



STUDY

Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e.V.

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PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES
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A difficult nexus of relationships?

Study: A comprehensive view of the USA, Germany, Israel and the Palestinian Territories

Even a cursory glance at the „Holy Land“ presents us with two international actors who are in the spotlight more than all others and who arouse, to an extraordinary extent, both positive as well as negative emotions. Firstly, this refers to the USA which - as a reliable Israeli partner - ensures the security of this country, but which also functions as a point of contact for the Palestinians and demonstrates an understanding for their desire for an independent state. Time and again, American presidents, in the assessment of their term of office, have had to measure what progress they achieved in the Middle East peace process. No matter how this solution may look in the end, it is almost inconceivable without any involvement from the US.

Secondly, it refers to Germany which has increasingly become a publicly relevant and well-known actor in Israel, not least due to its military cooperation and the huge recognition which Angela Merkel enjoys in Israel. Germany, however, also traditionally enjoys a high level of recognition and credibility amongst Palestinian decision-makers. Studies, such as the survey by the Foundation from December 2014, indicate that, alongside the USA, both sides desire a more active role from Germany and the country is perceived as an “honest broker” in the conflict.

Those who want a more detailed account of the relationship nexus, who want to evaluate the influence of the respective countries on the peace process, must not only look more closely at what the respective populations think about these actors but also at the interactions at play between these actors.

The time for such an examination is relevant for many reasons: The years 2014 and 2015 were shaped by debates about the looming Iran Nuclear Deal which had a significant impact on the Israeli-American relationship. The year 2016 is now already shaped by the 2016 presidential elections in the United States and the start of an election campaign in which the Middle East is a topic for discussion time and again. At the same time, the temporal background of this study is marked by the difficult security situation in this part of the world and the associated impact on Europe and not least on Germany with respect to the increasing flow of refugees.

With this study, the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung and its offices in Israel and the Palestinian Territories draw on the success of its examination “[the Holy Land and the Germans](#)” which was presented in January 2015 on the anniversary year of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Israel and Germany and it received wide publicity in the media and in academic discussions in both countries. This new survey provides the opportunity to draw on



insights from the data which were compiled in December 2014 and to detect new developments on the basis of this.

This year the previous survey design will, however - in the context of the US elections - be complemented by an incredibly important new dimension. Alongside the survey in Israel and the Palestinian Territories, a representative survey was also carried out in the United States. The study was laid out in such a way that even particular statements could be made about the attitudes of Jewish Americans and Americans with an Arabic migration history.

Uncharted scientific territory will be discovered once again with this comprehensive study. Indeed, studies have been developed time and again which focused on individual aspects of this theme such as for example regular surveys of American Jews about their attitude towards Israeli politics. The American-Palestinian relationship is also continually subject to examination. Previously, there has never been a related study that provides an opportunity for direct comparison with coordinated questionnaires and that deals intensively with the Israeli and Palestinian view on Germany and on the USA as well as the perspectives of the American population on the Middle East and the role of Germany.



I. METHODOLOGY AND SUMMARY OF THE SIGNIFICANT RESULTS

The methodology of the three survey components

The **Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung in Israel** in cooperation with the institute "KEEVON Strategies, Research and Communications Ltd."¹ and under the direction of Mitchell Barack, conducted random telephone surveys of 1006 Israelis over the age of 18 (including landlines and IP-phones). The survey included 68 questions, including an array of "open questions", therefore questions without the requirement for a fixed answer.

These questions were posed in three languages to the respective population groups: In Hebrew (between the 8th and 21st of February 2016), in Russian (between the 14th and the 21st of February 2016) as well as in Arabic (between the 10th and the 18th of February 2016). The sample is not only representative of the Israeli population, but also in relation to the share of stated language groups of the country's total population. It includes corresponding quotas on sex, age and place of residence. The Russian sample is quoted corresponding to the countries of origin. For the Arabic part of the sample, it is the relevant places of residence in which Arabic Israelis live, which is quoted.

The error rate of the survey lies at 3.61 percent.

The entire range of topics was tested in advance of the representative survey by three focus groups (young, secular people in Tel Aviv, middle-aged and quite religious people in Tel Aviv and Arabic Israelis in Haifa). The focus group, whose results flow into this evaluation, were also used, amongst others, as a "pretest" for questions in the quantitative survey.

The **Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung in Washington D.C.** in cooperation with the research institute "Olive Tree Strategies"² and under the direction of Nathan Klein, conducted random telephone surveys of 1000 Americans over the age of 18 (including landlines and IP-phones) between the 14th and the 21st of February 2016.

The sample also includes a significant proportion of American Jews (301) and Americans with an Arabic mi-

gration history (300), so that reliable and representative statements can also be drawn from this perspective.

The error rate of the survey lies at 3.61 percent.

For many years, the **Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung in the Palestinian Territories** has had a trusted collaboration with the think tank "Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research"³ (PSR) which is located in Ramallah. The heart of the cooperation consists of a survey which is carried out four times a year on the current and the long-term political trends and their perception in Palestinian society.⁴ Even the most recent survey results in autumn 2015 have enjoyed broad public interest.⁵

For this survey, 1270 randomly selected adult persons from the West Bank and East Jerusalem (62 percent) as well as the Gaza Strip (38 percent) were chosen and interviewed. All interviews took place in person between the 10th and the 14th of February 2016 at 127 randomly selected places and therefore telephone interviews were not used as a method of survey. The age structure, the educational background and the city/countryside divide of the Palestinian society were taken into account which also included selected people from refugee camps in the Palestinian Territories. This ensured that the Palestinian residents of the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem were represented. Every interviewed person was asked 64 questions.

The error rate of the error rate of the survey lies at 3 percent.

Beforehand, two gender-specific focus group interviews took place on the 21st of January in Ramallah (with ten male and ten female participants respectively). Thus, the think tank PSR who was carrying out the survey, was given the opportunity to adapt, delete or replace questions.

¹ See <http://www.keevon.com>

² See <http://www.olivetrestategies.com/about.html>.

³ See <http://www.pcpsr.org>.

⁴ Up-to-date survey results can be found at <http://goo.gl/pjMdHr>.

⁵ For example: Al Jazeera-Journalist Mehdi Hasan in an interview with Dr. Saeb Erekat, 23.10.15, <http://goo.gl/zU1F1k>.



Summary of the significant results of the three surveys

The significant results of the **Israeli part** of this survey can be summarised as follows:

- The participation of Germany in the negotiations about a nuclear agreement with Iran has absolutely no impact on the popularity of Germany in Israel. It remains stable at the same level. Fortunately, in the meantime, the young generation has a much more positive view than in December 2014.
- Israel's rejection of the Iran Nuclear Deal does not change anything regarding this: In the eyes of the Israelis, the USA remains the most important Israeli ally by far but this is followed by Germany as the second most important ally. Amongst the European countries, Germany also ranks highest on the popularity scale. Otherwise, the USA and Germany are identical for all values - advocacy for Israel's right to exist, trust and reliability - as an Israeli partner.
- It is noteworthy that in the meantime, it is no longer history but rather joint interests which are the most important justification for the German-Israeli relationship.
- The German refugee policy is perceived in a positive light and it also contributes to the popularity of Germany in Israel. In part, Germany is even being represented as a moral role model. Nonetheless, there is a genuine fear that the high proportion of refugees will change German relations with Israel.
- The German Federal Chancellor remains one of the engines of good relationships with a very high degree of prominence in Israel. She is viewed as an international leading figure. In Israel, she is the only politician who is trusted to contribute to the peace in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.
- German foreign policy scores highest by far in Israel. Their own Israeli foreign policy is evaluated far more critically.
- The USA and Germany, from the Israeli perspective, are those who can assume the role as

an "honest broker". An active role for Germany in the Middle East is expressly desired in Israel.

- In contrast to the high popularity of the USA and Germany, there is an increasing refusal on the part of the Israelis to accept criticism from their most important partners and this relates to the Israeli settlements.
- The votes are followed with interest by Israel and the hopes for an improvement of the Israeli-American relationships is focused entirely on Hillary Clinton who is clearly preferred with the exception of the Russian Jews in Israel who prefer Donald Trump.

The significant results of the **American part** of this survey can be summarised as follows:

- The European Union is considered to be an important partner - after the United Kingdom and Israel. Even Germany is seen as one of the most important partners in the USA: Within the EU, Germany lies in second place (after the United Kingdom).
- The Americans have a very positive opinion of Germany. It is also German foreign policy in particular which is viewed in a positive light - more positive than their own US foreign policy. The relationships with Germany are based on interests and less on common values.
- The Federal Chancellor is well-known and she enjoys high levels of popularity and appreciation in the USA.
- The German Federal government scores very high with respect to the refugee policy. The strong reluctance of the USA to accept refugees is worthy of particular mention here.
- The candidates for the US presidential election are viewed negatively overall. The party which is to be elected is considered to be of minor importance with respect to finding a solution to the Middle East conflict.
- Israel continues to be an important partner for the USA. The solution of the Middle East conflict is not, however, seen as a priority for the foreign policy agenda of the future president. Here



it is the fight against ISIS and international terrorism which occupies centre stage. In second place it is the relationships with China.

The significant results of the **Palestinian part** of this survey can be summarised as follows:

- The positive image of Germany on the part of Palestinians which was already determined in the 2014 survey is confirmed: They desire a more active role for Germany in the Middle East and they view Berlin to be the most important strategic partner within the EU.
- Whereas German efforts in the refugee crisis are viewed very positively, they look critically at German-Israeli relationships.
- Germany and the Germans are, in comparison to the USA, perceived far more positively: in particular they believe that the Germans lend more support to the Israeli-Palestinian peace process and the Palestinian calls for their own sovereign state than the US Americans. Furthermore, Germany enjoys the image of an "honest mediator".
- The pre-election campaign for the US presidential elections is followed with little interest. For the majority it is already clear that whoever the next US president will be, will make no difference to the situation between Israelis and Palestinians.

