



***AMERICAN ATTITUDES TOWARD ISRAEL,  
THE PALESTINIANS AND PROSPECTS FOR  
PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST***

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An Anti-Defamation League Survey  
1200 Interviews

October 2009



**Marttila Communications**

## *Methodology*

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On behalf of the Anti-Defamation League, Marttila Communications conducted a national telephone survey between September 26 - October 4, 2009 of 1,747 adults. The base sample is 1,200 plus an oversample of 256 African Americans, and 250 Hispanics, bringing the oversample for both communities to 400 each.

For those questions answered by all 1,200 respondents, the survey results have a margin of error of +/- 2.8%. For many questions, the survey used the technique of “split sampling,” a process in which the 1,200 person sample was split into two demographically representative samples of 600 respondents each. For those questions that were answered by 600 respondents, the survey has a margin of error of +/- 4 %.

The purpose of split sampling in the survey was to maximize the number of questions that could be asked, to test different hypotheses about an issue, and to test the impact of different question wording.

## *Executive Summary*

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When they think about the Middle East conflict, Americans, by decisive numbers, remain more sympathetic to Israel than the Palestinians.

Most Americans continue to believe that our support for Israel makes the U.S. more likely to be targeted for terrorist attacks. However, a clear majority of those people who believe this to be true maintain that we should continue to support Israel in spite of this risk.

A majority of Americans remain skeptical about the prospects for peace between the Israelis and Palestinians.

Americans continue to believe that Israel is very serious about wanting to reach a peace agreement with the Palestinians.

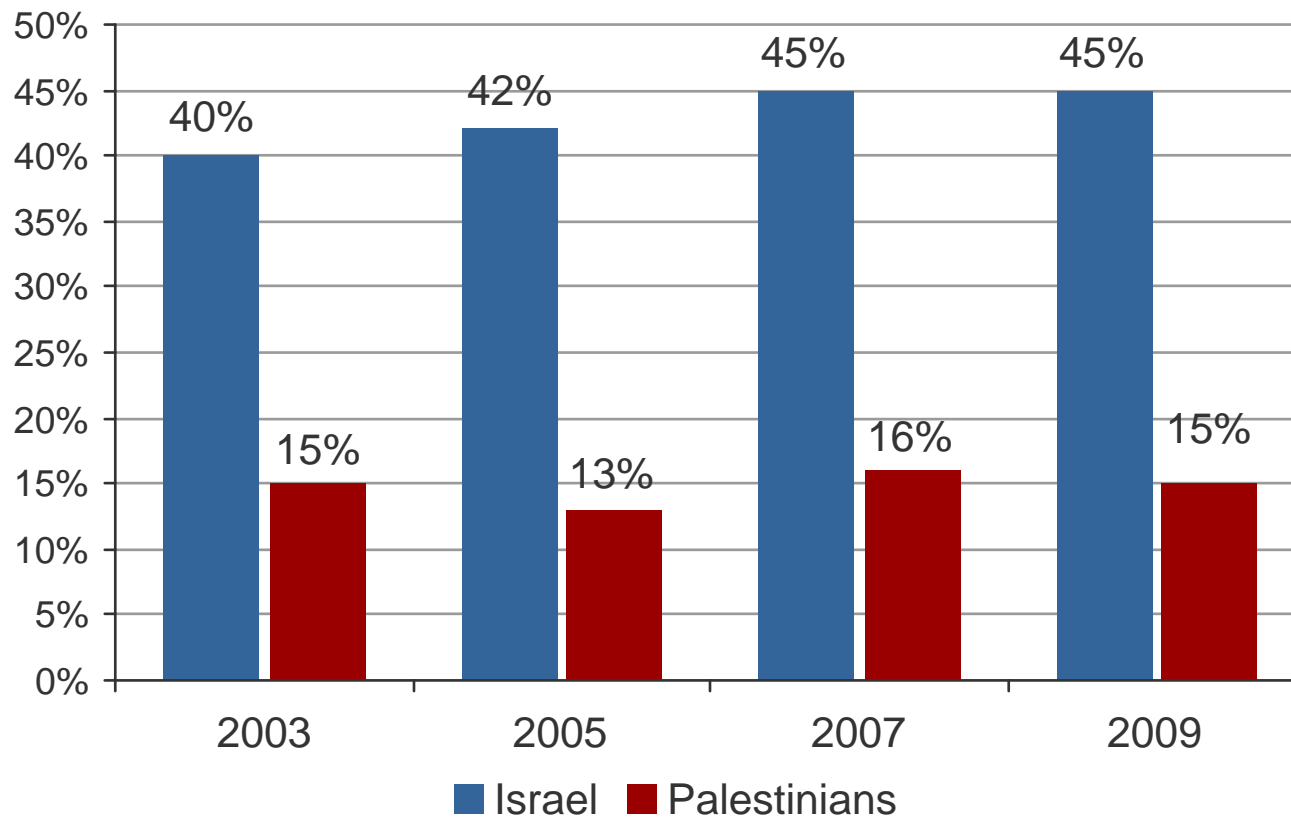
Americans continue to believe that the Israelis and the Palestinians will have to solve their own problems, but there is increased support for U.S. involvement.

Americans support the creation of a Palestinian state, but they believe it must not be established until the Palestinians end the violence and accept Israel's legitimacy.

