

# NOT IN AMERICA'S INTEREST:

WHY UNCONDITIONAL  
SUPPORT FOR ISRAEL IS  
BAD FOR AMERICA,  
AND BAD FOR AMERICANS

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## A New Policy Assessment #1

### **NOT IN AMERICA'S INTEREST: Why Unconditional Support for Israel is Bad for America, and Bad for Americans**

#### **America's unconditional support for Israel harms our global standing and influence**

1. When America expresses our values to the world, and then acts in a way that is contrary to those values, we damage our reputation, lose credibility, and create opportunities for our adversaries to exploit.
2. America's blind support for Israel is destabilizing the Middle East.
3. By protecting Israel from accountability, America is tearing apart the very rules-based international order that generations of Americans have worked to build in our interest.
4. Our inability to curb Israel's violations projects weaknesses to both our partners and adversaries.

#### **America's unconditional support for Israel harms our national security**

5. U.S. military assistance and operational support to Israel are a critical drain on U.S. national defense resources.
6. America is risking and sacrificing the lives of our service members for the benefit of a foreign country that has shown it is willing to go against America's interests.
7. Binding America to Israel's actions places our nation at unnecessary risk.
8. Because many are too afraid to have an honest conversation, we've created a blind spot in our national security.

#### **America's unconditional support for Israel harms Americans at home**

9. We're sending billions to Israel while our own needs go unaddressed.
10. Our broken political debate on Israel functions as an accelerant for anti-democratic forces at home.
11. When we send arms and funding to Israel without conditions, we break American laws and fail to protect American citizens.
12. Our broken politics on Israel results in real and growing damage to our nation's social fabric and undermines long-cherished civil rights.
13. The ultimate price of the disconnect between our politicians and our interests is the loss of faith in our electoral democracy and the perception that U.S. foreign policy is for sale.

**Current U.S. policy towards Israel, including unconditional U.S. support for Israel's systematic destruction of Gaza, is not in our national interest. Here's why:**

**A. America's unconditional support for Israel harms our global standing and influence**

**1. When America expresses our values to the world, and then acts in way that is contrary to those values, we damage our reputation, lose credibility, and create opportunities for our adversaries to exploit.**

Unconditional U.S. support for Israel has done deep, lasting, and possibly irreparable damage to America's reputation as a values-oriented power. Significant majorities across the Global South view America as, at best, an amoral actor that applies one standard to its allies and partners, and another to everyone else. As Politico has reported, "America's international reputation has taken a hit since early 2023, particularly in Muslim countries where Washington's unwavering support of Israel in its war in Gaza has proven intensely divisive. Now, Europe is joining the trend." Furthermore, in the Southeast Asia region, critical to America's strategic competition with the People's Republic of China (PRC), for the first time in polling history, a majority now prefer partnership with the PRC over America. This global impact has also played out in the past year at the United Nations, where time and again America has found itself isolated in the Security Council, and on the losing side of lopsided votes in the General Assembly as it repeatedly vetoes calls for ceasefires, and on other global diplomatic stages, such as the G20, where the U.S. has been criticized by some of its closest allies over its effort to water down statements calling for a ceasefire.

**2. America's blind support for Israel is destabilizing the Middle East.**

A shift in military balance should not be confused with an increase in regional stability. While Israel's strikes on Hezbollah and Iran appear to have achieved their immediate goals against the military capabilities of those actors, surveys and analyses in countries across the region indicate an increasing fragility of the social contracts and state legitimacy, which is in turn driving increased repression of civil rights, creating a vicious cycle that poses significant threats to the stability of countries including Jordan and Egypt, where hundreds of people have been arrested for protesting their governments' lack of support for the Palestinian people. As such, U.S. support for Israel inhibits democracy promotion in the broader Middle East, because America acts to protect Israel from the will of

regional populations by doubling down on autocratic governments that limit freedom of expression and opposition to Israel's oppression of the Palestinians. This fragility is underscored by recent polling showing historically low trust in the United States, with only 3% of Jordanian respondents and 9% of Egyptians expressing confidence in American leadership, and a widespread perception of U.S. actions as biased and harmful (the National Counter Terrorism Center (NCTC) reports that anti-American sentiment driven by the war in Gaza is at a level not seen since the Iraq War), which exacerbates public frustration and the erosion of state legitimacy.

