Hamas Seen as More to Blame Than Israel for Current Violence

*Deep Partisan Divide in Reactions to Mideast Fighting*

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ON THIS REPORT:

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Hamas Seen as More to Blame Than Israel for Current Violence

Deep Partisan Divide in Reactions to Mideast Fighting

As fighting continues to rage in Gaza amid calls for a cease-fire, about twice as many Americans say Hamas (40%) as Israel (19%) is responsible for the current violence.

Just a quarter (25%) believe that Israel has gone too far in responding to the conflict; far more think Israel’s response has been about right (35%) or that it has not gone far enough (15%).

The new national survey by the Pew Research Center, conducted July 24-27 among 1,005 adults, finds substantial partisan divisions over which side is most responsible for the violence and Israel’s response to the conflict.

A majority of Republicans (60%) say Hamas is most responsible for the current violence. Democrats are divided: 29% say Hamas is more responsible, 26% Israel, while 18% volunteer that both sides are responsible.

There also are deep differences over Israel’s response to the conflict: Nearly half of Republicans (46%) say Israel’s response has been about right while another 19% say it has not gone far enough; just 16% think Israel’s response has been excessive. Among Democrats, as many say Israel has gone too far (35%) as say its response has been about right (31%); 9% say Israel has not gone far enough.
A Pew Research Center survey conducted earlier this month found that the partisan gap in Mideast sympathies is as wide as it has been at any point since the late 1970s. Nearly three quarters of Republicans (73%) said they sympathize more with Israel than the Palestinians, compared with 45% of independents and 44% of Democrats.

**Views of Israel’s Response to the Conflict**

There are broad demographic divides in views of Israel’s response to the conflict that go beyond party identification.

By about two-to-one (40% to 22%), more whites consider Israel’s response to the current conflict about right than say it has gone too far. By contrast, blacks and Hispanics are about as likely to say Israel’s response has gone too far as to say it has been appropriate (36%-27% and 35%-28%, respectively).

Older Americans have long offered more support for Israel than younger adults. In the current survey, a 39% plurality of those over 50 say Israel’s response to the conflict has been about right, compared with 22% who say it has gone too far. Among those under 50, about as many say Israel’s actions have been excessive (29%) as appropriate (33%).

College graduates are roughly divided between viewing the Israeli response as having gone too far (32%) and saying it has been about right (36%). Among those with less education, pluralities say the response from Israel has been appropriate.

Liberal Democrats are among the most likely to view Israel’s response as excessive: 44% say they have gone too far in the conflict with Hamas, compared to 33% who say the response

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Younger Adults Divided over Israel’s Response in Conflict with Hamas</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Israel’s response to conflict with Hamas ...</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>College grad+</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>HS or less</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republican</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democrat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Survey conducted July 24-27, 2014. Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding. Whites and blacks include only those who are not Hispanic; Hispanics are of any race.

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has been about right. At the other end of the spectrum, 51% of conservative Republicans say
Israel’s response has been about right; just 10% say it has gone too far.

When fighting flared between Israel and Hamas in January 2009, 50% said the Israeli response to the conflict was about right compared with 24% who thought it went too far; just 7% thought Israel did not go far enough.

And in August 2006, amid fighting between Israel and Hezbollah, the plurality view also was that Israel’s response was appropriate (44%). About a quarter said it had gone too far (23%), compared with 15% who said it had not gone far enough.

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### Views of Israel’s Response to Conflicts Past and Present

*Israel’s response to conflicts ...*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>August 2006*</th>
<th>Jan 2009</th>
<th>July 2014</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gone too far</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>About right</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not gone far enough</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>24</td>
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<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Survey conducted July 24-27, 2014.
Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.
* August 2006 survey asked about conflict between Israel and Hezbollah militants.

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Who Is More Responsible for Current Violence?

As with views of Israel’s response toward Hamas, there are significant divides in views over who is most responsible for the current violence.

Overall, 47% of whites say Hamas is most responsible for the violence, compared with just 14% who blame Israel. By contrast, as many blacks blame Israel (27%) as Hamas (25%) for the fighting; and Hispanics are somewhat more likely to say Israel is to blame (35%) than Hamas (20%).

Among Americans under 30, 29% say Israel is most responsible for the current violence compared with 21% who blame Hamas. Pluralities of all other age groups lay more blame for the violence with Hamas, than Israel. Those ages 30-49 are more likely to blame Hamas for the fighting (37%-20%) even though they are split over whether Israel’s response has been appropriate or excessive (34%-30%).

Liberal Democrats are evenly divided with 30% blaming Israel for the violence and 30% blaming Hamas. Conservative Republicans give more blame to Hamas than Israel by a wide 70%-6% margin.