*When thinking about the conflict in the Middle East, Americans continue to sympathize more with Israel than with the Palestinians.*

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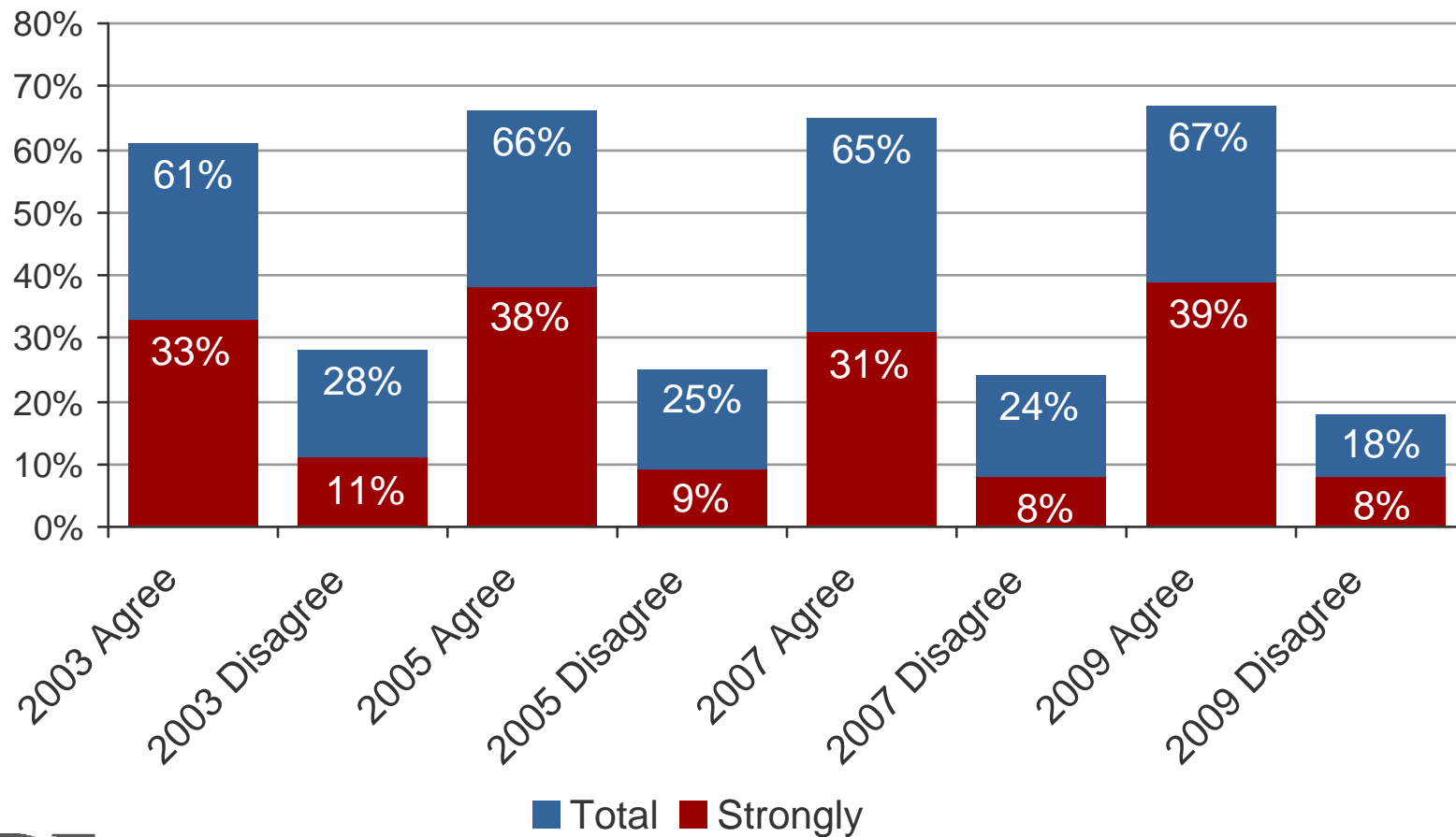
“Thinking specifically about the current conflict between Israel and the Palestinians—are your sympathies more with Israel or the Palestinians?”



*Americans continue to view Israel as a strong US ally.*

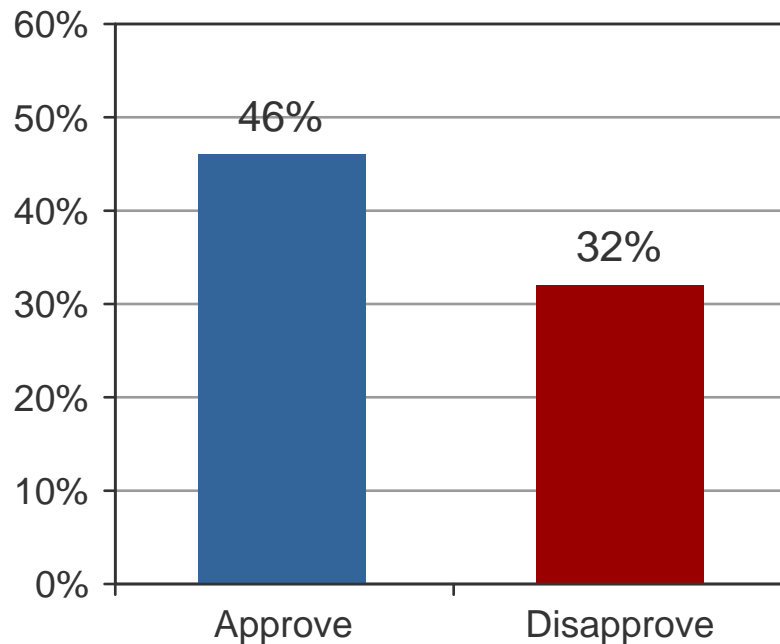
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“Israel can be counted on as a strong, loyal U.S. ally.”

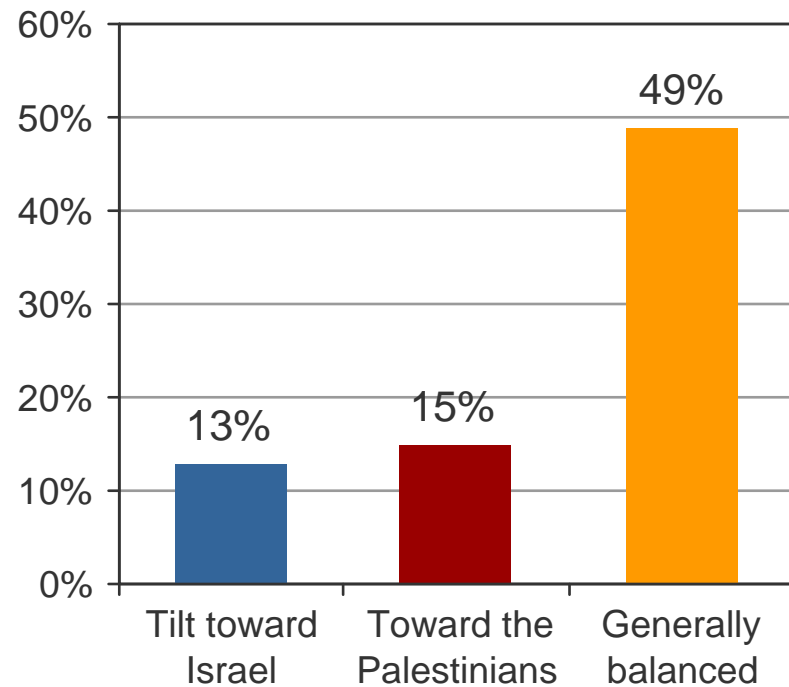


## Obama's management of American Middle East Policy

“And thinking specifically about the Middle East, do you approve or disapprove of the way President Obama is handling US policy toward Israel and the Palestinian territories?”