II. THE VIEW OF GERMANY, THE USA AND THE PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES FROM AN ISRAELI PERSPECTIVE (DR. MICHAEL BORCHARD)

The starting point in Israel

No event had a greater influence on discussions about international relationships with Israel in the year 2015 than the debate about the Iran Nuclear Deal. The conclusion of this Deal has become some kind of "multiple test case" for the relationship nexus in the Middle East.

On the one hand, the ongoing debate about this agreement has doubtless severely tested the Israeli-American relationship and has led to frosty relations at the government level. It was not least the confrontation with the United States on the part of Benjamin Netanyahu

more than a year ago that contributed to this. His decision - against the wishes of the White House - to accept the invitation of the oppositional Republicans on the 3rd of March 2015 to speak - before both houses of the US Congress - about the Iran Nuclear Deal and its associated dangers, and only two weeks before the Knesset elections, led to huge resentment on the part of the American president Barack Obama and in his administration.

The Israeli prime minister was reproached not only for endangering the Israeli-American relationship with his "lack of respect" and the evident break with protocol. The former Israeli ambassador Avi Primor, even accused Netanyahu of having "concocted this visit behind the back of the White House in order to influence the imminent elections in Israel", and the former finance minister, Yair Lapid, feared that the speech would "damage the security interests of the State of Israel".⁶ Netanyahu, on the other hand, emphasised his "moral commitment" to make his voice heard in light of these dangers. Whilst there was speculation in Jerusalem to the right of the political spectrum that the relationship would significantly improve once more when Obama's term of office comes to an end and under a new president, many leftist observers feared permanent damage to the relationships.

On the other hand, it is to be expected, in view of the numerous warnings in Israel, not least from Benjamin Netanyahu, that with the wrong negotiation result, we risk a "second Holocaust", a nuclear Holocaust, emanating from Iran and that the debate about this agreement would also have an impact on the German-Israeli relationship - not least with respect to Germany's traditionally intensive economic links with Iran.⁷

However, the fact that with the P5+1 conversations, the "one" stands for Germany, it is surprising how insignificant a role it played in the Israeli media landscape. Even daily newspapers that are located to the right of the political spectrum, barely criticised Germany. In the focus groups - which were carried out in the course of

⁶ Here and in the following: Die Zeit, Netanyahu confirms Iran to be a danger for the world, 3.3.2015,

<http://www.zeit.de/politik/ausland/2015-03/benjamin-netanyahu-usa-kongress-rede-barack-obama-atomprogramm-iran>.

⁷ Paul Bedard, Netanyahu warns of second Holocaust from Iran, Washington Examiner, 15.4.2015,

<http://www.washingtonexaminer.com/netanyahu-warns-of-second-holocaust-from-iran/article/2563105>.



this study in Israel - German influence on conversations with Iran were indeed not called into question, however, time and again there was the unanimous opinion that German influence had prevented the occurrence of even worse developments.

In actual fact, the Iran negotiations have not led to the slightest decline in the further upward trend of Germany's high level of popularity in Israel. On the contrary, the anniversary year in 2015 with its numerous German-Israeli meetings, the mutual visits of the state presidents and the number of festivities, served only to emphasise the high quality of the relationship.

During the entire course of the year 2015, it was the refugee problem that remained the subject of discussion in the Israeli relationship with Germany. The predominant purport in the media was a gloomy view on its development and this was connected in particular to the unashamed voicing of the anxiety that the acceptance of Muslim refugees would lead to increase in antisemitism and possibly even terrorism in Germany.

Another issue which pertains to the starting point in Israel at the time of this survey is the continuous array of attacks in Israel which not only increasingly compromise peoples sense of security, as many studies demonstrate, but which time and again makes their calls heard for international efforts to settle violence and for de-escalation.

In the course of government consultations in February 2016, it has become evident that the stagnation in the peace process after the accession of the right-wing government majority in late spring 2015, has also compromised the bilateral relationship of both countries and that of the heads of government. The evident misinterpretation by the Israeli media of a statement from the German Federal Chancellor who criticised this stagnation, as a supposed shying away from the two-state solution, is a sign that perspectives in the peace process are rather growing apart.⁸

The image of Germany in Israel

Against this backdrop, the questions about how much the people's point of view differs from the government

⁸ Michael Borchard, Anna Jandrey: *German-Israeli government consultations: The common characteristics predominate, country report*, 23.2.2016, http://www.kas.de/wf/doc/kas_44297-1522-1-30.pdf?160224095443.

narrative or from the portrayal in the media in Israel but also in the USA, is of utmost importance. Is the image of Germany changing in the eyes of the public? Have developments in relation to the USA actually been reflected in the opinions of the Israeli population and, in turn, what impact does that have on the German-Israeli relationship?

The majority of the population in Israel and in the USA is satisfied with the political trajectory of their respective country. 57 percent of respondents in Israel and 61 percent of those in the USA express criticism. In the "darkness" of these negative assessments regarding national and international political developments, it is the German star which shines brighter once again in both countries.

67 percent of respondents in Israel have a positive to very positive opinion of Germany. What is astonishing is the high levels of stability for these values throughout the course of time: In 2007, 67 percent had a high to very high opinion, in 2009 it was 65 percent and in 2014 it was 68 percent.⁹ The Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung provided detailed information about the reasons for these positive attitudes in its most recent survey entitled "the Holy Land and the Germans".¹⁰

The conflict lines along which the popularity of Germany is decided, have remained the same when compared to December 2014: The younger and more religious the Israelis are, the more rural they live and the more likely they are to vote for right-wing parties, then the more sceptical they are towards Germany. The female population also remains considerably more cautious about Germany than their male counterparts.

The acceptance of Germany is increasing amongst young Israelis

Here there is only a noticeable and welcome deviation with regard to age compared with December 2014. In the meantime, around 69 percent of 18-29 year olds have a positive to very positive opinion of Germans. The large appeal of Berlin evidently plays a significant role for young Israelis. Nonetheless, the overall impact of

⁹ All previous surveys about the role of Germany in Europe which were carried out in 2007 and 2009 as the image of Germany in Israel and in the Palestinian Territories in 2014, can be requested free of charge via the website of the office in Israel www.kas.de/israel

¹⁰ Dr. Michael Borchard, Hans Heyn: *The Holy Land and the Germans*, 11.1.2015, <http://www.kas.de/wf/de/33.40104/>.



this improvement should not be underestimated. Given that in the last few years, comparable questionnaires and studies have shown signs that there is rather a growing cultural estrangement of both young generations.

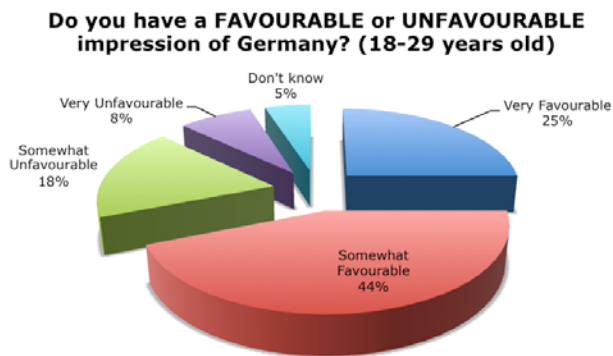


Fig. 1: The image of Germany among young Israelis

At this point it is interesting to compare the American data. Whereas with 75 percent, there are still more people in the USA who have a high opinion of Germany than in Israel, it is the American Jews with 55 percent that are far more sceptical than the Jewish segment of the population in Israel (64 percent). Here you can see that many American Jews were affected by the Holocaust. Both Israeli Arabs as well as the Americans who have an Arabic migration history, exhibit the exact same values (82 percent) which is by far the highest approval of Germany.

As for the role of Israeli Arabs, it stands out from this survey - as well as in the previous questionnaires that the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung carried out and for which the same questionnaires took place in Israel and the Palestinian Territories - that there has been a noteworthy development: The Arab Israelis are far more similar to the Jewish Israelis in their voting behaviour than the Palestinians in the Autonomous Territories. The question as to whether an individual identity of the Arab Israelis is evolving here, will form the subject of additional research work carried by the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung throughout the course of the year.

The mentioned finding confronts the growing virtual estrangement of both sections of the population in Israel and which according to the surveys, know less and less

about one another.¹¹ Time and again there have been - throughout the course of the terror attacks which also emanated inter alia from Arab Israelis - painful and occasionally unfairly led debates about the loyalty and the "unreliability" of Arab Israelis. Equally, legislative proposals such as the so-called "Jewish Nation-State-Law" continually reappear in the discussion and with which there is the fear that the Arab part of the population will be significantly disadvantaged. Against the backdrop of this data, the mistrust which was expressed towards the Arab Israelis, was evidently unjustified.

Great fondness for the American partner

On the question about the most important Israeli international allies, the dominant preference for the American ally is nothing less than overwhelming. Around 78 percent of Israelis view the USA as the first choice and only a negligible amount at 2 percent would choose Germany as its first choice and one percent would choose Russia. Just as the German-Israeli military cooperation determines relationships, it is also, alongside close family links, American military aid and cooperation, which has been consistently enhanced and intensified by President Obama, which still represents an important reason for particularly good relationships between these two countries.

Even disappointment about the Iran Nuclear Deal is not at all likely to diminish the intensity of the relationship between the two countries. In the focus groups, it was not only the high levels of emotionality with respect to this attachment that became apparent, but it was also the explicit fear that America's power and influence are in a state of decline - with potential consequences for Israel.

