeland. This piece will also be sent to all members of Congress, Vice President Pence and President Trump. If you agree that this kind of public relations effort on Israel's behalf is critical, I urge you to support us. Remember: FLAME's powerful ability to influence public opinion—and U.S. support of Israel—comes from individuals like you, one by one. I hope you'll consider giving a donation now, as you're able—with \$500, \$250, \$100, or even \$18. (Remember, your donation to FLAME is tax deductible.) To donate online, just go to [donate](#) now. Now, more than ever, we need your support to ensure that the American people, the U.S. Congress and President Trump stay focused on Israel's critical role in protecting U.S. interests in the region—as well as protecting itself.

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Facts and Logic

About the Middle East

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