



Former US president Donald Trump speaks during a campaign event at the Whittemore Center Arena on December 16, 2023 in Durham, New Hampshire. **GETTY IMAGES**

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hesion. This is in contrast to China and Europe, which are reducing income inequality and mending social divides. In the US, however, the division has deepened. This is a weakness for the US. Nevertheless, one should not assume that the US is in a state of collapse. The US remains the world's foremost power, but the new issue is that the country's global credibility has been lost or is diminishing. China is economically weaker than the US, but it has gained global credibility in industrial and IT sectors. Russia, while being militarily weaker than the US, was able to annex Crimea and then attack Ukraine, and the US and NATO have not taken effective action against it. These incidents indicate a decline in Washington's international credibility. Therefore, while the US is still the top global power, it is facing challenges to its international credibility.

Recently, the results of a Harvard University poll were released, showing that 51% of American youth support the establishment of a Palestinian state and the ending of Israel, which is contrary to official US policies. How do you evaluate this gap between the American people and their government?

This poll reflects the sentiments of the American people regarding Israel's actions in Gaza. However, decisions in the US are not made based on these polls but rather on US national interests, where powerful lobbies and interest groups, including the Jewish lobby, have a significant influence on decision-making. Despite these anti-Zionist sentiments among American youth, the relationship between Israel and the US remains a strategic one that is aligned with US national interests. For example, despite this poll and the anti-Zionist tendencies among American youth, the US sells a considerable number of weapons to Israel, providing regional conflicts involving Israel as pretext.

US biggest security threat to region: Arab nations

89% of Arab citizens oppose normalization with Israel



By **Ebrahim Beheshti**
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Benjamin Netanyahu, the hawkish prime minister of Israel, claimed in the early days of his devastating assault on Gaza in response to Hamas's October 7, 2023, attack on occupied territories that this war would bring fundamental changes to the West Asia region. However, the realities of the West Asian region and Arab nations suggest otherwise. At least in the realm of public opinion in Arab countries, these developments have not played out in favor of Israel and its main supporter, the United States. On January 14, 2024, an extensive report on the results of a public survey involving 8,000 respondents from 16 Arab countries was released. Conducted by the Arab Center for Research & Policy Studies based in Doha, Qatar, the survey explored the opinions of Arab citizens on issues regarding the Gaza war and the involved actors. Among the key findings, it is noteworthy that the majority of the Arab community supports Hamas's October 7 attack, considers the US positions in the Gaza war as incorrect, perceives the Palestinian issue as relevant to the entire Arab world, and opposes the formal recognition of Israel. Comparing the results of this poll with similar

surveys in 2022 reveals that Israel's hawkish policies and US support in the Gaza war have nullified whatever progress the two countries had made in changing negative attitudes in the Arab world towards themselves, evidenced by the fact that such attitudes have become more prevalent.

According to this year's survey, contrary to the narrative of pro-Israel media, 67% of Arab citizens consider Hamas's October 7 operation as a legitimate resistance operation, with only 5% labeling it as an illegitimate operation. Meanwhile, 94% of respondents assess the US position in the Gaza war negatively. Interestingly, 76% of the community stated that their positions towards the US have become more negative after the Gaza war. Additionally, 81% believe that the US is not serious about establishing an independent Palestinian state.

Most notably, 77% of respondents consider the US and Israel as the biggest threats to the region's security and stability. 51% of the total respondents view the US as the biggest threat, compared to 26% who consider Israel to be the biggest threat.

Israel and the US have pursued an Iranophobic policy in recent years, attempting to portray Tehran as the main threat in the region. However, this public opinion poll indicates a stark difference between the views of Arab nations and their governments, as only 7% see Iran as the biggest threat to regional security. The ineffectiveness of Iranophobic pol-

icies becomes more evident when comparing the results to previous years. In 2018, 13% of Arab citizens considered Tehran the main threat, which decreased to 10% in 2020 and further to 7% in 2022. Meanwhile, in the latest survey of January 5, 2024, negative attitudes towards the US have risen sharply to 51%. In 2020, 44% of Arab respondents considered the US the biggest regional threat, which decreased to 39% in 2022 but surged to 51% thereafter in 2024.

This survey underscores two main points: first, Arab nations have a significantly different evaluation of the Palestinian and Israeli issues compared to their governments, and second, the efforts and policies of the Biden administration have failed to reduce anti-American sentiments in the West Asian region, particularly among Arab countries. Israel's destructive attacks on Gaza, which were done with US support, have had a pronounced impact on exacerbating negative evaluations towards both the US and Israel. Ultimately, the exorbitant costs paid by Israel and the US to portray Iran as the primary regional threat have borne no fruit. The realities are much more tangible than what American media's promotional policies can conceal.

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US President Joe Biden attends a meeting with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, as he visits Israel amid the ongoing conflict between Israel and Hamas, in Tel Aviv, Israel, October 18, 2023. **REUTERS**