

**To:** Interested Parties  
**Fr:** Gretchen Barton, Founder of Worthy Strategy Group  
Mark Riddle, President of Future Majority  
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**Sb:** A Wall Around our Democracy

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Jewish people should not be used as a political football, and when it comes to antisemitism, 52% of Americans broadly agree that it is a problem that goes beyond partisan and ideological differences versus something that should be blamed on the left or the right. This has not stopped talking heads and social media feeds from doing so, which unfortunately, according to research, leads to more blame, division, and extremism.

While the problem of antisemitism has been focused domestically on bad actors, there are larger players manipulating our current situation. This fosters anti-American sentiment on both the left and the right, seeding discord and leading to a place where young people on the left and right are embracing anti-American sentiment and parroting disinformation from foreign actors.

In recent months, college campuses have erupted into protests against Israel and support for Palestinians. At the same time, **according to the ADL, post-October 7th, antisemitic attacks are up by 388% compared to last year in the United States. This number continues to grow.** In light of this and what is happening abroad, our team as part of a bipartisan working group was engaged to study the problem of antisemitism to understand with precision what is driving anti-Jewish sentiment for different age groups and what can effectively move them away from antisemitism and toward pro-Jewish beliefs.

As part of this initiative, we pulled together a representative poll of n=2174 Americans from across the United States (margin of error 2.2%). The poll was conducted April 18-24, 2024, by Change Research in partnership with Worthy Strategy Group and Future Majority.

**What we found in the data suggested a targeted psy-op against the American people, exploiting vulnerabilities in our social media, boosting anti-Israel sentiment, and leading to pro-Hamas, anti-semitic beliefs. It is our belief that now is the time for our nation to come together, call out these bad actors and pass legislation to equip citizens with the freedom to understand how these foreign actors have been trying to covertly manipulate and work to secretly destroy us. Americans deserve the truth and they deserve transparency, and they deserve the ability to see how foreign governments are manipulating them and their children to give them the ability to push back.**

*NOTE: Polling was conducted online from April 20-24, 2024. Using Dynamic Online Sampling to obtain a representative sample, Change Research polled 2174 voters nationwide. Post-stratification was performed on age, gender, race/ethnicity, education, region, and 2020 Presidential vote. The results have a margin of error of 2.2 percentage points.*

## TOP-LINE RESULTS:

1. If the 2024 election were held today, which of the following issues would be most important in deciding your vote? You can choose **THREE**.

- 32%** Inflation and the cost of goods
- 31% Illegal immigration and border security
- 25% Government corruption
- 22% Abortion restrictions/bans
- 7% Israel's war in Gaza (#14 on list)
- 7% Foreign aid being sent to other countries (#15 on list)
- 5% The Russia/Ukraine war (#19 on list)

2. How favorable are your feelings about each of the following world leaders? If you haven't heard of them, please indicate it.

	Neutral	Never Heard	Total Favorable	Total Unfavorable
President Volodymyr Zelenskyy – Ukraine	19%	6%	<b>46%</b>	<b>29%</b>
Former President Donald Trump - United States	5%	1%	<b>40%</b>	<b>53%</b>
President Joe Biden - United States	7%	1%	<b>35%</b>	<b>57%</b>
Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu - Israel	16%	9%	<b>30%</b>	<b>44%</b>
Prime Minister Rishi Sunak - United Kingdom	<b>38%</b>	25%	<b>16%</b>	<b>21%</b>
Prime Minister Viktor Orbán - Hungary	24%	<b>40%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>28%</b>
Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman - Saudi Arabia	24%	24%	<b>4%</b>	<b>47%</b>
President Vladimir Putin - Russia	11%	1%	<b>5%</b>	<b>83%</b>
Ismail Haniyeh - Leader of Hamas from the Palestinian Territories	10%	19%	<b>3%</b>	<b>69%</b>
Ali Khamenei - Supreme Leader of Iran	10%	21%	<b>2%</b>	<b>67%</b>
President Xi Jinping - China	14%	9%	<b>2%</b>	<b>74%</b>

**3. How favorable are your feelings about each of the following countries/territories? If you haven't heard of them, please indicate it.**

	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Never Heard</b>	<i>Total Favorable</i>	<i>Total Unfavorable</i>
The United States	9%	0%	<b>73%</b>	<b>17%</b>
Canada	21%	0%	<b>63%</b>	<b>16%</b>
Taiwan	<b>46%</b>	1%	<b>45%</b>	<b>8%</b>
Ukraine	27%	0%	<b>47%</b>	<b>25%</b>
Israel	24%	0%	<b>41%</b>	<b>34%</b>
Mexico	33%	0%	<b>34%</b>	<b>32%</b>
Palestine	30%	1%	<b>19%</b>	<b>50%</b>
Russia	17%	0%	<b>6%</b>	<b>77%</b>
China	20%	0%	<b>5%</b>	<b>74%</b>
Iran	17%	1%	<b>3%</b>	<b>78%</b>

