

# THE PIPA/KNOWLEDGE NETWORKS POLL

THE AMERICAN PUBLIC ON INTERNATIONAL ISSUES

## AMERICANS ON THE MIDDLE EAST ROAD MAP

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**PROGRAM ON INTERNATIONAL  
POLICY ATTITUDES (PIPA)**

A joint program of the Center on Policy Attitudes and the Center for International and Security Studies at the University of Maryland



**Knowledge  
NETWORKS**

A polling, social science, and market research firm based in Menlo Park, California

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**The Program on International Policy Attitudes (PIPA)** is a joint program of the Center for International and Security Studies at Maryland and the Center on Policy Attitudes. PIPA undertakes research on American attitudes in both the public and in the policymaking community toward a variety of international and foreign policy issues. It seeks to disseminate its findings to members of government, the press, and the public as well as academia.

**Knowledge Networks** is a polling, social science, and market research firm based in Menlo Park, California. Knowledge Networks uses a large-scale nationwide research panel which is randomly selected from the national population of households having telephones and is subsequently provided internet access for the completion of surveys (and thus is not limited to those who already have internet access).

**The Center for International and Security Studies at Maryland (CISSM)**, at the University of Maryland's School for Public Affairs, pursues policy-oriented scholarship on major issues facing the United States in the global arena. Using its research, forums, and publications, CISSM links the University and the policy community to improve communication between scholars and practitioners.

**The Center on Policy Attitudes (COPA)** is an independent non-profit organization of social science researchers devoted to increasing understanding of public and elite attitudes shaping contemporary public policy. Using innovative research methods, COPA seeks not only to examine overt policy opinions or positions, but to reveal the underlying values, assumptions, and feelings that sustain opinions.

Steven Kull, Clay Ramsay and Phil Warf designed the questionnaire and wrote the analysis.

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**INTRODUCTION**

Against the backdrop of military victory in Iraq, in May the Bush administration took long-awaited steps that showed a new focus on the Israel-Palestinian conflict. The road map plan--drafted by the US, the European Union, Russia and the UN--was formally delivered by the US to Israel and the Palestinians. The Palestinian leadership, and not long afterward the Israeli government, accepted the road map. And it appears that President Bush's trip to Europe will be extended to include summit meetings in the Middle East.

These events were accompanied by considerable media discussion, much of it on two points: whether the road map plan could long survive unless the president took a strong leadership role in the effort to push it forward and apply pressure on both sides; and what the political risks and benefits might be for the president, should he take this role. A number of voices suggested that if the president did choose to exercise leadership in the Middle East, the time to begin was now, while the Iraq victory was fresh and the 2004 election campaign had not begun from the US public's point of view. According to others' analyses, because of the intransigence of the conflict the risks are exceedingly high that such an effort will come to naught, leading to a diminished perception of the president's stature as a leader and an alienation of those whose votes are sensitive to the Israel-Palestinian issue.

All this points to key questions about public opinion. How do Americans view the road map plan for peace in the Middle East, and how do they respond when they learn more about the specifics of the plan? Do they feel comfortable working multilaterally through

the "quartet," or would they prefer to have the greater latitude of unilateral action?

More broadly, how do Americans view the Israel-Palestinian conflict today? Do they blame mostly one side for the conflict? Do they think of the Israel-Palestinian conflict as part of the war on terrorism? Do they want the US to take an even-handed approach or to favor Israel? Do they believe the US does, in reality, take an even-handed approach? Do they think a resolution of the conflict could lower the risk of terrorism directed at the US?

Perhaps the most central question is whether the public supports the US applying pressure on Israel, as well as the Palestinians, to take the steps required by the road map plan. A variety of possible methods for applying pressure could be considered, especially the politically ticklish possibility of the US threatening to withhold aid to Israel. Does the public think that, in fact, the President will apply pressure on Israel, or that he will be dissuaded by lobbying groups that oppose the road map? Does the public think the President will also apply pressure on oil-producing Arab states to fulfill their stated tasks in the road map?

How does the public view President Bush's leadership in dealing with the Israel-Palestinian conflict? Do they see the victory in Iraq as strengthening the President's hand in supporting the road map plan? If the President took a more active role in the road map process, how would his actions affect perceptions of him as a leader? If he tries and fails, will perceptions of his leadership suffer more than if he does not try?

In order to answer these and other questions about American public attitudes, the Program on International Policy Attitudes and Knowledge Networks conducted a

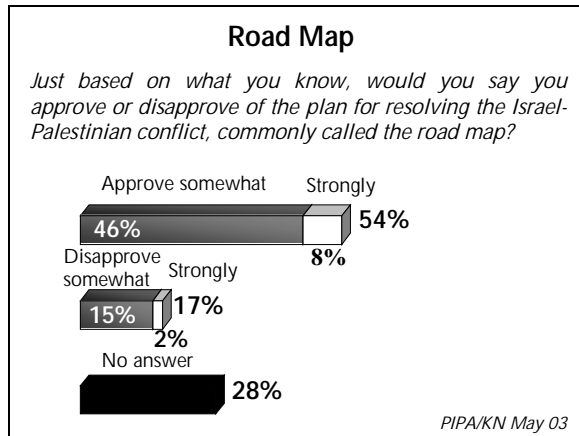
nationwide poll of 1,256 American adults over May 14-18, 2003. The margin of error for the full sample was plus or minus 3%; questions addressed to a half-sample had a margin of error of plus or minus 3.5%. The poll was fielded using Knowledge Networks' nationwide panel, which is randomly selected from the entire adult population and subsequently provided Internet access. For more information about this methodology see page 21, or go to [www.knowledgenetworks.com/ganp](http://www.knowledgenetworks.com/ganp).

Funding for this research was provided by the Rockefeller Brothers Fund and the Ford Foundation.

*Support for the Road Map and Working Through the Quartet*

A modest majority approves of the road map plan, rising to an overwhelming majority when they hear the details of the plan. A majority believes winning the Iraq war puts President Bush the US in a stronger position to resolve the Israel-Palestinian conflict and that resolving the Arab-Israel conflict would lower the risk of terrorism against the US. A strong majority supports the idea of working through the quartet, even when they hear the arguments against doing so.

Though only 32% of respondents said they were closely following recent efforts to restart the peace process, a modest majority approves the road map plan for resolving the Israel-Palestinian conflict. When asked, “Just based on what you know, would you say you approve or disapprove of the plan for resolving the Israel-Palestinian conflict, commonly called the road map?” 54% approved the plan, only 17% disapproved, and 28% declined to answer.



Later in the poll, respondents were exposed to more information about the road map plan—including the tasks that Israel, the Palestinians, and the Arab states were slated to perform in the plan’s first phase. Respondents saw the table below:

### First Phase Tasks of the Road Map (Shown to All Respondents)

*Below is a list of some of the key steps that the first phase of the road map plan requires Israel, the Palestinian leadership, and the Arab states to take concurrently.*

**Steps for Israel to Take**

- Gradually withdraw Israeli troops from West Bank and Gaza
- Freeze all settlement building, including expansion of existing settlements, for Israelis to live in West Bank and Gaza
- Stop using checkpoints to prevent Palestinians from traveling within the West Bank and Gaza

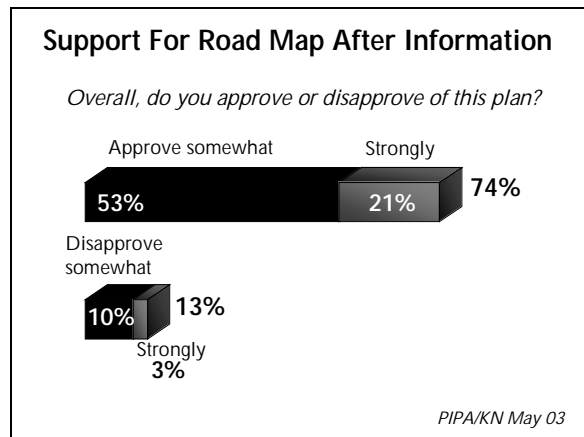
**Steps for Palestinian Leadership to Take**

- Make strong, visible effort to stop Palestinian individuals and groups from using terrorism against Israelis
- Confiscate all illegal weapons held by Palestinian groups
- Develop a new Palestinian government less controlled by Yasser Arafat

**Steps for Arab States to Take**

- Cut off public and private funding and all other forms of support for Palestinian groups engaging in violence and terror

With this information, respondents were asked: “Overall, do you approve or disapprove of this plan?” An overwhelming 74% approved—up from 54% before information was provided. Only 13% disapproved. This suggests that if an effort were made to publicize the road map and explain its basic ideas, the public would respond quite positively.