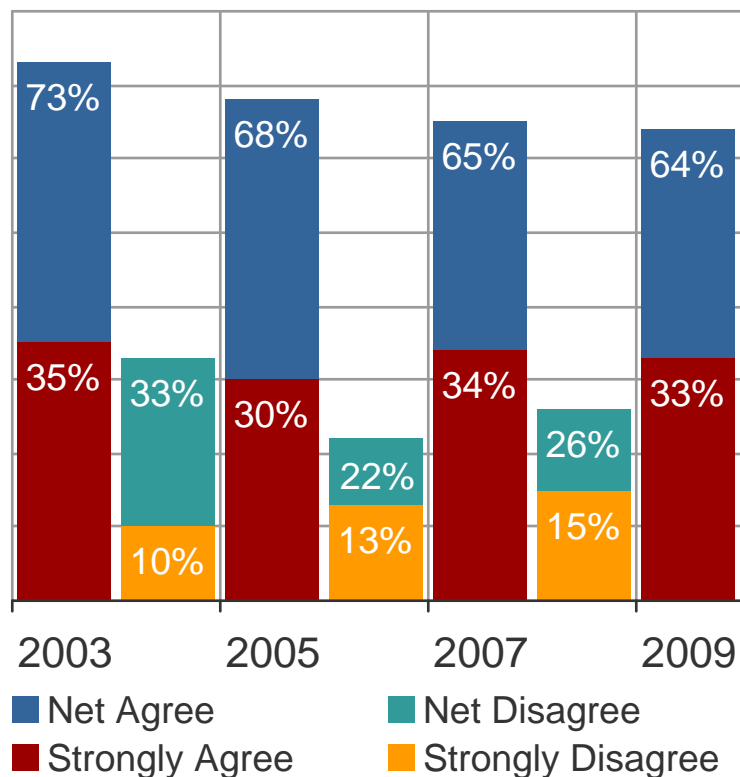


“In your opinion, does the Obama administration tilt toward Israel, the Palestinians, or is it generally balanced in its Middle East policies?”

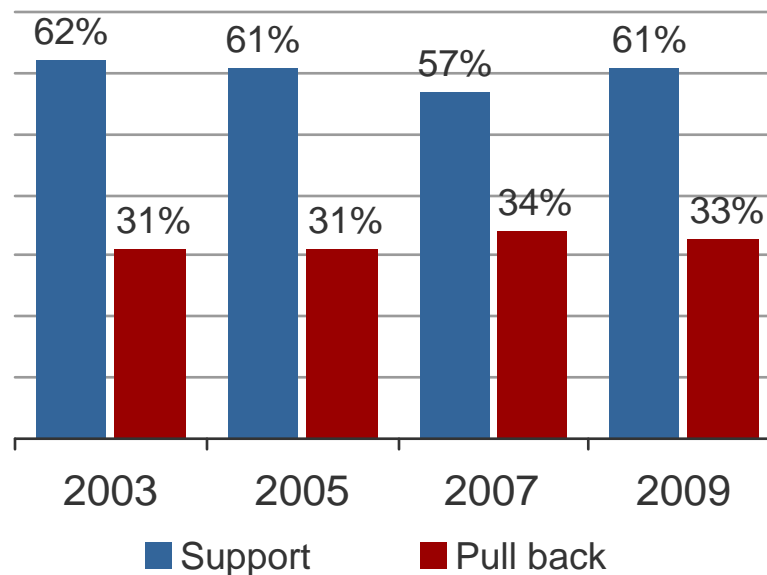


*Most Americans continue to believe that our support for Israel makes the U.S. more likely to be targeted for terrorist attacks. However, a clear majority of those people who believe this to be true maintain that the U.S. should continue to support Israel in spite of this risk.*

“The U.S. is more likely to be targeted for terrorist attack because of our support for Israel.”