The mention of the second most important allies is telling: At 21 percent, Germany ranks at the top of the list, followed by the United Kingdom with 11 percent. What is interesting with this is that in Israel, the much reviled European Union - albeit it is on the same level with Russia - obtained 8 percent. Another remarkable aspect is that regional factors such as for example the neighbouring country of Jordan which is of vital importance for the security of Israel, was only mentioned by 3 of the 1006 respondents. It was only with the question about the

¹¹ Survey of the Achva-College. quoted from: *Israel today, survey demonstrates deep divisions in Israeli society*, 21.5.2014, <http://www.israelheute.com/Nachrichten/Artikel/tabid/179/nid/27135/Default.aspx>.



second most important ally that Egypt obtained 3 percent and Jordan got 1 percent.

For the question about which European country Israel desires to have the closest relationships, Germany came in at top place with 33 percent - without a significant distinction between the population groups - followed by the United Kingdom at 25 percent and France at 14 percent. Amongst the American Jews, there is a substantial deviation here which is connected to the respective origin and family roots: Here 63 percent wish that Israel has the closest relationships with the United Kingdom and only 11 percent consider Germany to be at top place.

Common interests play a more important role than history

A remarkable change was detected with the question as to whether it is history or common interests which determine the relationship between Germany and Israel. In the meantime there are, with 39 percent, more Israelis who think that common interests are paramount. Merely 34 percent think that common history constitutes the strongest tie between the two nations.

And, when thinking about Israelis and Germans, do you think the relationship is based more on common...

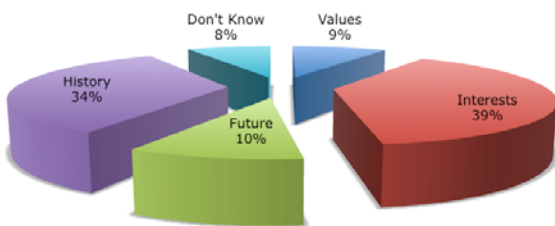


Fig. 2: The foundation of German-Israeli relations

At least in the eyes of the population, common values, however - that are invoked in speeches time and again - play an inferior role at 9 percent. At the end of 2014, the majority of Israelis were still of the opinion that historical motivations were clearly of the highest priority.

For this reason, the annual government consultations such as most recently in February 2016, were far more than just friendly declarations of intent but rather, from the Israeli perspective, they expressed the will of the Israeli people. The fact that relationships between Germany and Israel will never be "normal" relationships,

has been accurately described in many essays and publications. This positive development makes it clear, however, that alongside the pillars of historical responsibility, it is also the pillars of close cooperation that ensure the sustainability of the common relationship, which will play a decisive role, and which must be strengthened further.

If you believe the image that is predominantly portrayed by the Israeli press then there is supposedly a new danger to this common relationship and that is the prevailing concern in Israel that the acceptance of refugees will change Germany for the worse. Comments often depict the scenario that antisemitism and terrorism are increasing at dramatic rates and a consequence of these developments will also have ramifications on the popularity of the German people and its representatives in Israel. The vast majority of the Israeli population does not share this perception.

Positive assessment of the refugee policy

Even though it is assumed in the focus groups that the reason for the German refugee policy, alongside economic interests, is Germany's desire - by means of its humane policy - to unburden itself from historic guilt to some extent, the assessment of Germany is nonetheless very positive for this question. 56 percent of Israelis state that the acceptance of refugees from Syria positively influences its view of Germany. 36 percent have a negative impression of Germany as a result of this policy. Alongside the Israeli Jews, it is also the American Jews who share this view. Here it is even 57 percent that have a better opinion of Germany as a result of the refugee policy.

As a result of Germany accepting 1 million refugees, do you have a more favorable or less favorable impression of Germany?

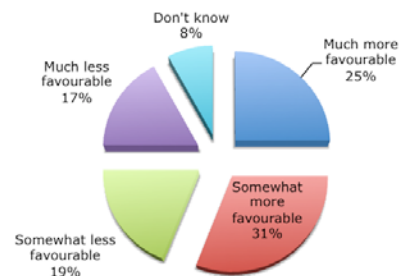


Fig. 3: The impression of Germany in regards to the German refugee policy (Israeli perspective)



This obvious admiration for Germany and the policy of the German Federal Chancellor, led to an interesting discussion in Israel: Israeli journalists often point to the problematic dealings with asylum seekers in their own country (of all western nations, it is Israel that has the lowest recognition rate of asylum seekers). For example Lily Galili who is the former Haaretz journalist and Harvard lecturer wrote: "If Germany does something then what should Israel do under these circumstances - a nation that is predominantly made up of refugees?"¹² In this context, Germany serves as a "moral compass", to which people can align themselves. Germany as a model example for humanity - in Israel such an assessment is nothing short of a miracle against the backdrop of our history.

The Israeli public also freely convey their concern in connection with the refugee crisis. Only 17 percent of Israelis believe that the refugee policy will have a directly positive impact on the German-Israeli relationship. This view is also shared by the Israeli Arabs. Here only around 32 percent predict that the relationships will further improve precisely in light of the refugee policy. This assessment arises less from the scepticism towards Germany but rather from the fact that an extremely critical view of Muslims dominates the agenda in Israel far more than in other countries. This Israeli attitude is clear from a particular "episode" of the US election campaign: Only a few days after the terrorist attack in Californian San Bernadino in early December 2015, the American presidential candidate, Donald Trump, declared himself in favour of a temporary entry ban for Muslims into the USA. Trump received, not least from the American president, fierce criticism for this proposal. Obama accused Trump of fuelling islamophobia with such remarks. In Israel, however, the majority of the population manifested sympathy for the proposal. Around 64 percent of the respondents indicated that they have a more positive impression of Donald Trump as a result of these comments. Meanwhile, what is surprising here is the footnote that even Israeli Arabs with a slightly higher share at 66 percent, endorse these remarks.

Convincing messages of successful cooperation

The critical view on refugee policy is matched by a clearly positive view of the German political effort which in the last few years has left Israelis with the feeling that Germany is steadfast on the side of their country. Again it has become outstandingly apparent that, from an Israeli point of view, the military cooperation between Germany and Israel represents the stable engine in the relationship.

Even people who have a lower level of education have detailed knowledge, not only about German involvement in negotiations to free Israeli soldiers, such as in the case of the soldier Gilad Shalit who was held imprisoned for many years by Hamas, but also in particular about the delivery of submarines that can be nuclear-armed in the case of a nuclear attack on Israel to ensure "second strike capacity". The extent to which this support influences the image of Germany is also reflected in the representative population survey: 84 percent of Israelis indicate that they have a positive image of Germany due to this military cooperation.

This positive assessment is no wonder given that the army is a core element of the Israeli national identity and it represents a reference point of primary importance for all social development. In the focus groups, a connection is always made to the policies of Angela Merkel and the significance of military cooperation - assuming that this cooperation further intensifies under her aegis.

From a German perspective, two other "messages" which can be interpreted as a sign of being held in high esteem in Israel and which have a great deal of potential to improve the view of Germany in Israel, also receive extraordinarily high levels of approval. On the one hand, it is the fact that Israeli citizens can pursue work in Germany with a tourist visa for six months without having to apply for the relevant working visa. 80 percent of Israelis confirm that this regulation positively influences their image of Germany. It may also be the case that the ongoing enthusiasm for Berlin on the part of young Israelis, also plays a role here.

What is even more outstanding is the assessment of a political step which emerged as a result of an extraordinary relationship of trust between the two countries, and whose positive drama will be difficult to surpass. What is meant here is the so-called consular convention between Germany and Israel. On the basis of this treaty, Germa-

¹² Lily Galili: *Thoughtful voices from Israel: Fear will triumph over the love of humanity*, Deutsche Wirtschafts-Nachrichten, 19.9.2015, <http://deutsche-wirtschafts-nachrichten.de/2015/09/19/nachdenkliche-stimme-aus-israel-angst-wird-ueber-menschenliebe-triumphieren/>.



ny grants Israeli citizens the right to protection and help in countries in which Israel does not have a consular post. In the event of a precarious situation while travelling abroad, Israeli citizens can seek help from German missions abroad. This fact received by far the highest praise by 86 percent of respondents. Both in Germany as well as in Israel, the degree of prominence for these facts is increasing still and it is recommended to continue including this "good news" in the communication.

Ongoing high levels of popularity for the German Federal Chancellor

Again, as already specified in our survey from December 2014, the German Federal Chancellor is one of the determining factors of this "good news" for the popularity of Germany in Israel. What is really worth noting is the high degree of prominence of the German Federal Chancellor in Israel. 66 percent of Israelis can correctly answer - without any prompt - the question about the current German head of government. 61 percent have a high to very high opinion of the German Federal Chancellor. Traditionally, the popularity of the Chancellor is especially high amongst the Jewish part of the population at 66 percent but even 53 percent of the Arab Israelis value the Chancellor. In the USA, it is American Jews with 59% who are also convinced by Angela Merkel and who have a high to very high opinion of the Chancellor.

In the focus groups, the reason mentioned for her popularity was not only her attachment to Israel but also her strength as a leading political figure. On many occasions, the term "iron lady" has been received with much admiration in Israel.

German foreign policy receives excellent reviews, which might be based partly on the large enthusiasm for Angela Merkel. In Israel, 55 percent of respondents view German foreign policy as good and only 24 percent have a negative impression. With 48 percent, their own Israeli foreign policy fares far worse in the assessment. There is a predominantly negative impression in the assessment of American foreign policy (45 percent have a good opinion and 46 percent have a bad opinion). As expected, the foreign policy of the Palestinian Authority was viewed critically and it only received 14 percent.