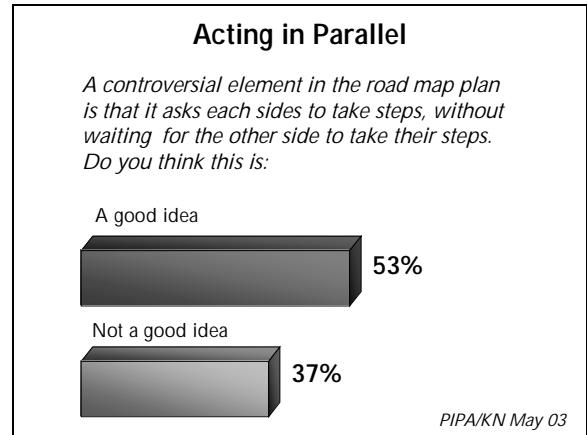


A majority seems to feel that this is a particularly appropriate moment to make an effort to resolve the Middle East conflict. Asked whether “As a result of having won the war with Iraq, do you think President Bush is or is not in a stronger position to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict,” 58% said the president was in a stronger position, while only 32% said he was not.

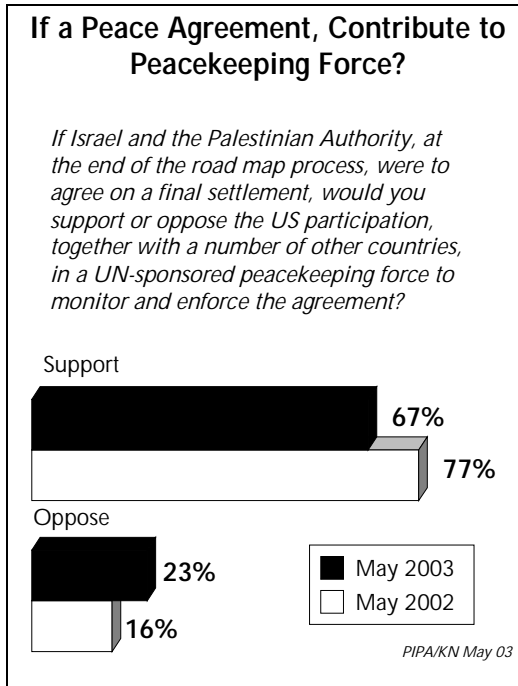


A majority (59%) believes that resolving the Israel-Palestinian conflict should be a high priority, and 55% believe that resolving the Arab-Israel conflict would lower the likelihood of terrorism against the US.

One aspect of the road map raises a difficult issue that has attracted criticism: it requires all sides to work on their tasks in a given phase, regardless of what the others are doing or not doing. No side is asked to go *beyond* the current phase before the other sides are finished; but within a phase, each side’s actions are noncontiguous. In a question about this issue, respondents were told “a controversial element in the road map plan is that it asks each side to take its steps, without waiting for the other sides to take their steps.” A modest majority (53%) called this “a good idea”; 37% thought it was “not a good idea.”



A test of support for the road map is the question of whether, were the road map process to succeed in creating a peace agreement, the public would be willing for the US to engage in the task of enforcing it. Two-thirds (67%) said that “if Israel and the Palestinian Authority, at the end of the roadmap process, were to agree on a final settlement,” they would support “the US participating, together with a number of other countries, in a UN-sponsored peacekeeping force to monitor and enforce the agreement.” Twenty-three percent were opposed. PIPA asked a similar question in May 2002 which spelled out the same conditions, and found 77% support at that time; the 10-point drop is presumably due to the months of strife between Israel and the Palestinians, plus the fact of the current, heavy US military engagement in postwar Iraq.

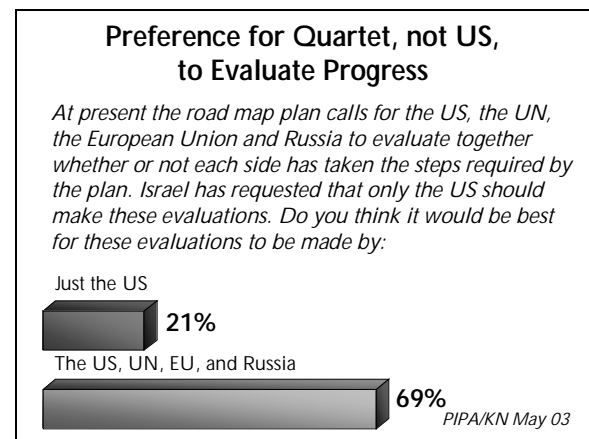
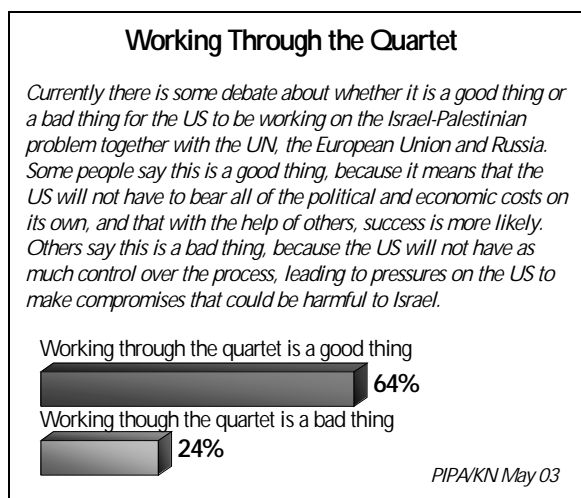


After reading these arguments, a strong majority of 64% said that it was a “good thing” for the US to work on the problem together with the UN, the European Union and Russia. Only a quarter (24%) said this was a “bad thing.” This response is consistent with a general tendency in the American public to favor multilateral approaches to international problems.

Another issue is Israel’s recent challenge to the road map’s stipulation that its four partners will together evaluate the parties’ progress. Respondents were told that “At present the road map plan calls for the US, the UN, the European Union and Russia to evaluate together whether or not each side has taken the steps required by the plan,” and that “Israel has requested that only the US should make these evaluations.” However, only 21% thought “it would be best for these evaluations to be made by the US.” A very strong 69% thought it best for the US to make the evaluations together with the quartet partners.

### Working Through the Quartet

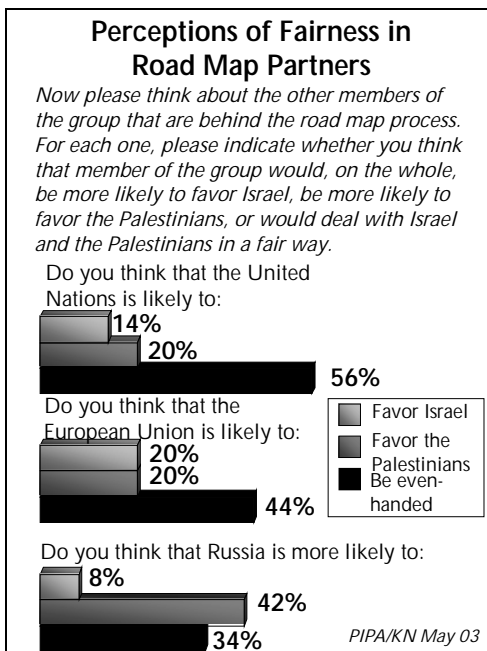
A strong majority supports the idea of working through the quartet (that includes the US, the UN, the EU and Russia), even when they hear the arguments against doing so. As shown in the box below respondents were offered a question that included the key arguments of both sides:



Another frequent criticism of the road map plan has been that the UN, the European Union and Russia are all somewhat biased against Israel and will not be evenhanded toward the parties. PIPA put this problem to respondents and asked whether they thought

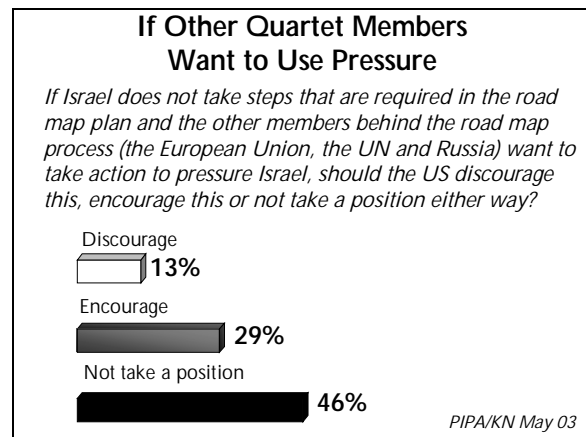
each “member of the group” (apart from the US) “would be more likely to favor Israel, be more likely to favor the Palestinians, or would deal with Israel and the Palestinians in a fair way.”