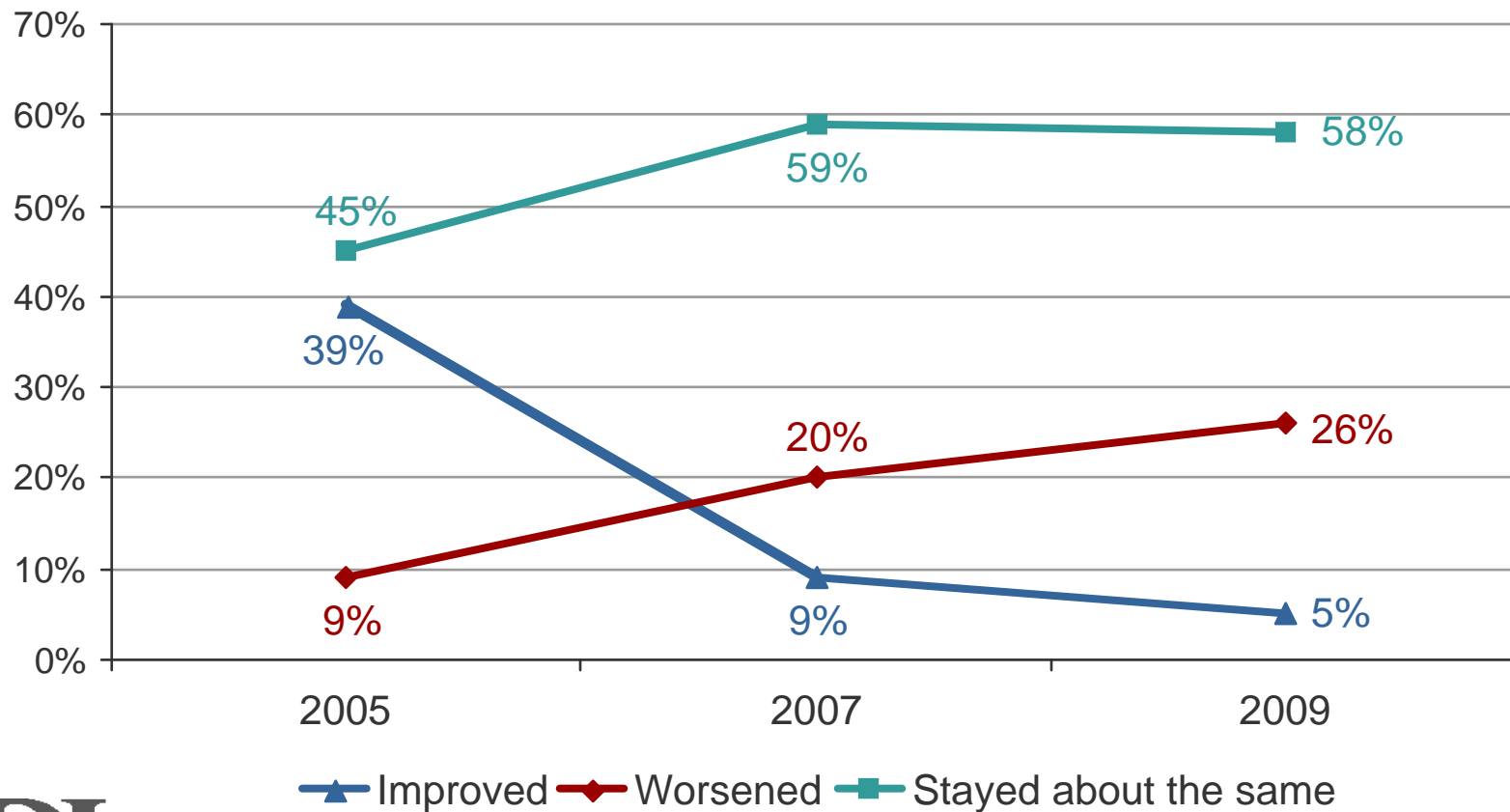
“In your opinion, should the U.S. continue to support Israel even if it means there will be a greater risk of terrorist attacks against America, or should the U.S. pull back from its support of Israel to minimize the risk of a terrorist attack in this country?”



*Americans remain uncertain about the prospects for peace.*

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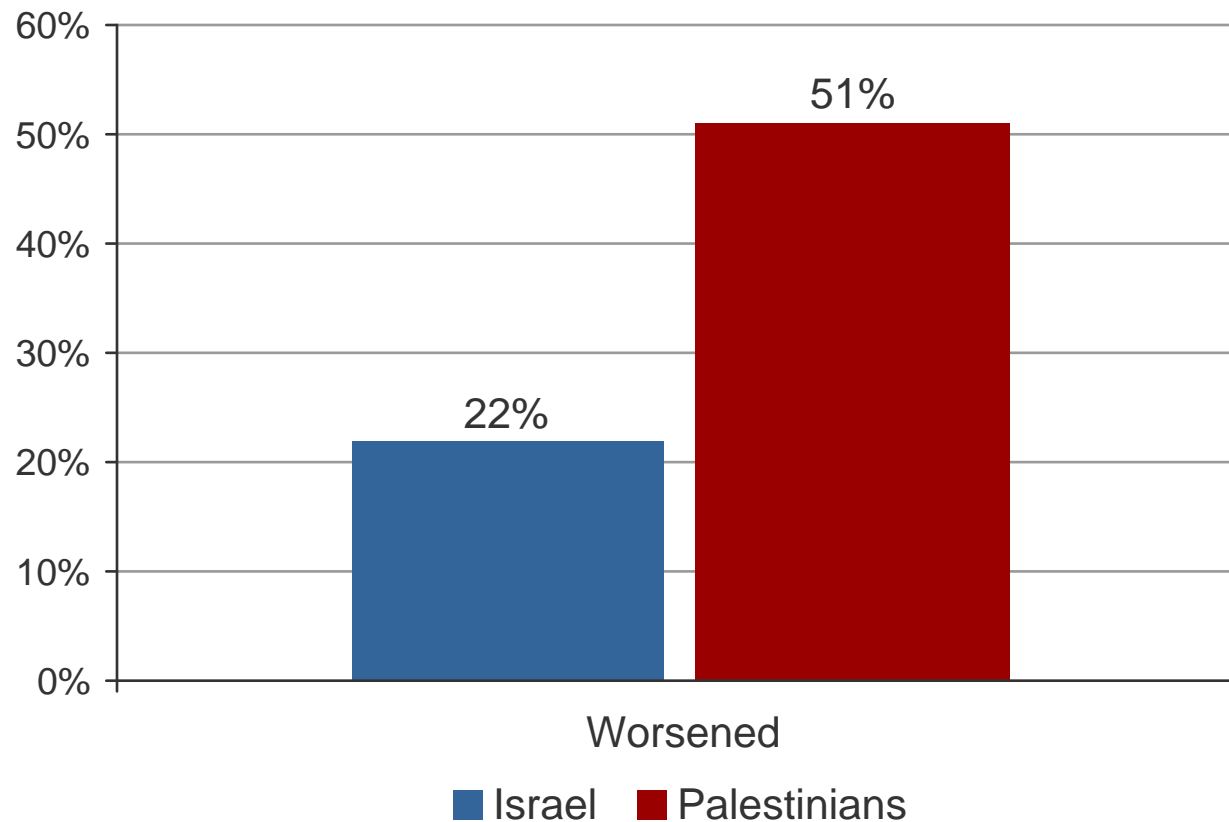
“Over the past six months, do you think the situation between Israel and the Palestinians has improved, worsened or stayed about the same?”