It is remarkable that German foreign policy also scored highest in America. 56 percent hold it in high esteem and only 18 percent have a negative opinion. Even Israeli foreign policy was viewed very positively in the

United States. 56 percent hold it in high esteem and only 33 percent have a negative opinion. That is genuinely remarkable against the backdrop of huge criticism which the American administration has voiced about Israeli politics in the last few years. The foreign policy strategy of the Palestinian Authority is, on the other hand, assessed at 12 percent in the USA which is even more negative than in Israel (14 percent).

For that reason, the previous examination which concerned the assessment of the German political role in the world, is in line with the trend of other studies. A plethora of examinations by the GIZ¹³ and the PEW¹⁴ demonstrate, that Germany is attributed a leading position on a world-wide scale and in particular in the USA. Yet in these studies it becomes apparent time and again, that they want Germany to assume a more active role to manage crises. It was already evident in the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung study on the attitudes towards Germany from December 2014 that both sides - Israelis and Palestinians - want Germany to play a more active role. It has equally become apparent that they would like to assign Germany a more active role within the European Union. More than one third of respondents - and indeed both in Israel as well as in the USA - desire a higher degree of activity in this area. That clearly disregards that Germany will have to focus strongly on tackling the challenges of the refugee crisis in the years to come.

In an additional and as yet unpublished study by the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung Israel on the relationships between Israel and the EU, the Israelis were asked in their opinion which European head of government could contribute to a sustainable peace settlement in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The outstanding leading role was assigned to the German Federal Chancellor, Angela Merkel.¹⁵ 42 percent believe that she can have a helpful effect. The British head of government, David Cameron, lies far behind with 10 percent and the French president, Francois Hollande, with only 6 percent. The bottom line is that it is only Angela Merkel who is trusted to place a genuine emphasis on the peace process.

¹³ GIZ, *Germany in the eyes of the world. The key findings of the GIZ- survey "the external view of Germany - conclusions for international cooperation, May 2012*

¹⁴ *PewResearchCenter, Germany and the United States: Reliable Allies. But disagreement on Russia, Global Leadership and Trade, May 2015.*

¹⁵ *Unpublished survey by the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung: Measuring the attitudes of Israelis towards Europe and the European Union. A Comprehensive Benchmark Survey. Publication date March/April 2016.*



Germany and the USA as the honest brokers in the conflict

As early as at the end of 2014, the majority of Israelis assigned Germany the role of an “honest broker” (54 percent). This is also a term that deserves particular praise in light of Germany’s history. This question was varied in the previous survey: Which country or which international organisation can be identified as most likely assuming the role of the “honest broker”? Even here it is the United States that clearly take first place with 30 percent but then instantly followed by Germany again. The lowest level of influence is awarded to the European Union. The United Nations are viewed just as disparagingly which is in stark contrast to the view of these institutions in the USA as revealed by the American part of this evaluation.

Of the following countries or entities, which do you think can most effectively play the role of “honest broker” between Israelis and Palestinians?

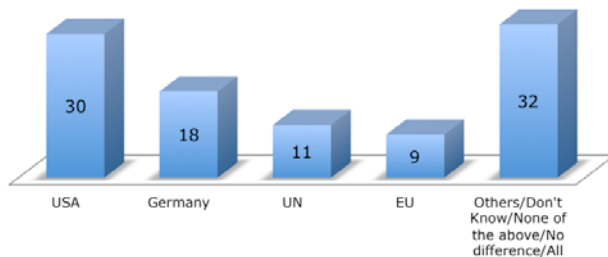


Fig. 4: The role of the “honest broker”

From the Israeli perspective, it has traditionally been the advocacy of Israel’s right to exist which has been a decisive indicator for an attachment with Israel. The fact that since the founding of the country, it has been confronted time and again with significant threat scenarios and with regional actors that without any doubt dispute its right to exist, plays a decisive role in this. With this question, both the American as well as the German government fared outstandingly well. Far more than 80 percent believe that both governments support the Israeli state’s right to exist. Only 16 percent of Israelis believe that the Palestinian Authority accepts Israel’s right to exist.

The question as to whether Israel can trust and unreservedly rely on its allies Germany and the USA is also strongly connected to this. Also here, data from both countries (USA 67 percent, Germany 60 percent), are almost on the same level. Regarding the acceptance of the two-state solution, there are two questions in this

survey that demonstrate a significant gap between the Israeli government and its American and German partners. More than 70% of both governments support the right of Palestinians to have their own State. Merely 27 percent believe that the Israeli government also recognises this right. Angela Merkel’s statement that Germany has a particular duty to support Israel but who equally insists that there should be a Palestinian state, only received a narrow majority with 56 percent. This correlates with findings pointed out by other examinations carried out every few months for many years by the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung and the Truman-Institute at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem and namely that the support for the two-state solution has been noticeably declining for years.¹⁶

Role of the settlement in the international relationship nexus

The question concerning the settlements in the West Bank is, in this context and from a European point of view, a key question in the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians. Angela Merkel has taken many opportunities to clearly emphasise the great extent to which the settlements symbolise an obstacle toward peace in the Holy Land. In the German public, the impression prevails that this settlement policy is supported by a vast majority of Israelis. In fact the settlement issue has, however, the potential to split Israeli society. With 48 percent it is indeed the case that a slight majority of Israelis advocate the settlement. However, 46 percent explicitly reject the extension and construction of the West Bank. Whereas a clear majority with 53 percent of Israeli Jews have a positive view of the settlements.

The party-political alignment on this question about the settlements in Israel is instructive. Whilst party elites and mandate holders even to the left of the political spectrum only rarely noticeably distance themselves from the settlement policy, their followers are very clearly divided here. Whereas 70 percent of the Likud followers advocate the settlements and merely 21 percent reject them, 84 percent of the Zionist Union followers speak out against the settlements. The leading advocate is HaBayit HaYehudi with around 92 percent. This party can quite rightly be dubbed as “the” settlement party. Remarkably, the case of Israel Beitenu is not so clear-cut. Here after all there is almost 37 percent who

¹⁶ The joint Israeli-Palestinian surveys covering the past five years can be accessed on the KAS-Israel website at: <http://www.kas.de/israel/de/pages/11244/>.



critically view the settlement policy and “only” 52 percent as positive. Even the opposition party Yesh Atid falls a bit “through the cracks” here: Almost 39 percent advocate the building of settlements.

This “convergence” of both opposition parties in the area of foreign policy, is increasingly taking place on a very practical level. In a joint press conference at the end of February 2016, Yair Lapid, the party leader of Yesh Atid and the leader of Israel Beitenu Avigdor Liberman, used harsh words to criticise the decline of Israeli foreign policy and the “destruction” of its allies which at least in the case of the former foreign minister Avigdor Liberman, who was hardly well-known during his term of office for committed “alliance policies”, cannot be viewed without a certain irony.¹⁷

Interestingly, the governing party “Kulanu”, on the other hand, is mobilising a majority of opponents to the settlement.

In this case, the comparison with the American figures is more than remarkable. Amongst Americans, the number of supporters for the Israeli settlement policy is virtually on the same level as Israel at 44 percent, however, the number of opponents to this policy at 32 percent is far less. Thereby it is particularly interesting that the American Arabs do not, for the most part, critically oppose the settlement. Whereas here 41 percent advocate the settlement it is merely 45 percent who oppose it. In order to coherently explain these findings, more extensive research is required.

In this question, a massive polarisation can be established along party-political lines in America. 51 percent of Democrats are against the settlements and for the Republicans - who have traditionally felt strongly attached to Israel - only 20 percent react negatively to the settlements.

Rejection of intervention and criticism

For Israel, the “Arab Spring” not only clearly failed years ago and whose “legacy” - failed states, terrorist groups with state-like features etc. - was deemed a security risk for Israel. To a greater degree it was the disappointment

about international politics which led to the attitude that Israel is on its own and that it must not expect to receive external help. This tangible and consequently fatal tendency for self-isolation accompanies a clear pattern of behaviour which is also evident in this survey: They refuse to tolerate ever more evident criticism about themes which are primarily viewed as domestic questions in Israel. Such a domestic question is also the construction of settlements in the Palestinian territories.

In Israel, 57 percent deny their by far most important ally, the USA, the right to criticise the Israeli settlement policy. The fact that the Americans actually feel different about this is hardly surprising although the Republicans evidently take the side of Israel here as with other matters. A majority of Republicans (54 percent) even deny their own country the right to intervene. What is interesting in this context is that American Jews think differently about this: 52 percent attribute the USA the right to criticise the settlement policy, only 38 percent think that American criticism is unjustified.

The same effect can be determined with the German allies. The statement from Angela Merkel that the settlement is viewed as counterproductive in view of the two-state solution is viewed critically by the majority of Israeli respondents (51 percent), only 39 percent positively assess this statement. The strong popularity of the German Chancellor obviously had no tangible impact on opinions here.

These “allergic” reactions against “external intervention” do not, however, signify that the restraint which it wants to impose on others should also be displayed in Israel itself: A majority of Israelis (52 percent) deem it to be justified that the Israeli Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, profoundly intervened in American politics with his appearance before Congress. Merely 37 percent reject his intervention as illegitimate.

Hopes for a new US President

In connection with the American presidential campaigns, Israel will harbour the hope that the American-Israeli relationships considerably improve under a president after the tangible distance between Benjamin Netanyahu and Barack Obama.

The Israeli population is, according to this survey, of the opinion that it is the US President and the Israeli prime minister who crucially determine the “tone and substance” of relationships. This is an opinion which is

¹⁷ Herb Keiron: Lapid, Liberman gang up to attack PM's foreign policy, *The Jerusalem Post*, 29.2.2016, <http://www.jpost.com/Israel-News/Politics-And-Diplomacy/Netanyahu-Israel-ranked-the-eighth-strongest-country-in-the-world-446439>.



shared in the USA and that is why it is remarkable because the assumption is voiced time and again that it is organisations such as AIPAC, Israel's "lobby" in the USA, NGOs or and others which determine relations.