The UN did the best of the three; a 56% majority thought the UN would deal with both parties in a fair way (favor the Palestinians, 20%; favor Israel, 14%). A 44% plurality thought the European Union would be evenhanded (favor the Palestinians, 20%; favor Israel, 20%)--clearly the picture proposed by some of a pro-Palestinian EU has made little headway with the public). Respondents took a more skeptical view of Russia, with a 42% plurality saying it would favor the Palestinians (be evenhanded, 34%; favor Israel, 8%). While the US was not a topic in this sequence of questions, interestingly, even fewer than 34% say that, in practice, the US is evenhanded toward the parties to the conflict (see below).



There is some controversy over what stance the US should take if other members of the quartet want to apply more pressure to

Israel. PIPA asked what the US should do “if Israel does not take steps that are required in the road map plan” and “the other members want to take action to pressure Israel.” Only 13% said the US should discourage other members from pressuring Israel. A 46% plurality said the US should not take a position, while 29% said the US should encourage the other quartet members in pressuring Israel.



One factor in the majority’s support for the road map plan may be a reluctance to have the US act as sole champion of any plan for peace in an area so difficult as the Israel-Palestinian conflict. One PIPA question offered the alternative of the US “strongly tak[ing] the initiative”:

It has been suggested that if it appears after a time that the road map process is failing, the United States should strongly take the initiative and formulate a detailed final plan that would specify future borders for a Palestinian state, the status of Jerusalem, and other central issues. The US would then seek international consensus as part of an effort to convince all parties to accept these solutions. Do you think this would be a good idea or not a good idea?

A 46% plurality thought this would not be a good idea; only 38% thought it would be a good idea. Thus the multilateral approach may derive some of its support from a desire



for the US to not tackle such a thorny problem alone.

Support for the quartet is consistent with a general majority preference for multilateral approaches—as was also demonstrated in a question on how to deal with the problem of Jerusalem. Respondents were asked:

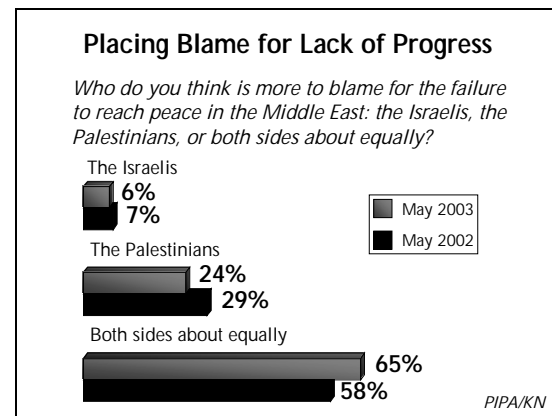
As you may know, a key dispute between Israel and the Palestinians is about certain areas of East Jerusalem, which Israel annexed after the 1967 war. Past negotiations over a peace agreement have broken down because both sides want to control these areas. Just based on what you know, are you more inclined to believe that Israel should have control, the Palestinians should have control, or that both sides should allow the UN to have control unless they later come to some other compromise?

A 55% majority felt the UN should have control, while 26% felt control should go to Israel and 6% felt control should go to the Palestinians. (This is virtually unchanged from May 2002, when the same question found that 57% felt the UN should have control.)

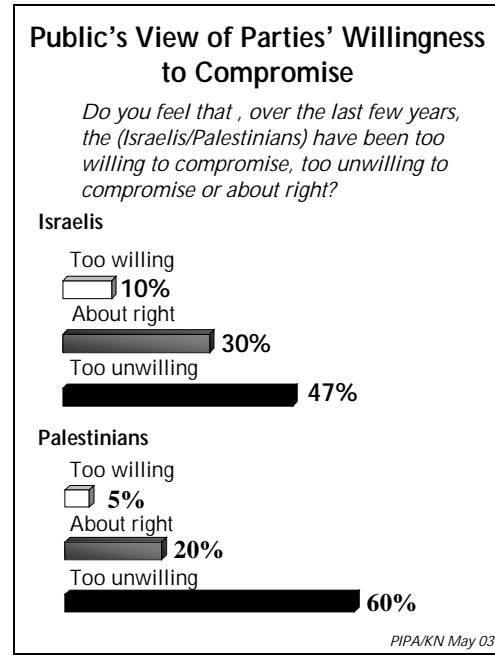
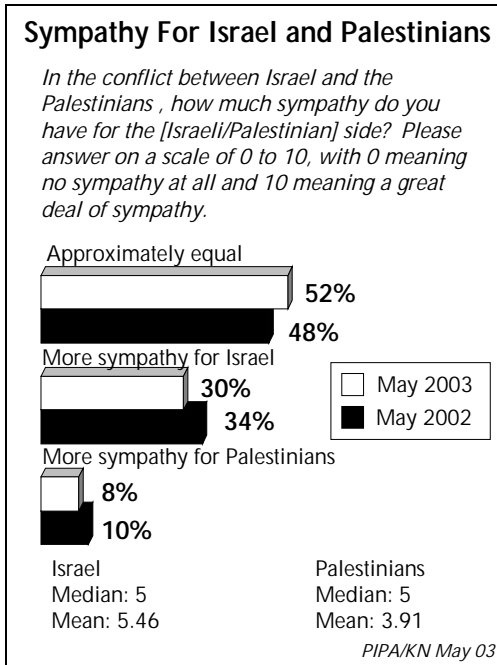
***Support for General Evenhandedness***

**A strong majority of Americans say they blame Israel and the Palestinians equally for the failure to reach peace. Half express equal levels of sympathy for each side, while 3 in 10 express greater sympathy for Israel. Only a small minority views Israel’s conflict with the Palestinians as part of the war on terrorism. A very strong majority thinks that US policy should be even-handed, while a clear majority believes that the US does favor Israel. Consistent with this even-handed orientation, if the Palestinians do come to a peace agreement with Israel, a majority favors equalizing the amount of aid that the US gives to each side.**

A strong majority of Americans say they blame both sides equally for the failure to reach peace. Asked, “Who do you think is more to blame for the failure to reach peace in the Middle East: the Israelis, the Palestinians, or both sides about equally?” 65% blamed both sides equally. Only 30% put more blame on one side: 24% on the Palestinians and 6% on the Israelis.