*Among those Americans who believe conditions for peace have worsened over the last 6 months, a majority blame the Palestinians. Among those who believe conditions for peace have improved, most credit the Israelis.*

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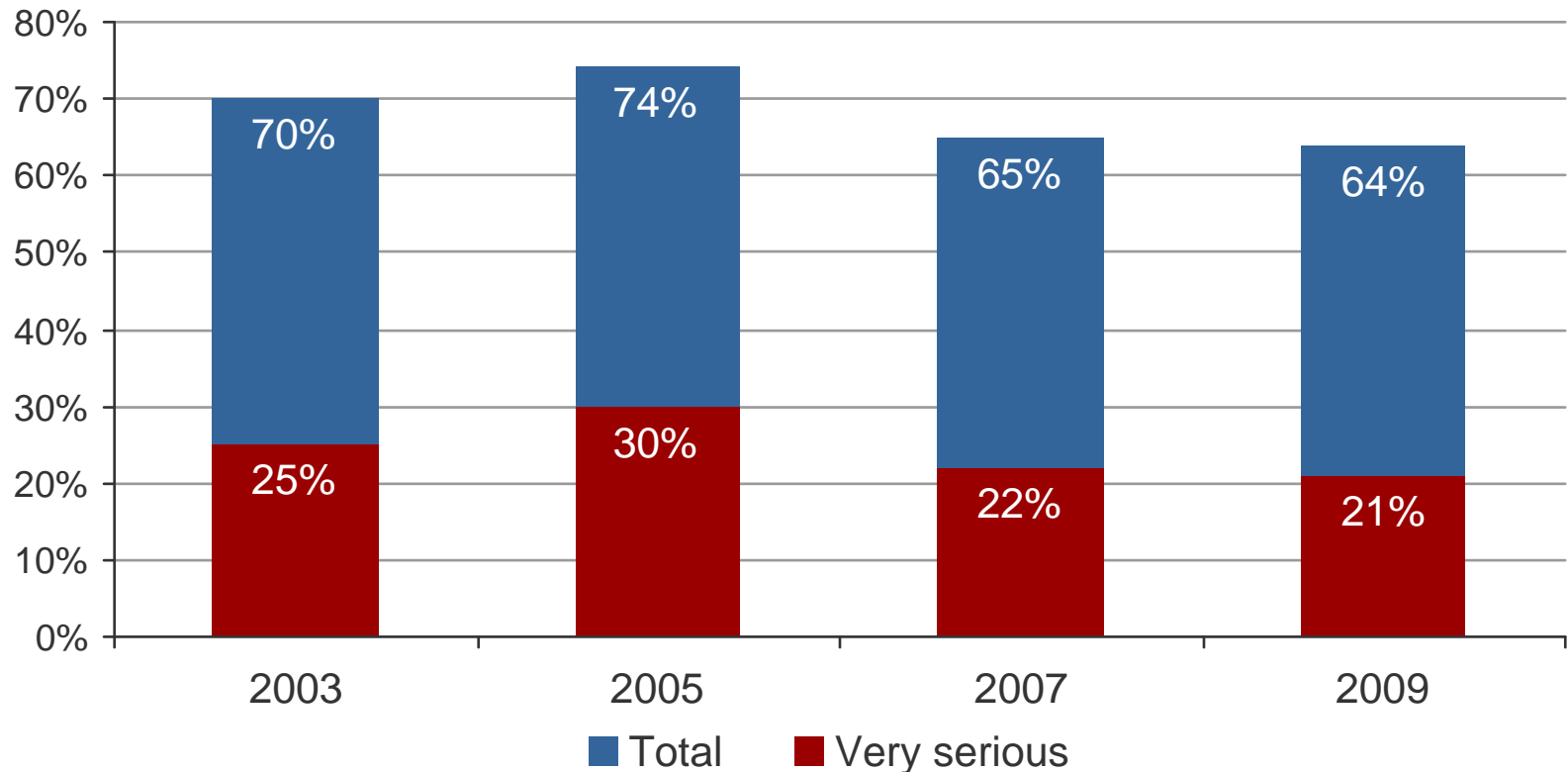
“Who do you think is primarily responsible for this change—Israel, or the Palestinians?”



*Americans continue to believe that Israel is very serious about wanting to reach a peace agreement with the Palestinians.*

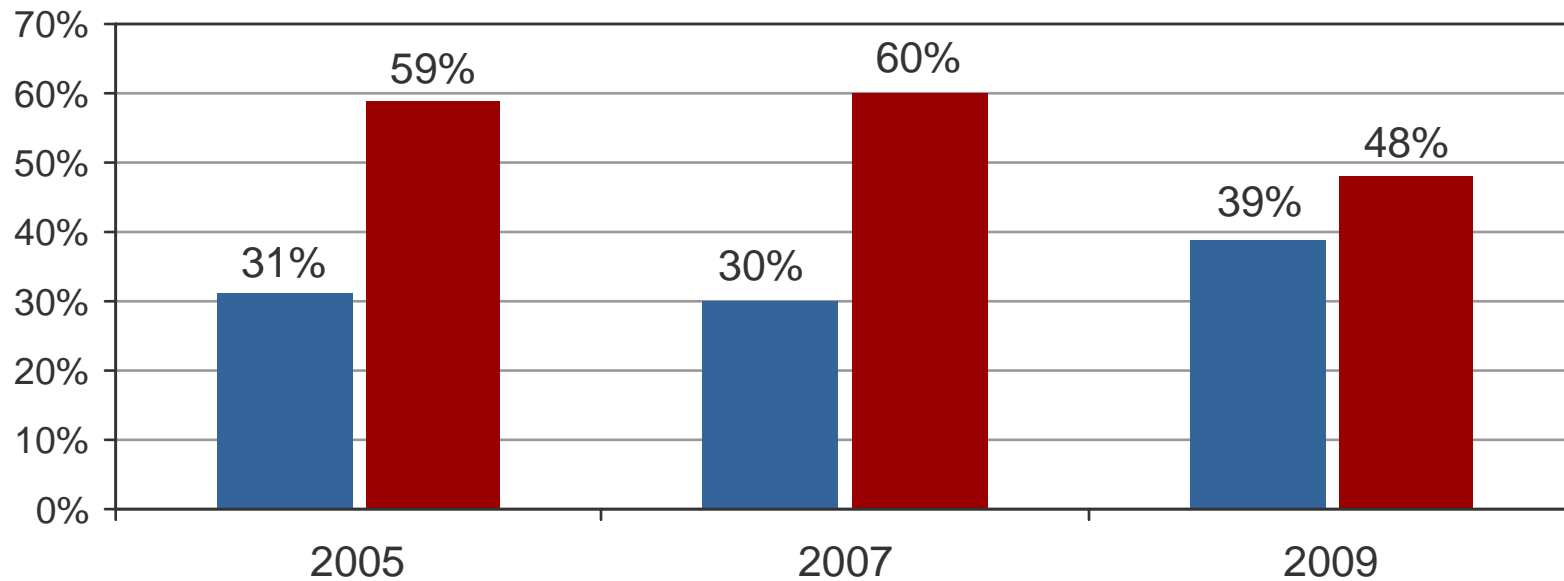
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“In your opinion, how serious is Israel about wanting to reach a peace agreement with the Palestinians -- is it very serious, somewhat serious, not very serious, or not at all serious.”