Hamas Widely Seen as More Responsible for Current Violence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Israel</th>
<th>Hamas</th>
<th>(Vol.)</th>
<th>Both</th>
<th>DK</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
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<td>40</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>28</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>24</td>
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<td>Women</td>
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<td>35</td>
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<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>29</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>34</td>
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</tr>
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<td>18-29</td>
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<td>35</td>
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<tr>
<td>30-49</td>
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<td>37</td>
<td>14</td>
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<td>50-64</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>53</td>
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<tr>
<td>Some college</td>
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<tr>
<td>HS or less</td>
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<td>35</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>32</td>
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<td>Republican</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>10</td>
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<td>Conservative</td>
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<td>70</td>
<td>9</td>
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<td>Democrat</td>
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<td>Liberal</td>
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<td>20</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>24</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Survey conducted July 24-27, 2014. Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding. Whites and blacks include only those who are not Hispanic; Hispanics are of any race.
The Week’s News

News about the fighting between Israel and Hamas vied with the situation at the U.S. border and a downed Malaysia Airlines plane in Ukraine as the public’s top news story last week.

A third of the public (33%) is very closely following the investigation into the downing of the airplane in Ukraine. Just as many (33%) are paying close attention to news about children from Central America crossing the U.S.-Mexico border, and 32% are following the fighting between Israel and Hamas very closely. Fewer Americans tracked news about the recent court rulings on the Affordable Care Act (25%) and the 2014 congressional midterms (14%).

While young people typically express lower levels of interest in news stories than older adults, the age differences are especially large when it comes to news about the U.S.-Mexico border, the downed Malaysia Airlines plane and fighting between Israel and Hamas. Roughly two-in-ten adults ages 18-29 are closely following each of those stories, compared with about half of those ages 65 and older.

There also are ideological differences in interest in the week’s news stories, especially when it comes to news about Central American children crossing the border. About four-in-ten conservative Republicans (42%) are closely following news about the situation at the U.S.-Mexico border, compared with 27% of liberal

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Similar Interest in Plane Downing, Border Crossings, Israel/Hamas Conflict</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% following each story very closely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Downed plane in Ukraine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children from Central America crossing border</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fighting between Israel and Hamas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Court rulings on Affordable Care Act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014 midterms</td>
</tr>
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Survey conducted July 24-27, 2014.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conservative Reps Following Border News More than Liberal Dems</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% following each story very closely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Downed plane</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-64</td>
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<tr>
<td>65+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Old-young diff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republican</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democrat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rep-Dem diff</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Survey conducted July 24-27, 2014.

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Democrats.

Hispanics are no more likely to be closely following news about the border (28%) than are non-Hispanic whites (34%) and non-Hispanic blacks (32%).
About the Survey

The analysis in this report is based on telephone interviews conducted July 24-27, 2014 among a national sample of 1,005 adults 18 years of age or older living in the continental United States (503 respondents were interviewed on a landline telephone, and 502 were interviewed on a cell phone, including 292 who had no landline telephone). The survey was conducted by interviewers at Princeton Data Source and MKTG under the direction of Princeton Survey Research Associates International. A combination of landline and cell phone random digit dial samples were used; both samples were provided by Survey Sampling International. Interviews were conducted in English and Spanish. Respondents in the landline sample were selected by randomly asking for the youngest adult male or female who is now at home. Interviews in the cell sample were conducted with the person who answered the phone, if that person was an adult 18 years of age or older. For detailed information about our survey methodology, see: http://people-press.org/methodology/.

The combined landline and cell phone sample are weighted using an iterative technique that matches gender, age, education, race, Hispanic origin and region to parameters from the 2012 Census Bureau's American Community Survey and population density to parameters from the Decennial Census. The sample also is weighted to match current patterns of telephone status, based on extrapolations from the 2013 National Health Interview Survey. The weighting procedure also accounts for the fact that respondents with both landline and cell phones have a greater probability of being included in the combined sample and adjusts for household size among respondents with a landline phone. Sampling errors and statistical tests of significance take into account the effect of weighting.
The following table shows the unweighted sample sizes and the error attributable to sampling that would be expected at the 95% level of confidence for different groups in the survey:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Unweighted sample size</th>
<th>Plus or minus …</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total sample</td>
<td>1,005</td>
<td>3.6 percentage points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republican</td>
<td>244</td>
<td>7.4 percentage points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservative Rep</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>8.8 percentage points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democrat</td>
<td>296</td>
<td>6.7 percentage points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal Dem</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>10.0 percentage points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>320</td>
<td>6.4 percentage points</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sample sizes and sampling errors for other subgroups are available upon request. In addition to sampling error, one should bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls.
**ASK ALL:**