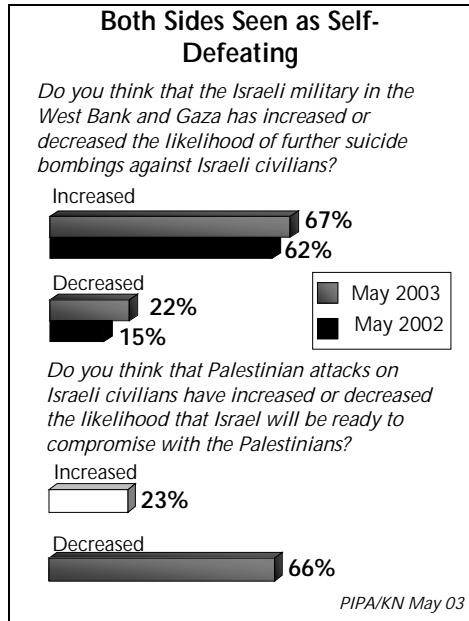


To gauge relative sympathy for the two sides, PIPA offered a 0 to 10 scale--with 0 meaning no sympathy at all and 10 meaning a great deal of sympathy—and, in separate questions, asked respondents to rate “how much sympathy you have” for each side. Just over half (52%) gave no more than one point’s difference in sympathy between the two sides; 30% expressed greater sympathy (two or more points higher) for Israel; and 8% expressed greater sympathy for the Palestinians. The median level of sympathy was the same for both Israel and the Palestinians: 5, while the mean responses showed a bit more sympathy for Israel: 5.46 for Israel and 3.91 for the Palestinians.



A plurality or a majority saw both sides as too unwilling to compromise, with a larger number feeling this way about the Palestinians. When asked how they feel about each side's willingness to compromise over the last few years, three out of five (60%) saw the Palestinians as too unwilling to compromise, while just under half (47%) saw Israel this way. Only 25% thought Palestinians were either too willing to compromise (5%) or "about right" (20%); while 40% thought Israel was either too willing (10%) or "about right" (30%).

A large majority sees both sides use of violence as being self-defeating. Asked, "Do you think that the Israeli military action in the West Bank and Gaza has increased or decreased the likelihood of further suicide bombings against Israeli civilians?" 67% said the actions had increased this likelihood and only 22% thought they had decreased it. Similarly, when asked "Do you think that Palestinian attacks on Israeli civilians have increased or decreased the likelihood that Israel will be ready to compromise with the Palestinians?" 66% said the attacks had decreased this likelihood and only 23% thought they had increased it.

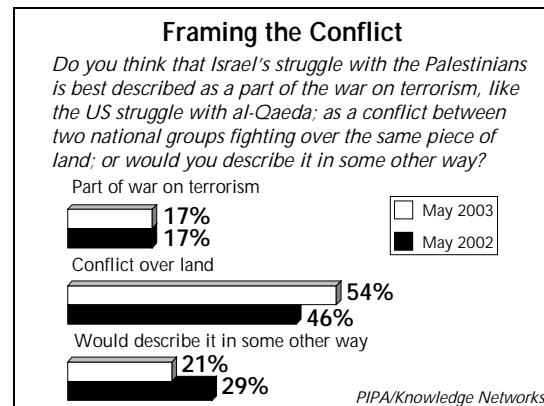


Consistent with this view, respondents gave low ratings to both Israeli and Palestinian leaders on “working for a solution to the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians.” Only 34% said Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon is doing an “excellent” (3%) or “pretty good” (31%) job, while 54% characterized it as “only fair” (39%) or “poor” (15%). Palestinian President Yasser Arafat was rated lower, with less than 1% saying “excellent” and 11% saying “pretty good,” while 80% called the job he is doing “only fair” (33%) or “poor” (47%). The poll also reminded respondents that “the Palestinians have chosen a new Prime Minister named Mahmoud Abbas, also known as Abu Mazen,” and asked the same rating question. While 31% declined to answer, 25% gave Abbas an “excellent” (1%) or “pretty good” (24%) rating, while 43% gave him an “only fair” (38%) or “poor” (5%) rating.

Despite repeated efforts on the part of Israeli leaders to make the association, only a small minority of Americans views the Israel-Palestinian conflict as part of the war on terrorism. Respondents were asked:

Do you think that Israel's struggle with the Palestinians is best described as a part of the war on terrorism, like the US struggle with Al Q'aeda; as a conflict between two national groups fighting over the same piece of land; or would you describe it some other way?

Only 17% said they would describe the conflict as part of the war on terrorism, while a 54% majority saw it “as a conflict between two national groups fighting over the same piece of land,” and 21% said they would “describe it some other way.” (When this question was asked in May 2002, the exact same percentage, 17%, saw it as part of the war on terrorism, while 46% described it as a fight between national groups; and 29% said they would describe it some other way.)

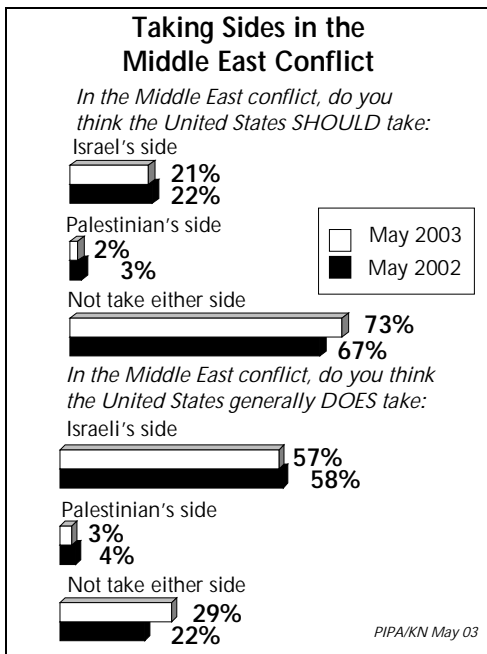


**Desire for Evenhanded US Policy**

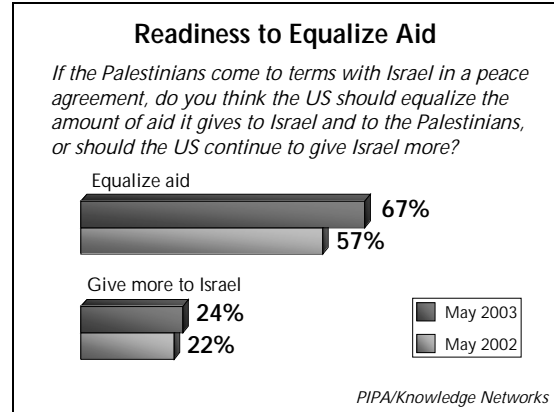
A very strong majority thinks that US policy should be even-handed, while a clear majority feels that it favors Israel. Asked “In the Middle East conflict, do you think the United States should take Israel’s side, take the Palestinians’ side, or not take either side?” an overwhelming 73% said the US should not take either side. About a quarter (21%) thought the US should take Israel’s side (Palestinians’ side, 2%).

Then asked what they thought the US “generally does,” a clear majority (57%) said the US generally takes Israel’s side. Only 29% thought the US generally does not take a side in the conflict (Palestinians’ side, 3%).

These results are very similar to those of a year ago; in May 2002 67% said that the US should not take either side, 58% said the US generally does take Israel’s side, and just 22% thought the US generally does not take a side.



Consistent with this evenhanded orientation, a strong majority (67%) said that “if the Palestinians come to terms with Israel in a peace agreement,” the US should “equalize the amount of aid it gives to Israel and the Palestinians.” Twenty-four percent said the US should continue to give Israel more. Support for equalization is up a bit from when PIPA asked in May 2002 and found 57% favoring and 22% saying the US should give Israel more.



But would this preference for equalizing aid hold up if respondents saw the actual dollar figures and were able to change them? To find out, PIPA gave a different half-sample a question that presented the amounts of US aid to Israel and the Palestinians in 2002 and allowed respondents to change these figures any way they liked. The question asked:

Last year the US gave Israel \$2.85 billion and the Palestinians \$0.07 billion in aid. If the Palestinians and Israel come to terms in a peace agreement, how much aid do you think the US should then give each side?

Respondents shifted the numbers sharply toward equalizing aid. The median response gave Israel \$1 billion and the Palestinians \$1 billion. The mean responses were higher (because a small group of respondents made large increases): \$3.76 billion for Israel and \$2.37 billion for the Palestinians.