*Americans continue to believe that it is up to the Palestinians and the Israelis to solve their own problems, but there is increased support for U.S. involvement.*

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- “Peace between the Israelis and the Palestinians will never take place without the continuing leadership and involvement of the U.S. government.”
- “It is up to the Palestinians and the Israelis to solve their own problems; any lasting peace agreement between them must be reached with minimal involvement from the U.S.”

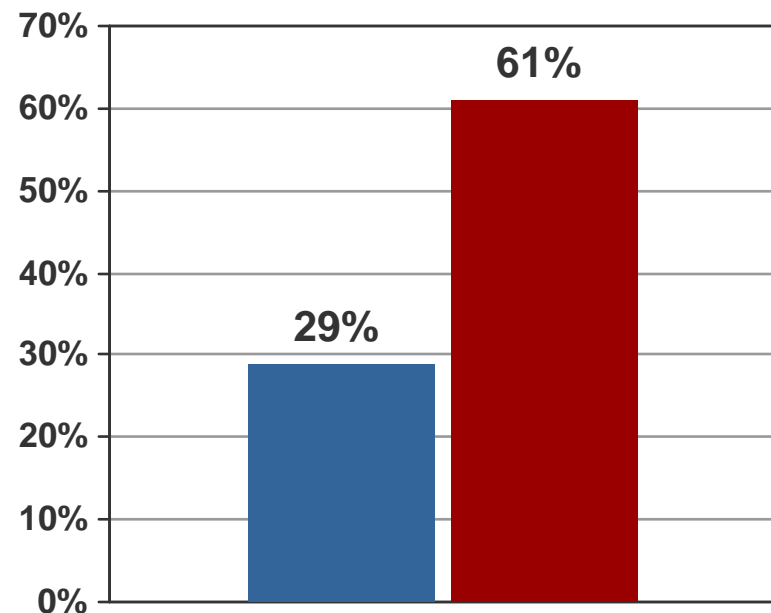
*Americans believe that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict will drag on for years.*

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In discussing their hopes for Middle East peace, senior officials in the Obama administration have said that this moment in history presents a unique opportunity for Israel and the Palestinians to move the peace process forward and come to a lasting agreement.

With these remarks as background, which view is closer to your own:

- “The Israelis and the Palestinians will never have a better opportunity to reach a peace agreement than they do at this moment.”
- “The differences between the Israelis and the Palestinians will drag on for years.”

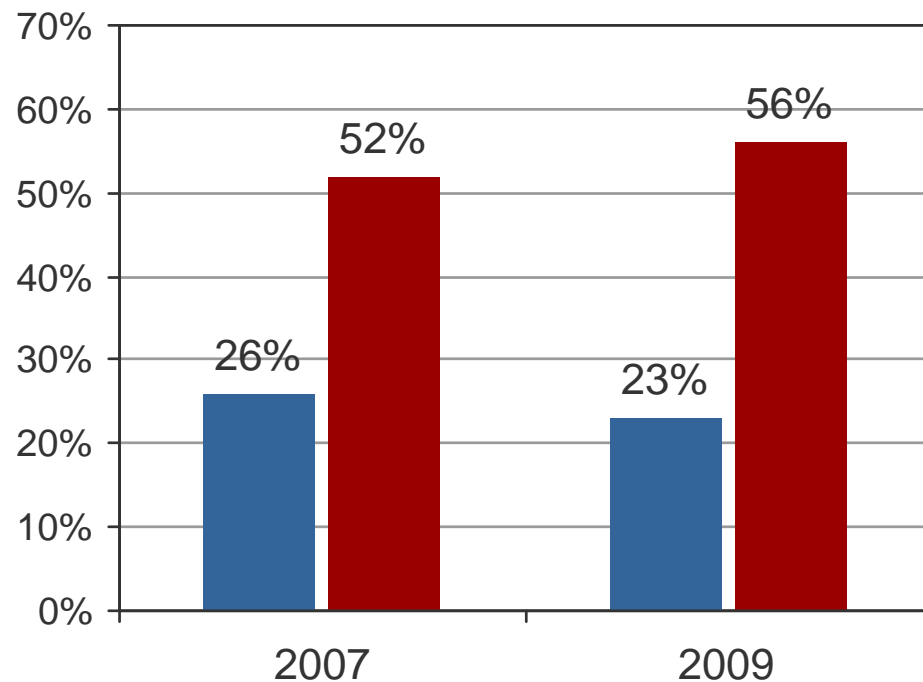


*Americans support the creation of a Palestinian state but they believe it must not be established until the Palestinians end the violence and accept Israel's legitimacy.*

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Which of these next two statements is closest to your own view?

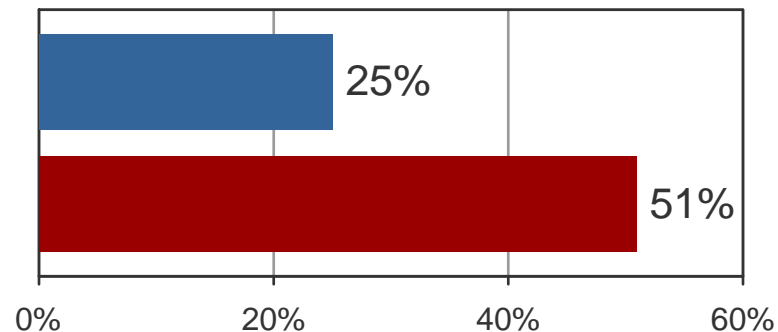
- “The peace process will be strengthened by the creation of a Palestinian state as soon as possible.”
- “A Palestinian state must not be established until Palestinians demonstrate a commitment to end violence and accept Israel's legitimacy.”