**4. How much have you heard about the events of October 7th, 2023 in Israel?**

- 53%** A great deal
- 28% A moderate amount
- 12% Only a little
- 6% Nothing at all

**5. As far as you know, is the organization Hamas:**

- 47%** A terrorist organization based in the Palestinian territory
- 4% The elected government in the Palestinian territory
- 32% Both of these
- 4% Neither one
- 13% Don't really know

**6. When it comes to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which of the following comes closest to your opinion, even if none is exactly right?**

- 48%** My views on the two sides are complicated and not black and white
- 33% I wholeheartedly support Israel without any reservations
- 10% I wholeheartedly support the Palestinian cause without any reservations
- 9% I don't know enough to have a strong opinion

**7. When it comes to the Israeli-Hamas conflict, do you agree or disagree with the following statements?**

	Not Sure	Total Agree	Total Disagree
“That part of the world has been fighting over land and religion for hundreds of years and this is just the latest battle.”	7	71	22
“When it comes to Israel, I don’t feel like I can speak freely without being misunderstood.”	14	54	31
“Hamas attacks on Israel are justified.”	10	13	77

**8. If you had to choose, who is most responsible for the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians?**

- 49% **Hamas**
- 20% Israel
- 9% Palestinians
- 1% Jews
- 21% Not sure

**9. In your view, was the October 7th attack on Israel by Hamas justified?**

- 92% **No**
- 8% Yes

**10. Thinking about the broader Israeli-Palestinian conflict, do you think Israel is seriously interested in a peaceful solution, or not?**

- 41% **Israel is NOT seriously interested in a peaceful solution**
- 32% Israel IS seriously interested in a peaceful solution
- 27% Not sure

**11. Thinking about the broader Israeli-Palestinian conflict, do you think the Palestinians are seriously interested in a peaceful solution, or not?**

- 50% **Palestinians are NOT seriously interested in a peaceful solution**
- 23% Palestinians ARE seriously interested in a peaceful solution
- 27% Not sure

**12. What drives anti-Semitism in the U.S. today? Is it mostly:**

- 52% **A problem that goes beyond partisan and ideological differences**
- 26% A problem coming from the political left
- 22% A problem coming from the political right

**13. Do you think the protests on college campuses about the war in Gaza are:**

- 46% **Deeply troubling and a sign of growing anti-semitism and corruption of educational institutions.**
- 31% Not important to me. I don’t go to college. College students protest wars. They always have. It’s no different than during Vietnam, Iraq, or any other recent conflict.
- 23% Not sure

**14. The following are some statements candidates could make. Which candidate are you more likely to vote for?**

- 48%** “America needs to push for a ceasefire of Israel’s war in Gaza and end the growing humanitarian crisis.”
- 35% “America needs to support Israel in their effort to destroy the terrorist organization Hamas.”
- 17% Not sure

**15. The following are some statements candidates could make. Which candidate are you more likely to vote for?**

- 51%** “America needs to defend Israel from drone and missile attacks from Iran and prevent a wider war in the Middle East.”
- 32% “America should stay out of the conflict between Iran and Israel and let them resolve it themselves.”
- 18% Not sure

**16. How important is it to maintain the US/Israeli alliance?**

- 73%** Very or Somewhat important
- 10% Not too important
- 11% Not important at all
- 7% Not sure

**17. How much influence do you believe that foreign governments like China and Russia have in influencing political division in America, including the recent rise in anti-semitism and Islamophobia?**

- 48%** A lot of influence
- 35% Some influence
- 8% Not too much influence
- 4% No influence at all
- 5% Not sure

**18. Corruption is the global problem of our time. The leaders of Hamas - Ismail Haniyeh, Moussa Abu Marzuk and Khaled Mashal - are corrupt billionaire autocrats who live at the Four Seasons in Dubai, year-round, under armed guard and make their money from taking humanitarian aid intended for the Palestinian people in Gaza and the West Bank. Hamas is no different from other authoritarian leaders in Russia, China, and Saudi Arabia. They are in it for themselves, not the people they claim to represent.**

**How persuasive is this statement?**

- 80%** Very or somewhat persuasive
- 20% Not too or not at all persuasive

**19. There are no clean hands when it comes to the Israeli/Palestinian conflict. For years, Israel’s leader, Netanyahu, has been encouraging Qatari funding of Hamas, creating division between the Palestinian Authority, who lead the West Bank, and Hamas, who lead Gaza, in order to prevent the creation of a Palestinian state.**