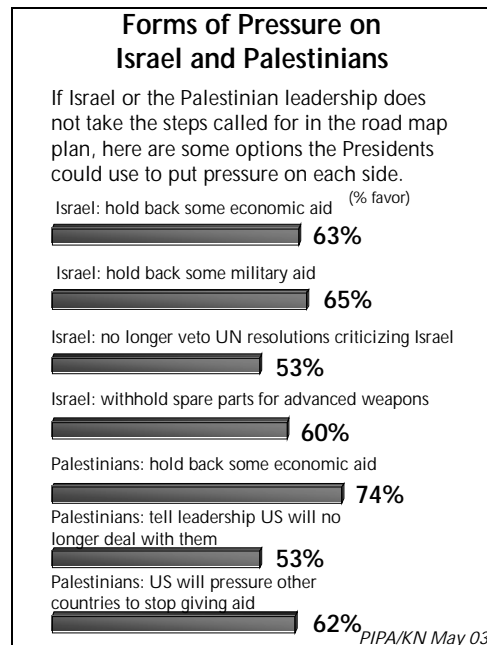


### ***Readiness to Apply Pressure***

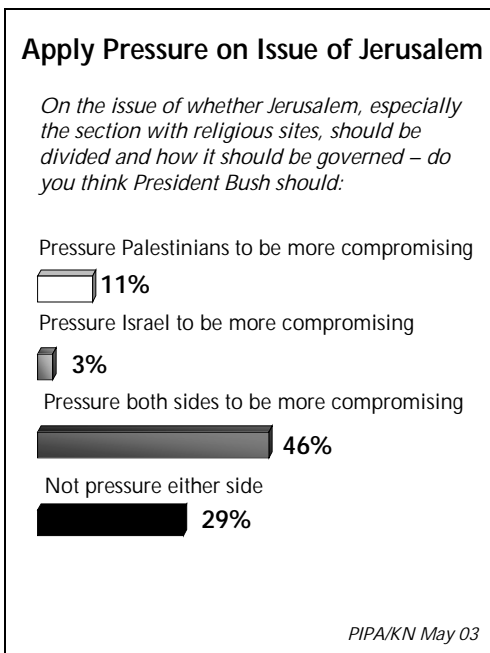
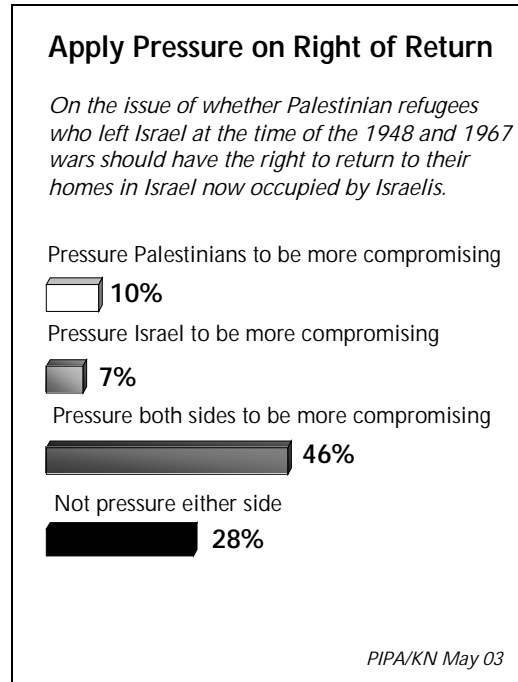
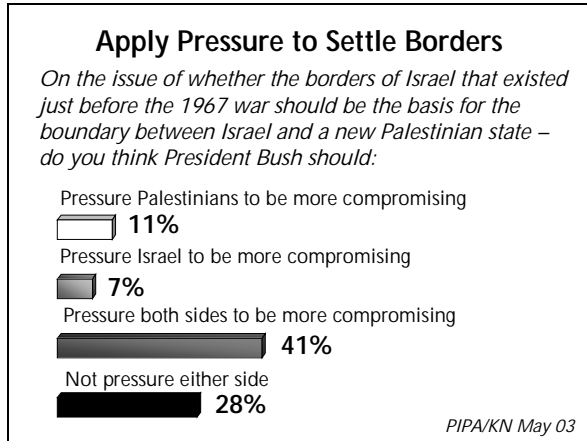
**A strong majority supports putting pressure on both Israel and the Palestinians to get them to take the steps in the road map plan, and endorses a range of specific options, including withholding aid to Israel as well the Palestinians. If the Palestinians refrain from using violent methods, a very strong majority would favor the US putting more pressure on Israel. Rewarding steps with aid does not receive majority support. A majority supports putting pressure on Arab states to take their steps in the road map plan, including those providing oil to the US.**

Americans show a readiness to use a variety of means to put stronger pressure on Israel as well as the Palestinians to take steps called for in the road map plan. If Israel does not take steps called for, majorities favored the President telling Israel that the US will withhold military aid (65%), economic aid (63%), and military spare parts (60%)--and that the US will no longer veto UN Security Council resolutions that criticize Israel for the way it treats Palestinians (53%). Likewise, majorities favored putting pressure on the Palestinian leadership by threatening to withhold economic aid (74%), to encourage other countries to withhold aid

(62%), and to refuse to deal with the Palestinian leadership (53%).



In addition, respondents were told: “There are a number of difficult issues in the Israel-Palestinian conflict that will need to be resolved in the final phase of the road map process. Both sides have taken strong and uncompromising positions on these issues. For each one, please indicate how you think President Bush should deal with Israel and the Palestinians.” As shown in the graphs, a plurality called for pressuring both sides to be more compromising on the borders of a Palestinian state, Jerusalem, and the right of Palestinian refugees to return to Israel. Just over one in four favored pressuring neither side, and just one in ten favored only pressuring the Palestinians.



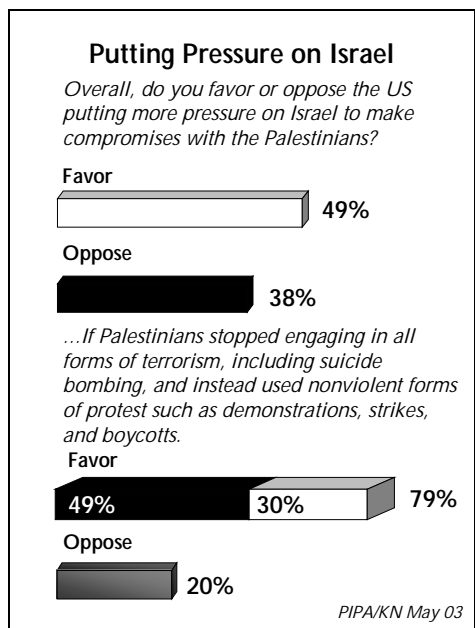
When respondents were asked about “the US putting more pressure on Israel to make compromises with the Palestinians,” without the context of pressure being applied to both sides, support was a bit lower. Forty-nine percent favored it while 38% were opposed.

### If Palestinians Stop Using Violence

If Palestinians would stop using violence, Americans say they that this would markedly change their attitudes about putting more pressure on Israel. Those that did not favor putting more pressure on Israel in the above-mentioned question (or did not answer) were asked a follow-on question that went:

I'd like you to imagine that the Palestinians stopped engaging in all forms of terrorism, including suicide bombing, and instead used nonviolent forms of protest such as demonstrations, strikes, and boycotts. Would you then favor or oppose putting more pressure on Israel to make compromises with the Palestinians?

Fifty-eight percent of these respondents said they would then favor putting more pressure on Israel, raising the total willing to apply more pressure to 79%.



Similarly, 7 in 10 agreed with the argument that the US should try to get Israel to show more restraint if Palestinians were to refrain from violence. Seventy percent agreed with the statement:

Israel has many means for putting pressure on the Palestinians that the Palestinians do not have, such as setting up roadblocks. However, the Palestinians’ means of putting pressure on the Israelis is largely limited to using violence. If the Palestinians refrain from using violence, the US should tell Israel that it should refrain from using forms of pressure not available to the Palestinians.

**Doubts About Effectiveness**

Initially, a majority showed pessimism that pressuring the parties would be effective, but after considering the various options a plurality expressed confidence that it would be effective with the Israelis; respondents

divided over whether it would be effective with the Palestinians.