**PEW.1**  As I read a list of some stories covered by news organizations this past week, please tell me if you happened to follow each news story very closely, fairly closely, not too closely, or not at all closely. First, **[INSERT ITEM; RANDOMIZE] [IF NECESSARY "Did you follow [ITEM] very closely, fairly closely, not too closely or not at all closely?"]**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TRENDS FOR COMPARISON:</th>
<th>Very closely</th>
<th>Fairly closely</th>
<th>Not too closely</th>
<th>Not at all closely</th>
<th>(VOL.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Continued fighting between Israel and Hamas July 24-27, 2014</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>19</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 15-18, 2012: <strong>Renewed violence between Israel and the Palestinians</strong></td>
<td>27</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>26</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 26-29, 2011: <strong>Debate about how to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian dispute</strong></td>
<td>18</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>34</td>
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<td>September 30-October 3, 2010: <strong>Israeli-Palestinian peace talks</strong></td>
<td>11</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>29</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 16-19, 2010: <strong>Renewed violence between Israel and the Palestinians</strong></td>
<td>13</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>40</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 2-6, 2010: <strong>Israeli-Palestinian peace talks in Washington</strong></td>
<td>14</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>35</td>
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<tr>
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<td>20</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>31</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 19-22, 2010: <strong>Reports about tensions in the Middle East between Israelis and Palestinians</strong></td>
<td>15</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>27</td>
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<td>30</td>
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<tr>
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<td>31</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>20</td>
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<td>20</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>21</td>
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<td>January 11-14, 2008: <strong>News about President Bush attending peace talks in Israel</strong></td>
<td>16</td>
<td>30</td>
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<td>Nov. 30-Dec. 3, 2007: <strong>The Middle East Peace Summit in Annapolis, Maryland</strong></td>
<td>11</td>
<td>25</td>
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<td>August, 2006: <strong>The military conflict between Israel and Hezbollah forces in Lebanon</strong></td>
<td>40</td>
<td>34</td>
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<td>June, 2003: <strong>President Bush’s summit meeting with world leaders and with the prime ministers of Israel and the Palestinian Authority</strong></td>
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**PEW.1 CONTINUED...**

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<tr>
<th>Event</th>
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<th>Not too closely</th>
<th>Not at all closely</th>
<th>(VOL.)</th>
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<td>April, 2002</td>
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<td>Early April, 2002</td>
<td>44</td>
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<td>December, 2001</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>9</td>
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<td>Early September, 2001</td>
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<td>33</td>
<td>25</td>
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<td>April, 2001: <em>Continued violence in the Middle East</em></td>
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<td>21</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>17</td>
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<td>30</td>
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<td>40</td>
<td>27</td>
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NO QUESTIONS PEW.2-PEW.3
QUESTIONS PEW.4-PEW.5 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE

ASK ALL:
Next,
Over the past few weeks, there has been a significant military conflict between Israel and Hamas [PRONOUNCED: Ha-Moss] in the Gaza Strip. Who do you think is most responsible for the current violence? [READ AND RANDOMIZE] [INTERVIEWER INSTRUCTION: If respondent volunteers “both,” probe once with “who do you think is most responsible?” before accepting both as a volunteered response]

July 24-27
2014
19 Israel
40 Hamas
14 Both (VOL.)
28 Don’t know/Refused (VOL.)

¹ In April 1998, September 1994 and October 1990, story was listed as "Candidates and election campaigns in your state." In November 1990, story was listed as "Candidates and elections in your state."
PEW.6 TRENDS FOR COMPARISON...

Over the past few weeks, there has been a significant military conflict between Israel and Hamas in the Gaza Strip. All things considered, who do you think is most responsible for the outbreak of the recent violence? [OPEN END; ACCEPT UP TO THREE RESPONSES BUT DO NOT PROBE FOR MORE THAN ONE. PROBE ONCE FOR CLARITY IF GENERAL RESPONSE]

Jan. 7-11 (escalation of violence between Israel/Hezbollah)

<table>
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<th>2009</th>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
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<td>Hezbollah</td>
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<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both sides</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Don’t know/Refused (VOL.)</td>
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</table>

ASK ALL:

PEW.7 What do you think about the way Israel is responding in the current conflict with Hamas in the Gaza Strip? Has Israel gone too far, not gone far enough, or has Israel’s response been about right?

TRENDS FOR COMPARISON (Israel/Hezbollah)

<table>
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<tr>
<th>July 24-27</th>
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<th>CBS/NYT</th>
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<tr>
<td>25</td>
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<tr>
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<td>15</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>15</td>
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<td>Not gone far enough</td>
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<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>44</td>
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<tr>
<td>About right</td>
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<tr>
<td>Don’t know/Refused (VOL.)</td>
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ASK ALL:

PARTY In politics TODAY, do you consider yourself a Republican, Democrat, or independent?

ASK IF INDEP/NO PREF/OTHER/DK/REF (PARTY=3,4,5,9):

PARTYLN As of today do you lean more to the Republican Party or more to the Democratic Party?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(VOL.)</th>
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<th>Independent preference</th>
<th>Other party DK/Ref</th>
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<th>Lean Dem</th>
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2 Question PEW.6 shows trends for comparable open-end questions asked in 2009 about the conflict between Israel and Hamas in the Gaza Strip and in 2006 about the conflict between Israel and Hezbollah in Lebanon.