*Americans are skeptical about the “peace dividends” that would be realized by Israel stopping all further construction of settlements.*

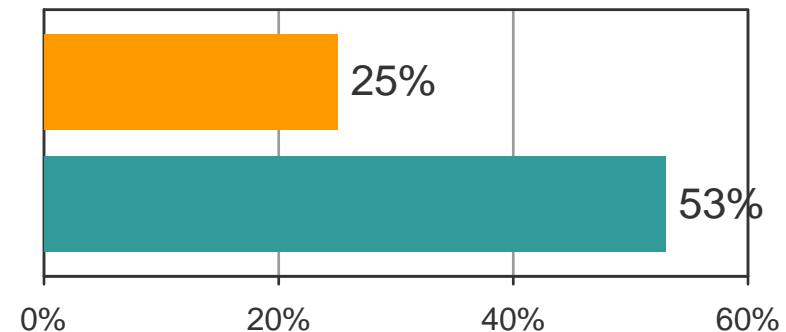
■ “If Israel completely stops all further construction of settlements, the Palestinians would be prepared to negotiate with Israel to achieve a final resolution of the conflict”

■ “Currently there are two Palestinian governments--one on the West Bank and one in Gaza. These two governments completely disagree about the future of the Palestinian and Israeli relationship. There can be no final resolution of the Israeli- Palestinian conflict until there is one unified Palestinian government.”



■ “If Israel completely stops all further construction of settlements, the leaders of the Arab countries will be prepared to negotiate a lasting peace with Israel and recognize Israel’s right to exist.”

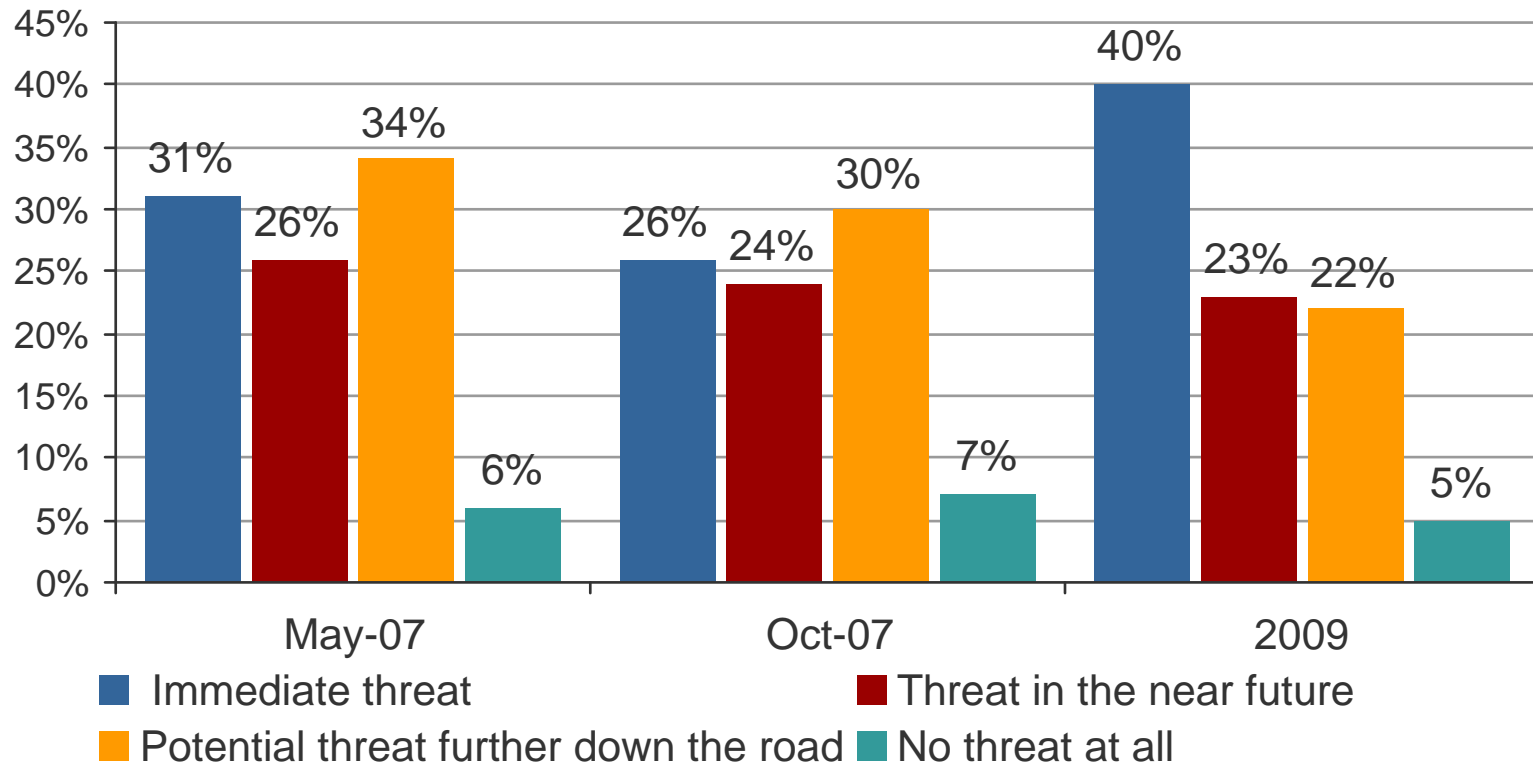
■ “If Israel completely stops all further construction of residential settlements, the leaders of the Arab world will continue to refuse to recognize Israel’s right to exist.”