Before hearing the options for applying pressure, half the sample was asked, “If President Bush were so determined to get Israel to stop building new settlements that he was ready to use all his available options to apply pressure, do you think he could succeed?” Only 45% said yes and 47% said no. Asked, “If President Bush were so determined to get the Palestinian leadership to build a strong police force effective enough to stop terrorist activities that he was ready to use all his available options to apply pressure, do you think he could succeed?” the prognosis was even worse, with 35% saying yes and 57% saying no.

A separate sample was first asked to assess the options for applying pressure, and was then presented the same set of questions. Responses were considerably more optimistic. A plurality of 48% said that the President could get Israel to stop building settlements, with 39% saying he could not. The response for the Palestinians was divided with 42% saying he could get the Palestinians to build an effective police force and 46% saying that he could not.

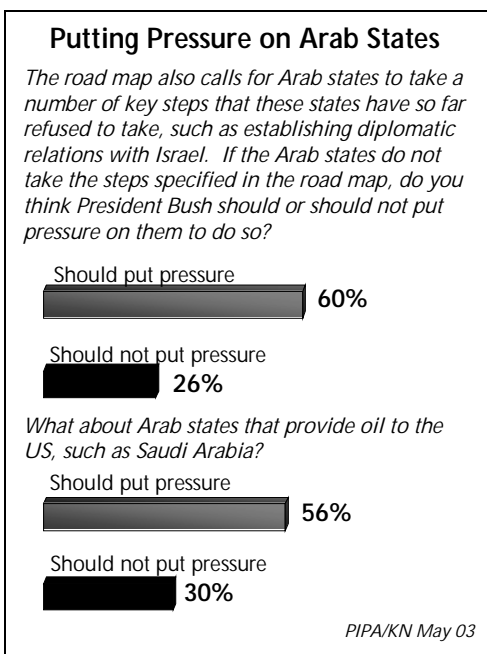
**Low Support for Rewarding With Aid**

Americans show low support for rewarding either Israel or the Palestinians for taking key steps in the road map by helping to pay the associated costs. Only 37% favored the US and the EU helping to pay for the costs of resettling Israelis who currently live in settlements in the West Bank and Gaza, while 54% were opposed. Only 39% favored the US and the EU helping to pay the costs of acquiring new homes for Palestinian refugees if the Palestinians agree to give up Palestinians’ claims to their homes in Israel now occupied by Israelis.

**Putting Pressure on Arab States**

The road map plan calls for Arab states to take a number of key steps that these states are presently refusing to take, such as having diplomatic relations with Israel. Respondents were told this and asked, “If the Arab states do not take the steps specified in the road map, do you think President Bush should or should not put pressure on them to do so?” Sixty percent said that he should.

Those that said he should were then asked, “What about Arab states that provide oil to the US, such as Saudi Arabia? If they refuse to take the steps specified in the road map, do you think President Bush should put pressure on them to do so?” Nearly all (93%)—or 56% of the full sample--said he should.

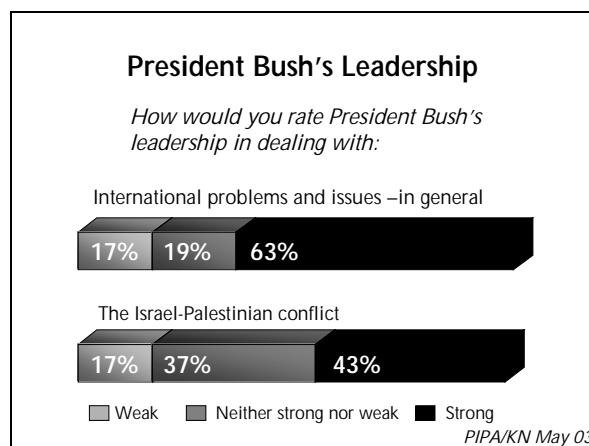


**Perceptions of President Bush’s Leadership**

**A modest majority perceives President Bush as not showing strong leadership in the Israel-Palestinian conflict. However,**

**if he would apply pressure on the parties to follow the road map plan, perceptions of him as a strong leader would go up, even if these efforts fail. If he does not put pressure on the parties, his leadership ratings would go down.**

While 63% rate President Bush’s leadership as strong “in dealing with international problems and issues,” a modest majority perceives him as not showing strong leadership in dealing with the Israel-Palestinian conflict. Asked to rate his leadership in dealing with this problem, only 43% rated it as strong (15% very strong, 28% somewhat strong). Fifty-four percent rated it as neither strong nor weak (37%), somewhat weak (8%), or very weak (9%).



However, if the president applies strong pressure on the parties to follow the road map plan, respondents say their perceptions of him as a strong leader would go up. Asked, “How would you feel about President Bush as a leader if he did put strong pressure on Israel and the Palestinian leadership to take the concrete steps called for in the new road map? Compared to how you view him now, if you think you would see him as a much stronger leader, rate that plus 5. If you think you would see him as a much weaker leader, rate that minus 5. If



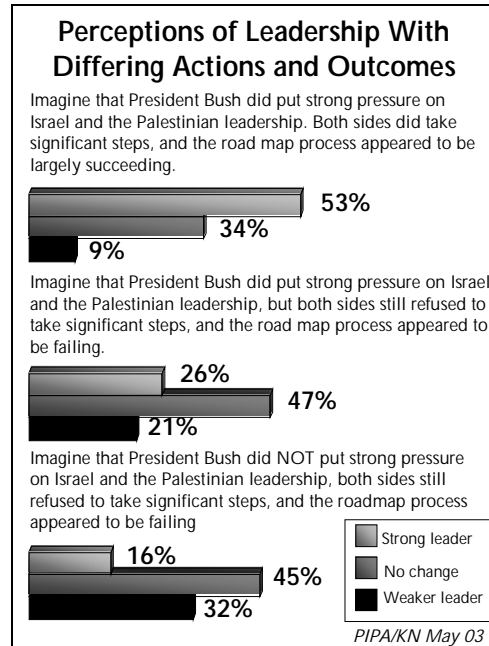
you would see him as neither stronger nor weaker, rate that 0.” Forty-nine percent said they would see him as a stronger leader, while just 14% said they would see him as a weaker leader and 33% said there would be no change.

If he does *not* apply strong pressure on the parties, his leadership ratings would go down. In that case, 35% said that they would see him as a weaker leader, while 15% said they would see him as a stronger leader and 44% said there would be no change.

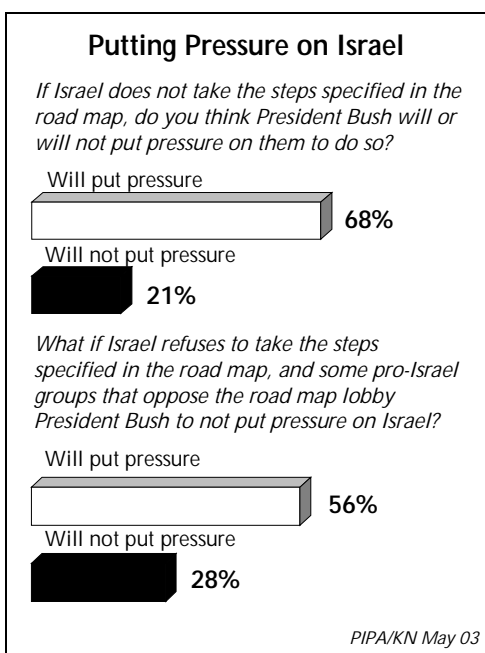
Respondents were also asked how they imagine they would respond to a number of scenarios in which the outcome of the President’s effort was specified. Not surprisingly, when asked to “Imagine that President Bush did put strong pressure on Israel and the Palestinian leadership, both sides did take significant steps, and the road map process appeared to be largely succeeding,” perceptions of his leadership went up. Fifty-three percent said they would see him as a stronger leader, with just 9% saying weaker and 34% no change.

Perhaps most interesting, when asked to imagine that the President put pressure on the parties, “but both sides still refused to take significant steps, and the road map process appeared to be failing,” his net leadership rating was still positive. Twenty-six percent said they would see him as stronger, 21% as weaker, and 47% no change.