Here, the Israelis acknowledge a clear preference for the former foreign minister, Hillary Clinton, who is traditionally deemed as particularly pro-Israeli and this is confirmed by many of her comments in the past. If the Israelis could vote in the American presidential election then according to the survey, the overwhelming majority would decide in favour of Hillary Clinton, followed by Donald Trump.

In November of 2016 there will be elections for President of the United States, of any of the candidates that are currently running, whether Democratic or Republican, do you have a preference of who you would like to be elected President?

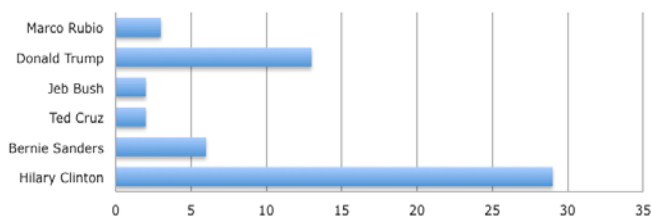


Fig. 5: Israeli preferences for US presidential candidates

Interestingly, the Jewish candidate Bernie Sanders comes far behind. These differences in name surveys are also always based on the different name recognition. That is clear if you look at the Jewish American survey results: Here it is Hillary Clinton in top place, Bernie Sanders is already at second place due to being well-known in the USA and then Donald Trump at third place.

However, it is remarkable that there is a deviation of a specific population group in Israel. The Israelis of Russian origin have a significant preference for Donald Trump. The preference of voters with a Russian origin for candidates that emanate a rather "authoritarian" aura - which has also been measured in other surveys - could be an explanation for this significant preference.

The fact that a narrow majority in Israel believe that a democratic president would be better for the peace process between the Israelis and Palestinians is also a surprising fact (37 percent Democrats, 30 percent Republicans), as well as for the American-Israeli relationships (35 percent Democrats, 33 percent Republicans).

The scientific view of the Middle East and the role of America in this part of the world is also continually drawn into the question about whether the involvement of the United States in this region will be less pronounced over the long-term and whether they will focus more on the challenges in the Pacific region. Against this backdrop, it is therefore far from insignificant which themes are given top priority from the perspective of the respondent in the respective countries.

Both in Israel as well as in the USA, it is ISIS by far which is of utmost importance (38 percent in Israel and 42 percent in the USA). From an Israeli perspective, it is hardly surprising that the nuclear threat by Iran (despite the Iran Nuclear Deal), comes second place at 15 percent and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as well as the dispute with Russia about the Russian approach in the Ukraine and in Syria at 8 percent, ranks at third place. Lagging well behind is the nuclear threat by North Korea and the challenges associated with China.

The theory about a growing disinterest on the part of America in the conflict between Palestinians and Israelis but possibly also the expression of frustration with respect to the stagnation of the peace process, is supported by the fact that Americans view this conflict as the challenge with by far the least priority of all pressing issues for the new US administration.

III. THE VIEW OF GERMANY, ISRAEL AND THE PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES FROM AN AMERICAN PERSPECTIVE (DR. LARS HÄNSEL)

The starting point in the USA

Germany enjoys high esteem in the United States. The close historical interwovenness definitely contributes to this positive image. Americans with a German background are the largest ethnic group in the USA - even if it is not particularly visible in society. Today it is, above all, the increasingly close economic ties which enable America to learn more about Germany. Germany is also perceived as a state which was the first to have successfully overcome - and supported by a good social system - the financial crisis and which has a strong, competitive economy.

The USA also supported the reunification of Germany in 1990 in the hope that a united Germany would as well play a positive role in the western community of values. At the same time, there was the hope that the uniting of



Europe would also lead on from this and for the most part it would be pacified and an “accomplished” task for the USA. The hope that Germany would play a positive role has proven to be successful from a US point of view. In contrast, in the last few years, the USA has had to acknowledge that Europe is not “accomplished”. Five years ago it was the sovereign debt crisis and later the possible Greek exit from the euro area which the USA saw as a threat to their own economy and international financial stability, and now we are faced with fears about the refugee crisis as a threatening centrifugal force endangering the unity of Europe. Here, Germany plays - as in many other questions such as the relationship with Russia - a key role in solving the problems.

The challenges for Europe must therefore be closely observed because Europe - and Germany as the decisive power in Europe - are seen as important partners on the world stage, a stage which is becoming ever more complex. This not only applies to crises such as the situation in the Middle East by international (ISIS-) terrorism, but it also applies to new challengers to US-American interests - above all China. It is acknowledged in the USA that they are less and less able to resolve global challenges by themselves. Under the Obama administration, foreign policy became more passive on the whole. This restraint, in particular in the face of military involvement, was strongly influenced by the Bush administration years to a certain extent. On the other hand, the financial crisis and the high government debts in the USA led to a limitation of resources for security and foreign policy involvement.

In the meantime, it is deemed that the USA has indeed overcome the financial crisis. The shale gas boom and now low oil prices have actually contributed to a positive development in the economy. The unemployment rate has fallen to approx. 5 percent (from almost 10 percent in 2009). However, the positive development has not been felt by everyone. In particular, the wages for the middle-class are stagnating.

Segments of society, above all the mentioned middle-class, feel neglected by politics. The expectations on President Obama but also on the Republicans who have now led both houses of Congress since the year 2014, have been deeply disappointed. This deep disappointment about dysfunctional “Washington” and the political classes is now, above all, the reason for the success of candidates Bernie Sanders and Donald Trump. The approval of political institutions and of the political elite is very low.

In addition, Americans perceive that politicians do not honestly address and tackle certain themes. This includes amongst others the fear about the threat of terrorism. This fear amongst the population has not been as high as since the attacks of September the 11th 2001.

Alongside Europe, it is Israel, as the only democracy in the Middle East, which remains one of the strongest allies for the USA. Israel clearly belongs to the western community of values, good relations are in the national interests of the USA. Under Obama, the USA also continually increased its military aid to Israel. With the financing of the “Iron Dome”, the USA made a decisive contribution to the protection against an acute risk of rockets from the Gaza Strip.

However, the relationship between President Obama and the Prime Minister Netanjahu was strained from the very start. Early in his term of office, Obama especially criticised the Israeli settlement policy during his most recent unsuccessful attempt in the Middle East and with this he exercised pressure on Israel in particular. Even the subsequent peace efforts by foreign minister Kerry were fruitless.

Finally, it was, however, President Obama’s extensive approach to the agreement with Iran about the nuclear issue that triggered a great deal of concern in Israel. Above all, this led to tense relations between the Prime Minister Netanjahu and President Obama. Last year, Netanjahu used an appearance in Congress - which was not agreed to by the White House - to exercise pressure on Obama.

The Middle East conflict has to an extent, in view of the perceived threat of ISIS, taken in back seat in the public awareness even though both Jewish as well as Arabic-born Americans closely follow the situation and still hope for a solution.

Europe and Germany as an important partner in the USA

If people ask Americans who their most important allies are in the USA, then they are confronted with the following answer: 26 percent see the United Kingdom as the most important ally. Israel at almost 19 percent lies in second place followed by the European Union in third place. A positive aspect that deserves to be mentioned in particular is the strong role that the USA attaches to the EU as an important partner of the USA. This was not



always the case. However, it is becoming increasingly clear what role the EU also plays for the USA - in particular with respect to trade policy. The European Union is a fundamentally positive factor. This positive view can be seen in all segments of society that were questioned and it is above-average especially amongst young people voting for the Democrats (age group 18-44: around 28 percent view the EU as the most important ally) and this is generally below-average for the Republicans. This also demonstrates that Europe is attractive for many young Americans as a social model with strong social legislation. Until recently, it would have still been inconceivable for a candidate such as Bernie Sanders to be depicted as a “democratic socialist” and to be successful with this and especially among young voters. Here, it seems, there is a social transformation underway.

The high percentage of the United Kingdom is largely due to historical reasons in particular. The “special relationship” still plays an important role. They are also close on a linguistic level - media in the United Kingdom is also consumed in the USA. Although the survey did not touch upon the political elite and the answers are likely to be less about strategic interests and more about cultural closeness, particular attention will still be paid to the development of elite relationships. The fact that a US President is involved in a highly profiled “Brexit” and who articulates the interest to remain in the EU can be considered an astounding event - it is, however, likely to be related to the special American interest in the United Kingdom.

The recent tensions have, however, not changed the fact that Israel is also still one of the most important allies of the USA. Furthermore, it is astounding that amongst the Arab-born Americans, it is Israel (at 25 percent) which is seen as a more important partner than the United Kingdom (19 percent) and Europe (11 percent).

When questioned about what state within Europe with which the USA should have the closest relationship, then the majority here is in favour of the United Kingdom (approx. 42 percent), Germany lies in third place with around 30 percent. Meanwhile, it is the Democratic voters again, at 35 percent, who are above-average (Democrats 18-44 at 44 percent), whereas the Republican voters lie just under average with 25 percent. Germany also has strong advocates amongst Arabic Americans (39 percent), the well-trained (academics 43 percent) and well-paid (over 100,000 dollars: around 45 percent).

Germany and the Federal Chancellor are particularly popular

When asked directly about Germany, around 75 percent have a good opinion of Germany and only around 16 percent have a negative view. Germany is held in particularly high esteem among academics which are above-average at 82 percent. 55 percent of the Jewish Americans see Germany as positive and 33 percent, on the other hand, as negative. History still plays an important role here: many American Jews still have an ambivalent relationship with Germany and there are many that to date do not want to travel to Germany. Arabic Americans see Germany, on the other hand, as especially positive at 82 percent.

The Federal Chancellor is well-known and she enjoys high levels of popularity amongst academics: with a ratio of approx. 4:1 positive to negative, she is well regarded. Approx. 44 percent see her in a positive light, only 11 percent negatively. This is then all the more astounding when you think about the very negative reputation of political leaders in the USA.