**3. By protecting Israel from accountability, America is tearing apart the very rules-based international order that generations of Americans have worked to build in our interest.**

For over 125 years, and particularly in the post-World War II era, a global consensus had been built around a system of international laws and norms – what is known as the “rules-based international order.” In order to protect Israel from accountability under that system – whether in the legal realm (both in the context of the ICC and ICJ and in terms of its own unwillingness to conduct proper assessments under IHL of Israel’s conduct in Gaza); the diplomatic realm (at the United Nations and in the context of multilateral fora where the Chair of the Senate Armed Services Committee has publicly attacked the head of the Munich Security Conference for simply stating that Germany should adhere to international law); or even the economic realm (where, for instance, the U.S. is laying the groundwork to sanction NATO ally Spain for preventing U.S.-flagged ships carrying arms to Israel from making port calls), the U.S. is now actively undermining the legitimacy and functionality of that system. The idea of a system that has global standards and applicability undergirds both international diplomacy and the global economy, as well as protecting the rights of Americans as they travel overseas. The U.S. has made itself the primary antagonist against that order, most directly for the benefit of a foreign country.

**4. Our inability to curb Israel's violations projects weaknesses to both our partners and adversaries.**

On repeated occasions over the past 15 months, the Biden Administration has painted red lines for Israel that it has continuously failed to enforce. The most prominent example of this failure is Israel's months-long operation on Rafah, which the Biden Administration threatened in March 2024 would result in a suspension of certain weapons transfers.

Another example was the thirty-day letter sent by Secretaries of State and Defense Blinken and Austin in October 2024 to their Israeli counterparts threatening implications under U.S. policy and law if 15 concrete and measurable steps were not taken to admit more humanitarian assistance to northern Gaza. In both instances, Israel ignored these warnings, and has paid no price for doing so. When an American President – or Cabinet Secretary – sets red lines and a country pays no price for crossing them, America looks weak to both its partners and adversaries, undermining the credibility of our diplomacy and power around the globe.

## **B. America's unconditional support for Israel harms our national security**

### **5. U.S. military assistance and operational support to Israel are a critical drain U.S. national defense resources.**

The primary mission of the U.S. Defense Department is to protect America; U.S. military support for Israel has severely compromised the U.S. military's ability to execute that mission both by draining key stockpiles as well as by straining the force. While precise stockpile data is classified, it is clear that the U.S. has expedited transfers of multiple key high-demand munitions to Israel since October 2023, including air-to-ground munitions (JDAMs, SDBs, etc), while the U.S. has itself expended over a billion dollars worth of interceptor missiles, including over a year's production's-worth of SM-3 interceptor missiles in just one night. The U.S. decision to provide the defensive backstops that have enabled Israel's continued operations in Gaza and across the region has also involved the repeated deployment of two carrier strike groups and several fighter wings to the Middle East for extended periods, necessitating the redeployment of these and related assets from the critical Indo-Pacific area of operations while putting a strain on the force and military families across America through extended deployments.

### **6. America is risking and sacrificing the lives of our service members for the benefit of a foreign country that has shown it is willing to go against America's interests.**

The cost to the U.S. has not only been measured in materiel and readiness, but also in the lives of American servicemembers. In January 2024, three U.S. Army soldiers supporting an unauthorized mission to interdict weapons supplies to Hezbollah for use against Israel were killed in Jordan by Iran-aligned militias. In December 2024, two U.S. naval aviators were almost killed when their F-18 was

shot down by friendly fire while conducting operations directed against the Houthi forces in Yemen on behalf of Israel's extended defense. With a U.S. military footprint wide-spread across the Middle East, U.S. forces are far more exposed to emerging and ongoing threats resulting from their association with Israel than Israeli forces themselves are, and the likelihood of further casualties remains high.