**How persuasive is this statement?**

- 53%** Very or somewhat persuasive
- 47% Not too or not at all persuasive

## THE RIP TIDE:

Upon review of the top-line numbers, most of it aligns with anticipated voter attitudes. Through a political lens, voters fall into their generalized camps – especially as we are heading into the U.S. Presidential election. However, several data points that aligned were troubling and we are highlighting for discussion. While it is super important to not cast wide dispersions and to understand that there are long-held beliefs and complicating factors involved, including the overwhelming prevalence of social media in our lives (now consistently ranked at the near top of where people get their news), we will note the following:

### Young Women 18-34

- On the Q of favorability of countries, young women said the United States favorable/unfavorable is 45/41 compared to 73/17 with the overall electorate. **A 52-point difference.**
- On the Q of favorability of countries, young women said Israel's favorable/unfavorable is 14/56 compared to 41/34 with the poll's average. **A 49-point difference.** Palestine favorable/unfavorable 40/24 compared to the overall electorate's average at 19/50. **A 37-point difference.**
- On the Q of " Hamas attacks on Israel are justified" this demo agreed and disagreed 29/57. However, the overall electorate average is 13/77. **A 36-point difference.**
- On the Q of "Was the October 7<sup>th</sup> attack on Israel by Hamas justified" this demo said yes 23% and no 77%. Nationally, respondents said 8% yes and 92% no. (This Q was after the explainer of how many people were killed in the Oct 7th attack). **A 15-point difference.**
- On the Q of the important issue deciding vote, this group picked Israel's war in Gaza **+11 points higher** than the national sample average.
- This group of young women views far right extremism more of a problem in America than far left extremism by **60 points.**

### The Rip Tide appears to be mostly caused by TikTok.

This group of young women lists TikTok as a source of news **20 points higher** (31 to 11) over the poll's average. While sentiments are not as visceral as the general group of women 18-34 years old, TikTok usage was highest for Hispanic women at 33% and also Black men at 17%.

This carried over into their sentiment as well. 48% of Black Men and 39% of Hispanic women agreed that "Israelis are mostly privileged white people" and 72% of Black Men and 67% of Hispanic women agreed that "Israel is a settler colonialist state that stole Palestinian land and displaced the Palestinian people."

What's clear from this is that social media is spreading disinformation at alarming rates, without repercussions or any checks on their power. We know that TikTok suppresses pro-Israel content

and amplifies pro-Hamas content, but it's not just TikTok - other social media outlets like Instagram, Facebook, Threads, YouTube and Twitter/X are also sources of significant disinformation.

The risk here is foreign powers infiltrating social media to fan the flames by playing to young Americans' social justice lens on the conflict in which Israel is the unequivocal oppressor and Palestinians the victims. By feeding misinformation on the platform consistent with this lens, these bad actors may fuel and propagate stereotypes about legitimate claims to the land and ahistorical comparisons to the Holocaust and young people may parrot them without recognizing the anti-Semitic undertones. This is the type of anti-Semitism we think poses a greater risk among this demographic. Young people in this poll expressed very low endorsement of any anti-Jewish individual level stereotypes about Jews being greedy, shifty/untrustworthy, or engaged in powerful conspiracies for power and influence.

## **STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATION: BUILD A WALL AROUND OUR DEMOCRACY**

- 1.** “U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken tells CNN the US has seen evidence of China attempting to influence upcoming US elections” (4-26-24). Data and money trails lead us to conclude the Secretary is correct. **But this is only part of the story.** We also know that Russia, Iran, and other bad actors are actively engaged and have learned how to use social media tools to manipulate the American people on the left and the right in a much more effective way since 2016. This needs to be exposed and the American public must be educated in a non-partisan effort. **The story should be centered on freedom, American strength, transparency, and anti-corruption.**
- 2.** A hard reset and public education regarding October 7, hostages, and who exactly is Hamas needs to be implemented - especially to younger Americans. It is a very slippery vertical from hating Israel to anti-semitism. To the Jewish population it is the same thing. Again, **this is about corruption and foreign manipulation.** In addition, a sustained but longer term effort to reset the right versus wrong social justice frame - particularly with younger women - **is critical to stop and repair the damage from this blatant manipulation.**
- 3.** Pass legislation like The Platform Accountability and Transparency Act (PATA). It is a bipartisan bill proposed in the U.S. Congress that aims to increase transparency and accountability of major social media platforms. It would require these companies to share data with independent researchers and the public, enabling a better understanding of their algorithms, content moderation practices, and societal impacts. It is very important that Congress works in a bipartisan manner to **increase transparency, expose corrupt behavior, and keep our children safe.**

**For more information about this project, please contact Gretchen Barton with Worthy Strategy Group at [gretchen@worthystrategygroup.com](mailto:gretchen@worthystrategygroup.com) or Mark Riddle with Future Majority at [mark.riddle@futuremajority.org](mailto:mark.riddle@futuremajority.org).**