Do you have a FAVORABLE or UNFAVORABLE impression of German Chancellor, Angela Merkel?

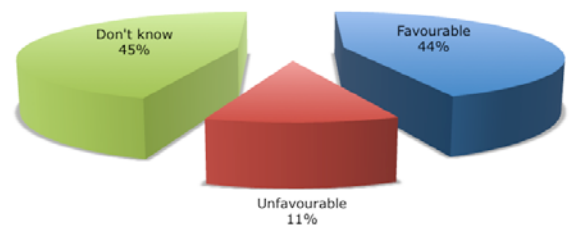


Fig. 6: The American impression of Angela Merkel

Amongst Jewish Americans, it is Angela Merkel with 59 percent who is very popular and especially amongst older Jews (55+: 63 percent). This is particularly interesting in light of the ambivalent attitude of American Jews in Germany and it says something about the high importance of Angela Merkel for the reputation of the Federal Republic. Amongst Arabic Americans, the approval for Merkel increases to 72 percent.

43 percent of the respondents can name the German Federal Chancellor correctly - even that is a large number. Amongst 55-64 year olds 56 percent are correct. Only 3 percent of those who name a name make an error here. For those who can accurately name the Federal



Chancellor, the reputation rises to 71 percent. Therefore it is those who know of the Federal Chancellor which are, according to the survey, also sympathetic towards her.

Relationships guided by interests, positive German foreign policy

Americans predominantly view relationships with Germany as based on interests, less on values. Around 44 percent view interests as paramount, 21 percent history, 19 percent values. Amongst the young Americans this is clearer still: 53 percent of 18-29 year olds see interests as being the basis for relationships. This corresponds with a general trend in the USA whereby international relationships are strongly guided by interests and less on emotions. International partners are rather described with metaphors such as “allies” than with emotional metaphors like “friends”. Values do, though, have a part to play when it concerns who can best safeguard the interests.

Regarding German foreign policy, it performs, as already indicated, better in the American opinion in comparison with their own US foreign policy. A majority at 56 percent view German foreign policy as good and only 18 percent see it negatively. Their own US-American foreign policy is, on the other hand, evaluated far more critically. 52 percent see it as positive and 43 percent see it negatively which is twice as much as for German foreign policy. The Israeli foreign policy is also seen more critically by Americans (albeit not as critically as their own foreign policy), with 49 percent approval and 33 percent rejection. The Palestinian foreign policy, however, is viewed in the most negative light with 12 percent approval and 64 percent rejection.

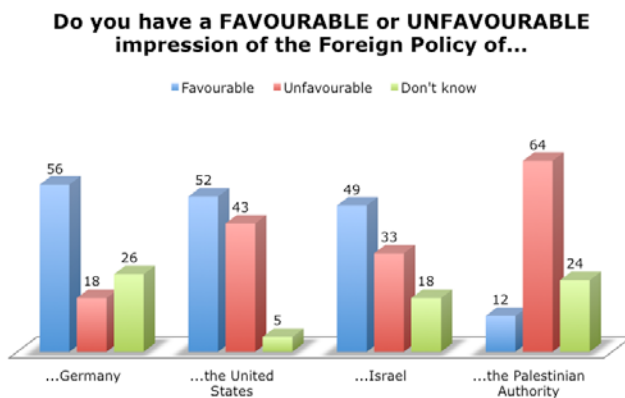


Fig. 7: The foreign policy of Germany, the United States, Israel and the Palestinian Authority

The Americans expect a more active foreign policy from Germany. This was articulated time and again under the Obama administration. The high levels of appreciation that were expressed to Germany and the Federal Chancellor with the awarding of the “Medal of Honor” to Angela Merkel in 2011, was also connected with the expectation that Germany would make a strong commitment to both foreign and security policy. This is now also reflected in the figures: 66 percent want Germany to be more active with foreign policy and only 13 percent reject this. Amongst male Democratic voters, the expectation is especially high at around 83 percent. This expectation seeks once more to prove the positive assessment of German foreign policy.

High marks for German refugee policy

The current refugee crisis is not only seen in the USA as a threatening centrifugal force for Europe. In order to solve the crisis, they look particularly to the goodwill of Germany and of the Federal Chancellor. A majority support the policy of the Federal government: around 64 percent support the decision to accept the large number of refugees in Germany, only 29 percent are against it. Jewish Americans are at an average level whereas Arabic Americans support for the decision far exceeds the average at 88 percent.

The generally high approval is also interesting because the USA has previously only accepted a very small number of refugees from Syria (approx. 1500) and in the next two years, it only wants to accept 10,000 refugees from Syria. In the population, there is a far-reaching scepticism towards immigrants and especially those from Syria. 31 American governors declared in December 2015 that Syrian refugees are not welcome in their federal states. That is also a theme in the election campaign. Donald Trump proposed a temporary entry ban for Muslims. This scores him points with the Republicans above all.

Amongst Republicans, the support for the German federal government policy to accept refugees is also lower than its Democrat counterparts at 48.4 percent and for the Democrats it is 85.2 percent. The policy of the federal government also receives high levels of support amongst young Americans (18-29 years old) at 81.4 percent.

The decision to accept refugees has led to an improved reputation of Germany and of the Federal Chancellor in particular. An opinion article in the Washington Post in



September 2015 contrasted the policy of the Federal Chancellor with the attitude of Donald Trump towards immigrations and it summarised that it is the Federal Chancellor herself who represents American values here. An improved reputation as a result of accepting refugees is also demonstrated in this survey: With around 61 percent of respondents, the reputation of Germany is enhanced due to this decision and it decreases only for 25 percent of respondents. Whereas the Jewish Americans lie nearer to the average (around 57 percent vs. 19 percent), the reputation increases at around 86 percent for Arabic Americans and it decreases for only 7 percent of them.

On the other hand, Donald Trump's proposal for a temporary entry ban for Muslims into the USA has led to 59 percent of respondents having a worse opinion of Trump - for 29 percent his reputation increases with this proposal. There is a similar story amongst Jewish Americans: 59 percent vs. 31 percent, for 52 percent of Arabs Trump's reputation worsens but, nevertheless, it increases for 42 percent. That is an astounding result but it could indeed be linked to the fact that Americans who have lived longer in the country and established Arab-born Americans, have a less solidary attitude towards immigration: Trump increases in reputation for 59 percent of Arabs who were born in the USA and only 7 percent for those not born in the USA. Furthermore, since the attacks of 11th of September 2001, Muslims have worried that they are held collectively responsible. A terrorist threat which has increased due to Muslim immigrations - even if it is only subjectively perceived that way - is not in the interests of Muslims and Arabic Americans in the USA.

USA presidential election: the new president must combat ISIS above all

For the majority of Americans, relationships with Israel are determined at the highest executive level. Therefore it is important who is elected. The survey results reflect the current situation here and it is similarly described in other surveys: Hillary Clinton is the favourite among Democrats with 22 percent. Bernie Sanders is at 15 percent - the Democrats have a total of 37 percent. Both Jewish as well as Arabic Americans support Hillary Clinton in particular (Jews: 43 percent Arab: 53 percent) as well as Bernie Sanders (Jews: 19 percent Arab: 25 percent).

Donald Trump enjoys the highest level of approval among Republicans at 10 percent (even among "Inde-

pendents" he gets 10 percent and he gets votes from Democratic voters), Ted Cruz is at 9 percent, Marco Rubio at 7 percent, Ben Carson at 5 percent and John Kasich at 3 percent. The number of people who are undecided is 23 percent. In the end, the successful president will be who can mobilise their own party and who can win a decisive number of those who are undecided and "Independents".

However, candidates score badly overall:

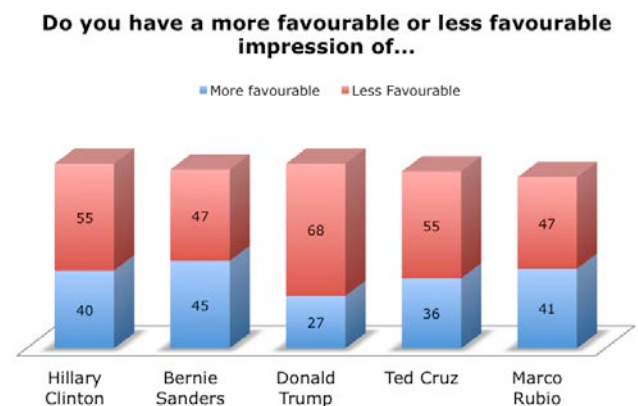


Fig. 8: The impression of US presidential candidates

The full picture demonstrates that all candidates are viewed negatively: more respondents consider them to be negative than positive. This is likely to be the reflection of a general mood: politicians have a very low reputation. Not one candidate enjoys the support from a majority.

Regarding the foreign policy tasks that await the next US president, a majority at 42 percent indicate that the fight against ISIS and global terrorism is of utmost importance. That is hardly surprising in view of the current perception of the threat. Above all it is young Americans (18-29 years old) who are concerned, 53 percent see ISIS and terrorism as the most important foreign policy task. The attacks in San Bernardino and Baltimore only recently brought the danger to the awareness of the public again. Also the videos and images published in the media about the inhuman brutality of ISIS are likely to have made a major impact. The attacks in Paris were also deemed by many Americans as an attack "on the West" and they triggered a high level of sympathy for France.

At 14 percent the second most important task that was mentioned for the next president is China (security and trade questions). Many Americans view a growing China and the China which is taking a more aggressive ap-



proach to security questions, as a challenge but also an opportunity in the future. President Obama and the supporters of the Trans-Pacific Partnership which has been presented to Congress for ratification, point to the aggressive trade policy in China as a central argument for the necessity of TPP. China and trade issues are also an important theme in the election campaign.