## **7. Binding America to Israel's actions places our nation at unnecessary risk.**

Israel's assault on innocent civilians is playing out every second of every day, not only for the Palestinian people, but at a deeply emotional and personal level for communities across the world. For forty years, the U.S. has faced no direct threat from any Palestinian nationalist group – but the Palestinian cause has animated and motivated attacks by other actors on America and American presences overseas, including both U.S. military forces and corporations. For instance, Osama Bin Laden cited U.S. support for Israel as a key reason for the 9/11 attacks that killed almost 3,000 Americans. A New Policy believes that terrorism must always be defeated and the threat of terrorism should never shift us from our policies or goals. At the same time, the NCTC has assessed that Israel's actions in Gaza and the West Bank (to include East Jerusalem), and the inextricable American government support for Israel's aggression against Palestinian civilians is likely to contribute to further radicalization, increasing the risk of future attacks against the U.S. and against American interests. In a world already burdened by security challenges, our leaders should reassess the policies that create threats to the American people simply because our government continues to support the actions of a foreign country - particularly when those actions fail to align with our own strategic interests or our values.

## **8. Because many are too afraid to have an honest conversation, we've created a blind spot in our national security.**

U.S. unconditional support for Israel, and the unwillingness of the political elites to permit free and fair debate about the benefits and costs of our policies, also opens the door to one final insidious threat to our national security – that of espionage and influence operations by a foreign power. The precise nature of the various intelligence threats Israel poses to the U.S. remain classified, but multiple public cases of Israeli spying on the U.S., including that of Jonathan Pollard and Lawrence Franklin point to the existence of an ongoing espionage effort directed by one of our closest partners against the U.S. – a unique situation among our closest partners. Israel is also a key supplier of military technology to countries

including Azerbaijan, whose recent war on Nogorno Karabakh was roundly criticized by the U.S. Government. Additionally, in 2021 it was revealed that Israeli companies were sharing highly sensitive American military technologies with the PRC. In the context of the PRC, the U.S. understands that nation to employ a model of Military-Civil sector (Mil-Civ) fusion in which the corporate world is essentially inseparable from the PRC national security apparatus, which is a key reason why the U.S. has established regulatory, statutory, and policy barriers to the ability of PRC companies to enter key sectors of the U.S. economy and infrastructure. The fact we are unable to freely debate, in national policy and government circles, whether a similar model may exist when it comes to the Israeli intelligence and defense establishment, or the Israeli tech sector, creates a clear blind spot in our national security.

### **C. America's unconditional support for Israel harms Americans at home**

#### **9. We're sending billions to Israel while our own needs go unaddressed.**

With the economic impact of inflation and the rising cost of food, fuel, housing, healthcare, and education, and while our cities and states lack the necessary resources to fully equip and maintain critical social services from mental health support to firefighting, Americans are struggling more than ever. But since October 2023, the U.S. has spent approximately \$20 billion for additional assistance to Israel, and at least a further \$4.86 billion on U.S. military operational support costs for Israel's defense. At best, this deficit spending increases the load against the national debt which American taxpayers must service. At worst, these dollars are being provided by reducing the availability of funding for domestic priorities such as disaster relief, healthcare, and education. In some cases, the supplemental spending requests to support Israel have competed directly against such domestic requirements in the Congressional appropriations process. Over the past 75 years, the U.S. has given Israel, the leading recipient of U.S. foreign assistance despite having a per capita GDP equivalent to that of Germany or the United Kingdom, over \$250 billion in taxpayer money. Of the \$3.3 billion that the U.S. gives Israel in annual foreign military financing, Israel is permitted to use up to 20% of this to fund its own defense industrial base, a sector that is now a top 10 weapons exporter, competing with the U.S. itself in key markets including military electronics and drones. And all of this is happening while Israel itself provides its citizens with free universal healthcare and postsecondary education, as well as tax breaks for those living in settlements in the West Bank that are illegal under international law.

## **10. Our broken political debate on Israel functions as an accelerant for anti-democratic forces at home.**

The visible and growing gap between popular opposition to U.S. policies and entrenched support for Israel in the American political elites has been seized upon by those with a broader anti-democratic agenda as a means of getting a foot-in-the-door for policies and laws that undermine American civil rights and freedoms. This can happen because of a bipartisan willingness that allows, even endorses, repression of political speech, specifically criticisms of the Israeli government's actions against Palestinian civilians. Examples of this include efforts to pass anti-boycott bills around the country that condition federal contracts and employment on a commitment not to engage in free-speech economic activity, as well as efforts at the Federal and State levels to legislate limitations on freedom of speech, and to ban social media apps that facilitate the free flow of information about Gaza. The unwillingness of many of those with political influence or power to even countenance a free and fair debate is not only resuscitating the devastating McCarthyist legacy of the 1950s, but is also setting precedents for the weakening of First Amendment protections that are key to our democracy and freedoms.