Not surprisingly, if he did not put pressure and the road map process appeared to be failing, his net rating would suffer. Thirty-two percent said they would perceive him as weaker, 16% as stronger, and 45% no change.



Though only a 43% minority see President Bush as taking a strong leadership role, a majority does expect that the President will apply pressure on Israel and a majority (though a more modest one) believes that he will do so even in the face of opposition from pro-Israeli lobbies opposed to the road map plan. Asked, “If Israel does not take the steps specified in the road map, do you think President Bush will... pressure on them to do so?” 68% said they thought he would. Asked, “What if Israel refuses to take the steps specified in the road map, and some pro-Israel groups that oppose the road map lobby President Bush to not put pressure on Israel,” 56% (of the full sample) still thought he would apply pressure.



Also, 61% thought that President Bush would be willing to take actions similar to when “in 1991 then-President George H.W. Bush pressured the Israelis to stop building settlements in the Palestinian territories by threatening to withhold \$10 billion worth of loan guarantees.”

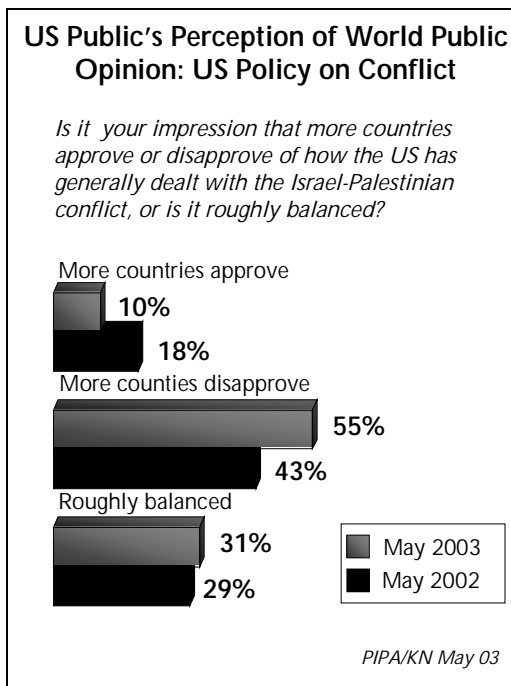
A majority also assumes that he will put pressure on the Arab states, with a more modest majority saying that this would also apply to Arab states providing oil to the US. Respondents were presented the following question: “As you may know, the road map also calls for Arab states to take a number of key steps that these states have so far refused to take, such as establishing diplomatic relations with Israel. If the Arab states do not take the steps specified in the road map, do you think President Bush will... put pressure on them to do so?” A strong 69% said they thought he would. Asked, “What about Arab states that provide oil to the US, such as Saudi Arabia?” 57% (of the full sample) still thought he would do so.

Interestingly, before respondents received any information about the possible forms that US pressure could take to induce the parties to the conflict to take steps in the road map, they were divided as to whether “President Bush should take a strong leadership role in trying to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict” (43%) or whether “this is not a good idea” (47%). However, it appears that this response is largely due to uncertainty about what it would mean to take strong leadership, because when the poll asked about highly proactive options for pressuring the parties a strong majority favored them (see above). In addition (as discussed below) subgroups of the attentive, the politically active, and issue-sensitive voters—who presumably had a clearer sense of what strong leadership would look like--all showed clear majorities wanting the president to take a strong leadership role, though they too gave his leadership fairly low ratings.

***Perceptions of World Public Opinion***  
**A majority now perceives that more countries disapprove of US policy toward the Israel-Palestinian conflict. Only one quarter of Americans know that a majority of countries are more sympathetic to the Palestinian position.**

A majority now perceives that more countries disapprove than approve of US policy toward the Israel-Palestinian conflict—which was not the perception one year ago. In the current poll, 55% knew that more countries disapprove of “how the US has generally dealt with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict”—up from 43% when the same question was asked in May 2002. Forty-one percent mistakenly believed that more countries approve than disapprove (10%) or that the numbers of countries approving and disapproving are “roughly balanced”(31%)down from one year ago

when 47% assumed that more countries approve (29%) or that there was a rough balance (18%).



When asked for their impressions on whether "more countries in the world are more sympathetic to the Israeli or the Palestinian position, or is it roughly balanced?" only 27% knew that more countries are more sympathetic to the Palestinian position—exactly the same as one year ago. However, shifts are visible in the other responses to this question. Sixty-six percent thought that sympathies were either "roughly balanced" (52%, up from 39%), or that a majority of countries were more sympathetic to the Israeli position (14%, down from 22%).

***Attitudes of Politically Relevant Subpopulations***

**Among respondents that were more attentive to international issues, who were politically active, or whose votes were sensitive to a candidate's position on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, support for the road map plan is higher. All three**

**categories were bit more favorable to Israel, though in all cases a plurality or majority took an even-handed approach; were willing to put pressure on Israel as well as the Palestinians in a variety of ways; were more inclined to view Bush as playing a critical role in the peace process; were more inclined to view him as a stronger leader if he put pressure on the parties, whether or not he succeeded; and were more ready to view him as a weaker leader if he did not put such pressure.**

To better understand attitudes among populations considered politically relevant PIPA identified three subgroups of the poll's sample:

*Those attentive to international issues.* Those respondents who said they voted in the November 2002 election and that they followed foreign affairs very closely, or that foreign policy was one of the most important issues to them when they voted for the presidency or Congress, were included in this group--19% of the full sample.

*The politically active.* Those respondents who said they voted in the November 2002 election, had ever contributed money or volunteered for a presidential or congressional candidate, or had ever done so for an organization concerned with an international issue, were included in this group--24% of the full sample.

*The vote-sensitive (on Israel-Palestinian issues).* All respondents were asked how much they thought a presidential candidate's position on how the US should deal with the Israel-Palestinian conflict would influence their vote, and were offered a 0-to-10 scale, with 0 meaning "not at all" and 10 meaning "the most important issue." Those giving a

response from 6 to 10 were included in this group—24% of the full sample.

While there was substantial overlap between the attentive and politically active groups, there was only modest overlap between the vote sensitive population and the other two groups.

Unless otherwise noted below, responses among these subpopulations were approximately the same as the general population on all other questions.

### **Roadmap Process**

All three categories showed support for the road map plan that was as high or considerably higher than the general public. While 54% of the general public initially approved of the road map plan, 65% of the attentive public, 67% of the active public and 60% of the issue-sensitive voters approved. When given information about the road map plan, support jumped to 74% for the general public and to 81% for the attentive public, 82% for the active public and 80% for the issue-sensitive voters.

All three categories showed higher levels of confidence that “as a result of having won the war with Iraq Bush is...in a stronger position to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict” (general 58%, attentive 69%, active 71%, vote-sensitive 72%).

### **Evenhandedness**

All three categories were a bit more favorable to Israel than the general population in a variety of questions, but in all cases a plurality or majority took an even-handed approach.

On the question of which side is more to blame, 65% of the public blamed both sides

equally as did 55% of the attentives, 57% of the actives, and 59% of the vote-sensitives.

While 24% of the general public blamed the Palestinians more 36% of the attentives, 34% of the actives and 30% of the vote-sensitives felt that way.

The majority of all groups said that the US should not take either side in the conflict (general 73%, attentive 64%, active 65%, vote-sensitive 58%) but the minority wanting the US to take Israel’s side was larger among the political subgroups (general 21%, attentive 30%, active 29%, vote-sensitive 34%).

The political subgroups were equally or more apt to believe that the US does take Israel’s side (general 57%, attentive 70%, active 73%, vote-sensitive 56%).

Among the political subgroups, equal or larger majorities perceived that Israeli military attacks increased the likelihood of suicide bombing (general 67%, attentive 73%, active 74%, vote-sensitive 65%) and that Palestinian attacks made Israel less ready to compromise (general 66%, attentive 75%, active 80%, vote-sensitive 63%).

### **Applying Pressure**

All political subgroups were a bit more willing to put more pressure on Israel to be more compromising (general 49%, attentive 57%, active 59%, vote-sensitive 55%).