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict ranks lowest on the list of tasks which also includes the Iranian nuclear threat, North Korea, Russia's role in the Ukraine and in Syria. Even Russia is hardly perceived as a threat by the public. They cooperate in Syria but Russian interest in the conflict in the Ukraine is on the wane. For the majority, it does not at all look like a new "Cold War".

US-Israel Relationships are important but Middle East conflict not a priority

Indeed the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is not at the top of the list of priorities. The relationships with Israel are, however, still important for America (see above).

Most recently in the election campaign, Israel and the Middle East conflict played a role in a Republican television debate. Meanwhile, Donald Trump broke a taboo again: As a Republican, he did not clearly align himself with the Israeli side. In contrast, he wants to negotiate in the conflict from a neutral standpoint.

The other candidates, however, immediately made it clear that they are unconditionally on the side of Israel. On the question about whether a Democrat or a Republican would be in a better position to resolve the conflict is of little significance according to American voters: Around 39 percent believe that a Democrat would be better in the presidential office and 40% believe a Republican would be better. Almost 47 percent of Jewish Americans, however, believe that a Democrat would best solve the conflict and only 20 percent believe a Republican is better. Overall this certainly reflects that Jewish Americans for the most part traditionally vote for Democrats. At 69 percent (vs. 7 percent) even the Arabic Americans prefer a Democrat for the resolution of the conflict.

If you ask, though, who is the better president with respect to relationships with Israel then the answer is a narrow majority in favour of: a Republican (43 percent vs. 38 percent). However, 48 percent of Jewish Americans see a Democrat as a better president, when it comes to relationships with Israel - only 22 percent be-

lieve that a Republican is better. The American Arabs have a similar view of this: 76 percent Democrat vs. 10 percent Republican.

At 59 percent, the majority of Americans believe that Germany recognises Israel's right to exist. 81 percent believe this is the case for the US government, only 21 percent think this applies to the Palestinian Authority.

A majority perceive the United Nations to be an "honest broker" between Israel and the Palestinians and as high as 57 percent of young Americans (18-29 years old) believe that the United Nations is the most effective mediator here. When asked about their second choice, it is the European Union that gets the highest approval at 33 percent. Even here it is clear that the European Union is perceived as a positive force.

The relationships between the USA and Israel are determined by political leaders: the majority of respondents (38 percent) believe that it is President Obama and Prime Minister Netanyahu who are the key players in influencing and shaping events. Other institutions are less important such as the US Congress, the Jewish community, the media, interest groups, NGO's and individual politicians.

Settlement policy as a central theme

The settlement policy plays a key role in the perception of the Middle East conflict. It is the main criticism on the part of the US government.

Generally, a majority of Americans are of the opinion that the US government should be allowed to criticise the Israeli government policy: 54 percent are in favour and 38 percent against. The Jewish share the same opinion: around 52 percent are in favour and 38 percent against.

The settlements were a key issue for Obama in his early efforts to restart negotiations. Obama requested Israel to put in place an absolute settlement stop which did not previously constitute US policy. Americans view of the settlement policy is a mixed one: 43 percent of the respondents indicated that they support the Israeli settlement policy, almost 32 percent reject it. What is astonishing is that 41 percent of Arabic Americans support the settlement policy, around 45 percent reject it. The approval for it is even higher at 53 percent amongst Arabs born in the USA, 39 percent reject it. This possibly suggests that the solidarity with Palestinians decreases



amongst those Arabs who are already established in the USA. Thus it correlates that 60 percent of Arabs who were not born in the USA reject the settlement policy and only 11 percent support it. Arabs in the USA are also not homogenous in this question. However, in order to coherently explain these surprising and not immediately comprehensible findings, more extensive research work is required.

The Jewish Americans also have differing opinions on this: 59 percent support the settlement policy, around 30 percent reject it whereas GOP voters (Republicans) among Jews support the settlement policy at 70% and only 48 percent of Jewish Democrats.

Finally it can be established that: Germany and Europe enjoy a very good reputation in the USA and they are seen as close allies. For Americans, the relationships are based above all on interests. The Federal Chancellor is especially popular in the USA which lies in stark contrast to their own politicians in the USA. The refugee policy of the federal government is very positively assessed.

US relationships with Israel continue to be of utmost importance. However, on the question about what the main priority for the new president, the Middle East conflict was only of marginal importance. In order to solve the conflict, there is little distinction made between whether a Democrat or a Republican holds the presidential office. What is also interesting is that the United Nations and the European Union are seen as suitable "honest brokers" when solving the Middle East crisis.

IV. THE VIEW OF GERMANY, ISRAEL AND THE USA FROM A PALESTINIAN PERSPECTIVE (MARC FRINGS)

Starting point: German-Palestinian Relationships

The relationships between Ramallah and Berlin are exceptionally close. This year the steering committee which was started in 2009, will come together again in the German capital to intensify cooperation and/or agree on selected policy areas. This special instrument of German foreign policy is comparable only to the government consultations which Berlin maintains with a few selected industrialised countries and emerging economies (for example France, India and Israel).

After the war between Israel and the radical Hamas in the Gaza Strip (summer 2014), the German federal government increased their resources for development pro-

jects with the result that around 215 million euros were provided by Germany in order to provide assistance for both long-term political and technical as well a humanitarian aid (alleviation of the humanitarian catastrophe in the Gaza Strip where currently 1.9 inhabitants are dependent on food aid).¹⁸

The German role is followed closely by the Palestinians: The fact that the federal government abstained from voting in the United Nations in October 2012 when the status of Palestine was upgraded to "non-member observer state status", was very favourably received in Ramallah. Or in the words of a PLO spokesperson in a conversation with the author: "German abstention was more important for us than 10 yes votes from friendly nations".

After the failed mediation initiative by the foreign minister John Kerry (spring 2014), the USA announced that no new peace plan can be expected from Washington until the presidential elections in November 2016. Ramallah followed the most recent arguments of the US experts on the situation in the Middle East: while in December 2015, minister Kerry warned of a "binational state" if the Palestinian Authority (PA) should fail and be dissolved¹⁹, the statements from the US ambassador in Israel in January 2016 caused a stir: when asked about the attacks of Jewish extremists on the Palestinian inhabitants in the West Bank, he stated: "...At times it seems Israel has two standards of adherence to rule of in the West Bank – one for Israelis and one for Palestinians."²⁰

For this reason, according to the Palestinian version, the USA is clearly aligning themselves with the positions taken by the EU. In November 2015, Brussels published a Directive with regard to the decision that was already taken in 2012 on the correct labelling obligation for products from Jewish settlements in the occupied territories (Golan, West Bank, East Jerusalem) and it thereby reiterated that products from the settlements are not "Made in Israel" and thus they require a correct labelling.

¹⁸ Most recent figures available on German aid date back to 2014.

¹⁹ Al-Jazeera, Netanyahu rejects Kerry's warning of Israel becoming binational state, 06.12.2015, <http://goo.gl/P3ofqE>.

²⁰ Barak Ravid, U.S. Ambassador: Israel Has Legal Double Standard in West Bank, Haaretz, 18.01.16, <http://goo.gl/8e8K1p>.



The past months have been and continue to be marked by a recent wave of violence in Israel and the Palestinian Territories. At the same time, the approval rates for the Palestinian President, Mahmud Abbas, fell in his eleventh year of government to an all-time low; a majority of Palestinians at 90 percent also doubt that the Israeli government still feels bound by the Oslo Accords.

Geographical and social differences

The following statements should be understood as an update of the survey results from the year 2014. A general picture is portrayed. Geographical and gender-specific differences can be summarised as follows:

- In the West Bank, the image of Germany is more positive than in the Gaza-Strip;
- However, people in the Gaza-Strip place more trust in Germany than those in the West Bank when it comes to mediating between Israel and the Palestinians;
- More men than women are convinced that the German Middle East policy favours Israel;
- Those who regularly consult the internet and social media and who have a strong educational background, tend to view Germany, its foreign policy and the Federal Chancellor, Angela Merkel, in a more positive light. However, this also increases the potential for critical perspectives: those with a stronger educational background are more sceptical about whether Germany can mediate between Israelis and Palestinians.
- Age is by far the most negligent variable. There are merely differences concerning the relevance of history: The younger generations are less convinced than the older generations that Germany always supports Israel as a result of the Holocaust.

The Palestinians view on Germany.

Germany is also popular amongst Palestinians and in the year 2016 (Fig. 9): 69 percent have a very good or good impression of Germany and 70 percent assess Germans positively. They value Germany as a modern country (52 percent), the “best products in the world” come from here (approval 65 percent). For this reason, the image of Germans amongst Palestinians has significantly im-

proved once more: In the survey carried out in 2014, 49 percent had a positive image of Germany.

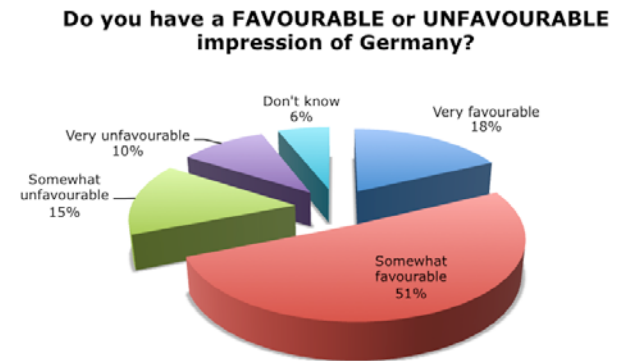


Fig. 9: The Palestinians view on Germany

This enhanced reputation is accompanied by a greater expectation: although the attitude towards German foreign policy is rather cautious (45 percent have a positive and 42 percent have a negative impression), 60 percent (2014: 52 percent) desire a more active role for Germany in international relations.