## **11. When we send arms and funding to Israel without conditions, we break American laws and fail to protect American citizens.**

Under U.S. law, it is illegal to provide assistance to a country that is restricting the delivery of U.S.-funded humanitarian assistance, and illegal to provide security assistance to units of foreign forces credibly alleged to have committed gross violations of human rights. In both cases, there is ample evidence that should make Israel, or Israeli units, ineligible for our taxpayer-funded assistance, and yet the U.S. Government continues to flow such support while going out of its way to avoid making the appropriate legal determinations that could lead to the suspension of aid. When the White House is willing to ignore American laws for the sake of foreign interests, this sets a concerning precedent for any Presidency's willingness to abide to any laws, including those that relate to American citizens. At the same time, Israel has itself killed at least half-a-dozen American citizens, among them Aysenur Eygi, of Washington State, who was shot in the head by a sniper while observing Israeli settler activities in the West Bank, reporter Shireen Abu Akleh, who was shot in the head by a sniper while wearing a PRESS jacket and helmet while reporting on Israeli military operations in the area, and Jacob Flickinger, who was killed in Israel's attack on the World

Central Kitchen convoy. The U.S. has done nothing to hold accountable those responsible for the killing of its own citizens.

**12. Our broken politics on Israel results in real and growing damage to our nation's social fabric and undermines long-cherished civil rights.**

The unhealthy repression of domestic debate is not only creating an opportunity for those seeking to limit domestic freedoms and rights, but is also contributing directly to domestic tensions that are harming the American social fabric, for example pitting students and faculty against college administrators on an issue in which there is no obvious stake for college administrators to take such a hard line, other than the political and financial pressure being leveraged to force them into a position of antagonism to their own communities. To many Americans, particularly people of color, the contrast between our passionate and just support of Ukrainian resistance to Russian military occupation versus our active complicity in Israel's military occupation of Palestinian territories, comes off as an approach informed, if not driven, by racial bias. Meanwhile, unfounded accusations of antisemitism against critics of Israeli policies desensitize many to true antisemitism – the rise of which is indeed a genuine threat.

**13. The ultimate price of the disconnect between our politicians and our interests is the loss of faith in our electoral democracy and the perception that U.S. foreign policy is for sale.**

As a recent IMEU/YouGov Poll demonstrates, a plurality of American voters who sat out the 2024 election after supporting President Biden in 2020 did so because of his Administration's policies on Gaza. Because U.S. unconditional support for Israel is increasingly unpopular among the American people – and at the very least is not a motivating priority for the vast majority of voters – it is sustained through the increased spending in our elections process, with well over \$100 million being spent in the 2024 election cycle, much of it in the form of 'dark' – or untraceable – money. This fuels the perception among American voters that the interests of a foreign power figure more prominently in the minds of their elected representatives than the interests of those they actually represent. When Americans feel that their voice in our democracy – and their votes at the polls – are rendered ineffective by massive spending, it undermines faith in the democratic system well beyond those American communities who are most directly impacted.

## About A New Policy

Relying on foundational American values as our guiding principles, A New Policy will promote a hopeful, forward-looking vision that advances liberty, equality and human rights in Israel and Palestine.

Hardline lobbies have spent decades setting up political incentives that have skewed American politics, and by extension, American society away from a rational and moral policy in the Middle East. Meanwhile, there is no equivalent set of organizations promoting a fair and just policy centered on human rights and American interests and values. A New Policy will be the voice for that just and balanced approach.

As a nondenominational, nonsectarian, nonpartisan American organization, A New Policy will educate members of Congress on related foreign policy, legislative, and regulatory matters, and will lobby government officials to urgently pursue long-overdue policies that reflect our American values, interests, and voter preferences, as well as comply with U.S. laws. A New Policy works in partnership with organizations across the political spectrum to bring together a large American constituency that strengthens our impact and influence.

For more information, visit <https://anewpolicy.org/>