*A majority of Americans believe Iran is an immediate or short-term threat to the security of the Middle East.*

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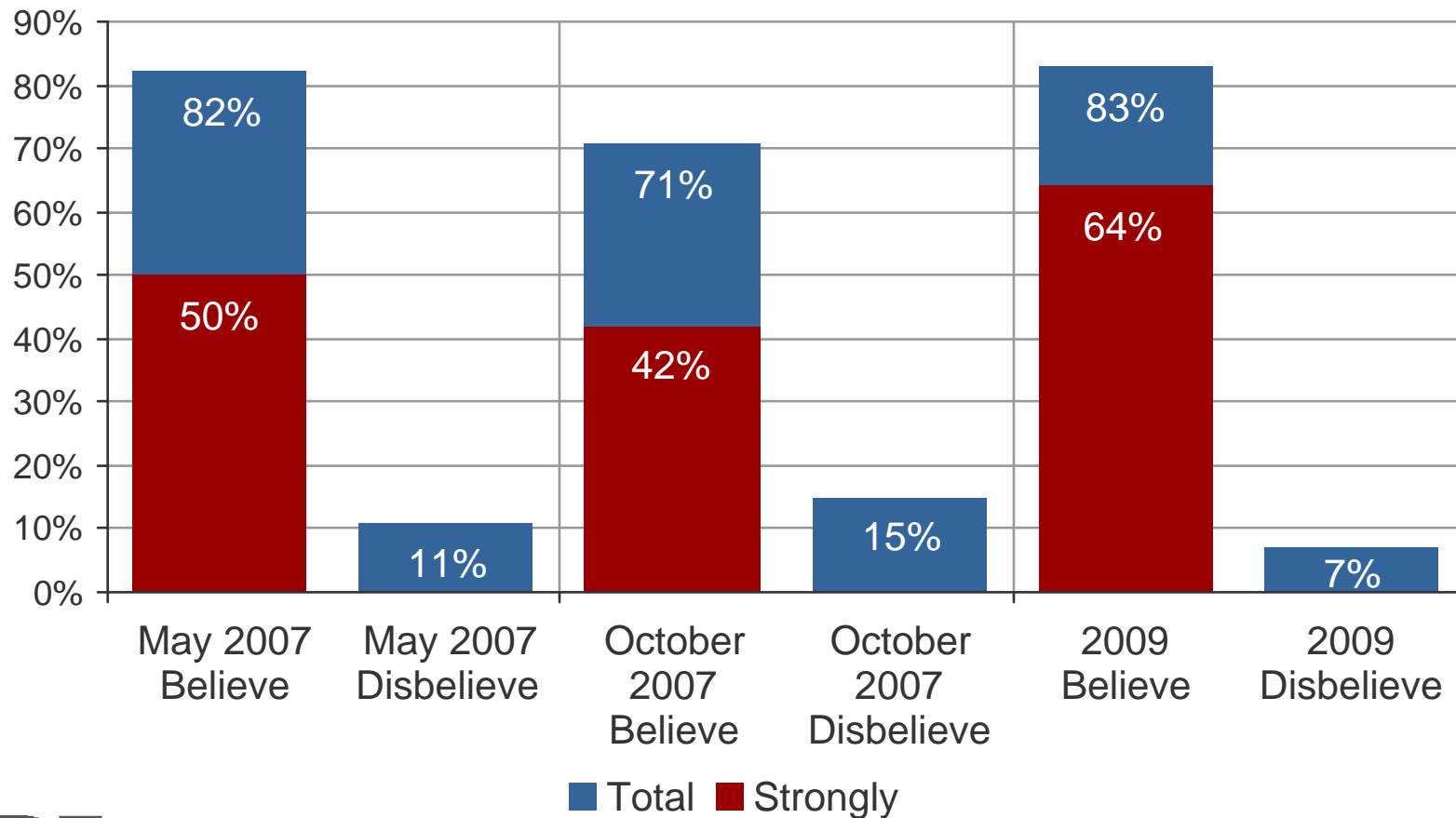
“Iran is an immediate threat to the security of the Middle East, a threat to the security of the Middle East in the near future, a potential threat further down the road, or no threat at all?”



*Americans believe that Iran is developing nuclear weapons.*

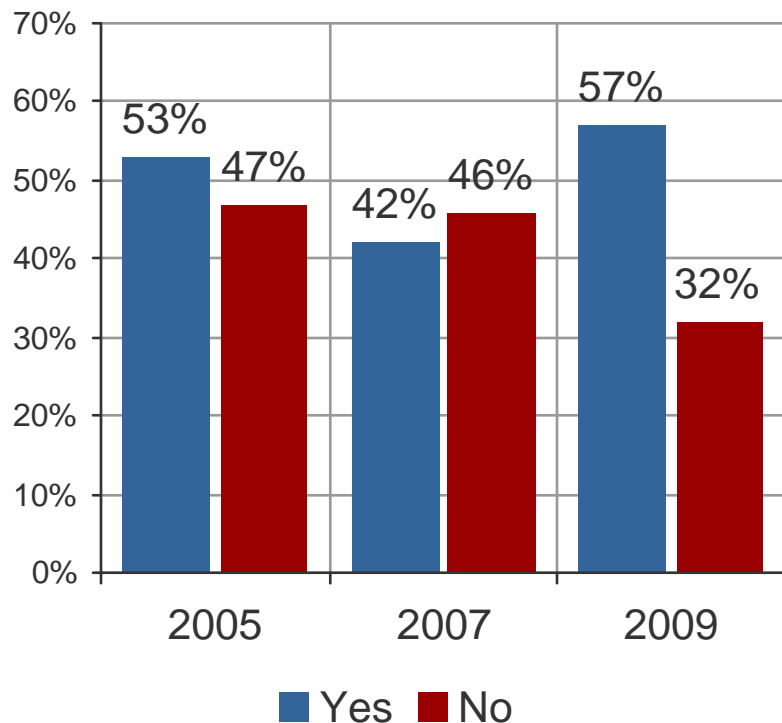
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“Do you believe that Iran is developing nuclear weapons?”



*A majority of Americans (2009) would support military action against Iran by Israel—and by the U.S.—to prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons.*

“Do you think that Israel should take military action to keep Iran from developing or trying to develop a nuclear weapons program?”



“Do you think that United States should take military action to keep Iran from developing or trying to develop a nuclear weapons program?”