When presented specific options for putting pressure a majority of all groups expressed support for every option, with the attentives and actives consistently showing significantly higher levels of support. The general public and the vote-sensitives were quite similar. On the politically sensitive question of withholding economic aid to Israel, the attentives and actives were quite

supportive (67% and 70%) in favor, with the general public and the vote-sensitives a bit lower (63% and 55%).

All three categories showed greater readiness to put pressure on Arab states to take key steps, such as having diplomatic relations with Israel (general 60%, attentive 77%, active 77%, vote-sensitive 75%), with more than 90% of these in every case saying they would even favor putting pressure on oil-producing Arab states.

All three categories, especially attentive respondents, were more willing to give aid to help Palestinian refugees who would need to be resettled if they give up claims to their homes in Israel (general 39%, attentive 52%, active 48%, vote-sensitive 46%).

### **Views of President Bush**

All three categories were only slightly more likely to view Bush as being a strong leader in dealing with the Israel-Palestinian conflict (general 43%, attentive and active 48%, vote-sensitive 51%).

However, all three categories were much more inclined to believe that the only way the Israeli-Palestinian conflict can be solved is if Bush plays a strong leadership role (general 32%, attentive 46%, active 40%, vote-sensitive 51%).

If Bush were to use all his options to try to get Israel to stop building settlements, all three categories were a bit more inclined to think he could succeed (general 45%, attentive 53%, active 50%, vote-sensitive 53%).

All three categories would be more inclined to view Bush as a stronger leader if he put strong pressure on the parties and process seemed to be succeeding (general 53%,

attentive 67%, active 71%, vote-sensitive 68%). If he applied strong pressure and failed, a larger percentage would still see him as a stronger leader (general 26%, all others 36%). However, if he did not apply pressure and the process failed, all three categories would be more severe and show a greater readiness to view him as a weaker leader (general 32%, attentive 36%, active 37%, vote-sensitive 46%).

As mentioned above, all three categories were more supportive of the idea that Bush should play a strong leadership role (general 43%, attentive and active 59%, vote-sensitive 76%). As discussed, this higher level of support may be due to this group having a better understanding of what it would mean for Bush to take such a strong role, because when the whole sample was asked about specific options for taking a proactive role, majorities were clearly in favor, though not as robustly as among the active, attentive and vote-sensitive populations.

### **World Public Opinion**

Attentive and active respondents were much more aware that more countries disapprove of US foreign policy in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (general 55%, attentive 64%, active 65%) and that more countries are more sympathetic to the Palestinian position (general 27%, attentive 49%, active 47%). The issue-sensitive voters were not significantly different.

### **VARIATIONS BY PARTY IDENTIFICATION**

Differences between Republicans, Democrats and Independents were very small on attitudes about the roadmap, but other questions showed more support for Israel among Republicans, as well as more

approval of Bush's handling of the Middle East and more support for his taking a stronger leadership role in that area.

Respondents in both parties support the Middle East peace plan. Sixty-two percent of Republicans and 58% of Democrats say they approve of the roadmap. Still, without any information, nearly a quarter in each party did not know enough to answer the question. Nearly one third of independents could not answer, but 51% said they approve.

When told some of the specific steps included in the plan, support for the plan rose dramatically all around--84% of Republicans and 75% of Democrats approved of those steps, along with 69% of independents. Two-thirds of Democrats and Republicans think that the US working with the EU, Russia, and the UN on the road map plan is a good thing.

Republicans were generally more supportive of Israel and more critical of Palestinians, while Democrats were more likely to see the parties as equal partners in perpetuating the conflict. A 58% majority of Democrats expressed similar sympathy for Israelis and Palestinians (within 1 point on a 0-10 scale, as did 62% of Independents. However, only 38% of Republicans did. A majority of Republicans (54%) rated sympathy for Israel at least 2 points or more higher than sympathy for the Palestinians.

Other indicators were less dramatic, but still showed Republicans as somewhat less critical of Israel. Both sides said the Palestinians have been too unwilling to compromise in the peace process (69% of Republicans and 59% of Democrats). But although a majority of Democrats (53%) also saw Israel as too unwilling to compromise, only 42% of Republicans did.

Among Democrats, about three-quarters blamed both sides about equally for the Middle East conflict, and about the same percentage want the US to not take either side in the conflict. Just about half of Republicans agree on both counts. Majorities in both parties think the US currently takes Israel's side in the Middle East.

Evaluations of the job the president is doing on working for a solution to the conflict are markedly different between the parties. Over 80% of Republicans say Bush is doing an excellent or pretty good job, but 61% of Democrats say he is doing only fair or poor. Fifty-six percent of independents also rated Bush's efforts only fair or poor.

A slim majority of Republicans (54%) think the president could get Israel to stop building new settlements if Bush were willing to use all available options to pressure Sharon; however, a slim majority of Democrats (51%) do not think so. One explanation for these differences is that an overwhelming majority of Republicans (78%) feel that Bush, having won the Iraq war, is in a much stronger position to deal with the Middle East conflict. A majority of independents agree (55% to 32%). However, Democrats are divided, with 48% saying he is in a stronger position and 44% saying he is not in a stronger position. About three-fourths of Republicans and two-thirds of Democrats think Bush will pressure Sharon on the peace process.

## **VARIATIONS BY RELIGION**

Another group that stood out on many questions in the survey was people who describe themselves as fundamentalist Christians (17% of respondents). Among all religious groups, other than Jews, who made up only 2% of the weighted sample,

fundamentalist Christians show the strongest support for Israel and for President Bush, and support a more pro-Israel US policy.

While majorities of Catholics, moderate Christians and others showed a similar level of sympathy for Israelis and Palestinians (52% to 62% of these groups rated sympathy for each side within 1 point), fundamentalist Christians strongly sympathized with Israelis. Sixty percent of this group rated sympathy for Israelis at least 2 points higher than for Palestinians. Also, while strong majorities in other groups (67-74%) blamed both sides for the failure to reach peace in the Middle East, 50% of fundamentalists blamed the Palestinians (47% blamed both sides).

At least 74% in other groups wanted the US to take neither side in the conflict, but only 50% of fundamentalist Christians felt this way. Forty-seven percent preferred to see the US take Israel's side, while no more than 14% in other groups felt that way.

Fundamentalists also showed much stronger support for Bush's efforts in working for a solution to the conflict – 73% said he is doing an excellent or pretty good job, while 57% of Catholics and 53% of other Christians felt this way. Among non-religious respondents, 62% rated Bush's job on the Middle East as only fair or poor.

When asked whether the quartet should evaluate Israel's road map progress or if the US alone should make such assessments, fundamentalists were divided – 43% for the US alone and 48% for the group of four together. Among all other respondents at least 72% favored a multilateral evaluation.

If there were peace between Israel and the Palestinians, strong majorities of 70% or greater of all other groups would support

equalizing aid between Israel and the Palestinians, while fundamentalists are divided on the question (48% favor equalizing while 47% want to continue giving Israel more).

Jewish respondents were such a small sample that it is not possible to make a meaningful analysis.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The poll was fielded by Knowledge Networks, a polling, social science, and market research firm in Menlo Park, California, with a randomly selected sample of its large-scale nationwide research panel. This panel is itself randomly selected from the national population of households having telephones and subsequently provided internet access for the completion of surveys (and thus is not limited to those who already have internet access). The distribution of the sample in the web-enabled panel closely tracks the distribution of United States Census counts for the US population on age, race, Hispanic ethnicity, geographical region, employment status, income, education, etc.

The panel is recruited using stratified random-digit-dial (RDD) telephone sampling. RDD provides a non-zero probability of selection for every US household having a telephone. Households that agree to participate in the panel are provided with free Web access and an Internet appliance, which uses a telephone line to connect to the Internet and uses the television as a monitor. In return, panel members participate in surveys three to four times a month. Survey responses are confidential, with identifying information never revealed without respondent approval. When a survey is fielded to a panel member, he or she receives an e-mail indicating that the survey is available for completion. Surveys are self-administered.

For more information about the methodology, please go to:

[www.knowledgenetworks.com/ganp](http://www.knowledgenetworks.com/ganp)