59 percent (2014: 46 percent) were convinced that the German government advocates peace between Israel and the Palestinians. This is a significant result if you consider that there is currently no Middle East peace process. The idea which prevails among Palestinians is that neither the USA (33 percent) nor Israel advocate freedom between the two peoples. The positive values for the federal government reflect the societal view: 69 percent agree with the statement that Germans support peace between Palestinians and Israelis, whereas only 47 percent trust the same from the US Americans and 30 percent from the Israelis.

As a result they see Germany as an “honest broker” (approval 49 percent; Fig. 10) between Israelis and Palestinians - a task which ideally the EU (46 percent) could still assume according to Palestinians, but by no means the USA (approval lies merely at 21 percent). This is an astounding improvement since the last survey when only 28 percent placed their trust in Germany to mediate between the conflict parties.

Despite the consistently positive image of Germany, a majority of the Palestinians at 31 percent want the European Union to be the mediator between the Israeli and Palestinian conflict actors; Germany (26 percent) and the United Nations (24 percent) just behind the EU; the United States are far behind here (eight percent).

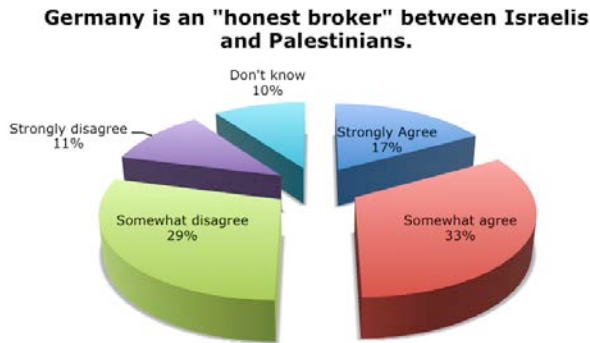


Fig. 10: Germany as "honest broker"

German-Palestinian Relationships: Bilateral plus one

Whereas Germany is admired for its innovation (see above), the respondents are critical when it comes to the role of Berlin in the Middle East conflict. Thus, the German-Palestinian relationships should not only be viewed from a purely bilateral perspective: Ramallah and Berlin always meet one another in line with the relationships between Berlin with Tel Aviv (cf. Fig. 11). Thus 19 percent perceive relationships between Germany and Palestinian Authority as friendly but 25 percent indicate that the bilateral relationship is unstable.

How would you describe the German-Israel relationship, as STRONG or WEAK?

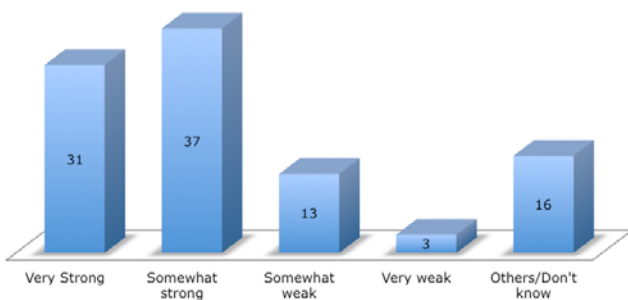


Fig. 11: The relationships between Germany and Israel

A majority at 34 percent is convinced that the German policy towards Israel - over 70 years since the end of the Second World War - is motivated by feelings of guilt. Only 18 percent believe that a political interest on the part of Berlin for peace between the Israelis and the Palestinians arises from of the German responsibility for the Holocaust. A majority (48 percent) deduce that German Middle East policy gives preference to Israel and approximately just as many (47 percent) specify that German's have provided support to Israel even in the face

of its long-standing occupation of the Palestinian Territories since 1967.

The German arms transfers to Israel are viewed very critically, whereas 71 percent welcome the Federal Chancellor, Angela Merkel's critical stance on the Israeli settlement in the occupied territories as ("counterproductive" in view of the aim for a two-state solution).

Noteworthy: 73 percent claim a "special relationship" between Germany and the Palestinians based on the Holocaust.

Only 42 percent describe German-Palestinian relations as "strong". Bearing in mind the values for relationships between the USA (16 percent) and Israel (seven percent), this does, however, continue to be an outstanding result. Also two thirds of the respondents agree with the statement that the German federal government supports the Palestinian calls for their own sovereign state. 34 percent say the same about the US government and 23 percent about the Israeli government.

When the respondents are given figures about German development aid to Palestinians (see above), the positive image of Germany increases to 86 percent; 53 percent also welcome the fact that Germany is involved in the fight against ISIS.

They are aware of the strategic significance of Germany for their own national objectives: 30 percent indicate that, within the EU, it is Berlin with which the best relationships should be nurtured. At place two it is followed by France with 20 percent and it is here where clear attempts are being made to revive the Middle East peace process.

44 percent specify that the German stance on the Middle East conflict is comparable with that of other EU member states; 36 percent state that the German position is fairer and twelve percent that it is less fair for the Palestinian cause. Here, Germany fares surprisingly well because recently, it was notably the parliaments of other EU member states (including the United Kingdom, France and finally Greece) who requested their governments to recognise Palestine as its own sovereign state.²¹

²¹ Sweden fared best as the only western European country that fully recognised the country of Palestine in October 2014.



Palestinian view of German-Palestinian relationships

It is evident that Palestinians have a deep understanding for Germany's responsibility towards Israel. As emphasised in 2014, 47 percent recognise that Israel and Germany will continue to have a special relationship in the future as a result of the Holocaust. 43 percent deduce that German support for Israel in the future will arise from the historical responsibility for the Holocaust; 48 percent - which is ten percent more than 2014 - state, however, that the historical German responsibility for the Holocaust is not the deciding factor upon which German relationships with Israel are based. At the same time 70 percent believe that the German-Israeli relationships are shaped by common interests.

68 percent of the Palestinians surveyed describe the German-Israeli relations as strong; the perception of this relationship lags behind the US-Israeli cooperation: 94 percent indicate that the relationships between Washington and Tel Aviv are strong. The fact that Germany supports Israel's right to exist is advocated by 54 percent (2014: 55 percent). Only 40 percent support the statement that the Palestinian Authority supports Israel's right to exist.

German efforts in the refugee crisis are closely monitored

The European refugee crisis is the subject of very intense discussion in the Arabic world in general and in Palestinian society in particular. 88 percent of Palestinian respondents support the German decision to accept over one million refugees throughout the course of last year. 86 percent of respondents felt that this positively influences the perception of Germany (Fig. 12).

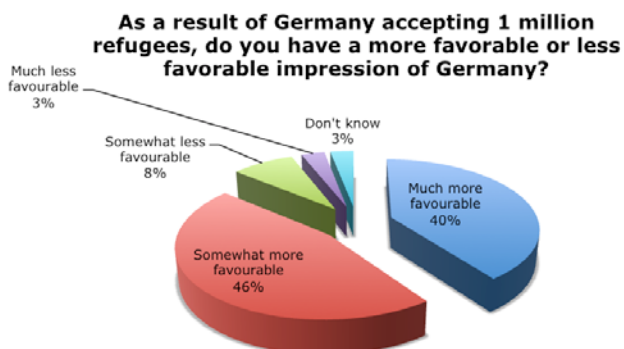


Fig. 12: The impression of Germany in regards to the German refugee policy (Palestinian perspective)

59 percent even assume that Germany will experience positive changes as a result of the influx of refugees; 57 percent expect tangible improvements in the German-Israeli relations because of this. Two thirds see the German refugee policy as a result of "moral responsibility" due to its Middle East policy. However, 70 percent record that Germany's handling of the refugee crisis is more humane than the strategy of other Arabic states in the Near and Middle East.

Scarcely any knowledge, scarcely any interest: Pre-election campaign in the United States

In January 2017, Barack Obama will resign from the office of the US President. When asked who should succeed him in the White House, 20 percent favour the Democrat Hillary Clinton, followed by former senator Jeb Bush who has since dropped out of the presidential race as well as Donald Trump (both Republicans) with three percent respectively. The strong preference amongst Palestinians for the former US foreign minister - she is also in the lead in the pool of candidates on the question about positive perception - is surprising: in her most recent statements about the Near and Middle East she clearly aligned herself with Israel.

It seems logical that the US presidential elections have not as yet triggered public interest at such an early stage in the election calendar. The majority of candidates are simply (still) unknown: 19 percent have not heard of Hillary Clinton, 68 percent have never even heard the name of her only Democratic opponent, Bernie Sanders. The situation looks similar for the Republicans: even the leading candidate Donald Trump is unknown to 59 percent of the respondents.

In the Palestinian territories, there is an increasing sense of disillusionment with respect to the role of the US: 27 believe that a Democratic president would be better for US-Palestinian relationships whereas 17 percent place more trust in a Republican president to achieve this. However, 52 percent indicate that the political party of the next president will make no difference when it comes to reviving the peace process.

Whilst a majority of 79 percent reject the controversial calls by Donald Trump for a temporary entry ban for Muslims into the USA, 59 percent welcome Hillary Clinton's statement in which the two-state solution would still be the best way of dealing with the conflict in the Middle East.



While the survey carried out in the USA places a special focus on the Jewish and Arabic parts of society, the Palestinians were asked about their perception of these groups. Merely two percent believe that the Arabic community in the USA has an influence on US foreign policy; 82 percent attest that this group is insignificant in political matters. In opposition to this, 76 percent state that the Jewish community in the USA has a strong impact on the foreign policy of their country.

The foreign policy priority of the next US administration should be the fight against ISIS-terror and international terrorism, according to 28 percent. In second place is the Israeli-Palestinian peace process, following by dealing with Iran following the Iran Nuclear Deal. Although (see above), only eight percent speak in favour of a more active role of the USA in the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians and 59 percent indicate that they want the next US president to focus on the Middle East peace process.



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