

Two-Thirds in Jordan Fear U.S.-Israeli Plans, But Domestic Issues Rank First

by [David Pollock \(/experts/david-pollock\)](#)

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Brief Analysis

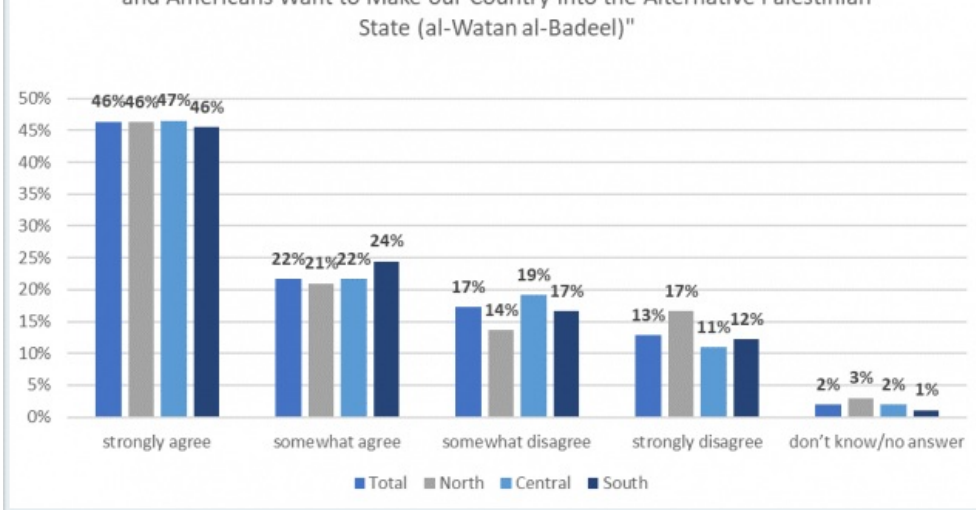
The Jordanian “street” is now relatively content with its government’s posture, in spite—or indeed precisely because—of all the turbulence surrounding it.

Results of a rare Jordanian public opinion poll, conducted by a leading regional commercial firm in June, show widespread popular concern about current discussion of Israeli annexation in the West Bank, in the context of the Trump “Peace Plan (<https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/fikraforum/view/arab-reactions-to-trumps-peace-plan-an-analysis-and-recommendation>).” 68% of Jordanians say they “need to be concerned that some Israelis and Americans want to make our country into the alternative Palestinian state”—though this is not actually part of the plan at all. Moreover, nearly half of the Jordanian public feels “strongly” that this is the case. Equally striking is that there are almost no regional differences in this distribution of attitudes, including the central region of majority Palestinian origin and the southern region of mostly East Bank origin.

For the most recent polling data from Jordan, [click here. \(https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/domestic-reform-still-top-issue-jordanians-most-reject-new-peace-deals-israel\)](https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/domestic-reform-still-top-issue-jordanians-most-reject-new-peace-deals-israel)

Jordanian Views on if "Jordan Needs to be Concerned That Some Israelis and Americans Want to Make our Country Into the Alternative Palestinian State (al-Watan al-Badeel)"

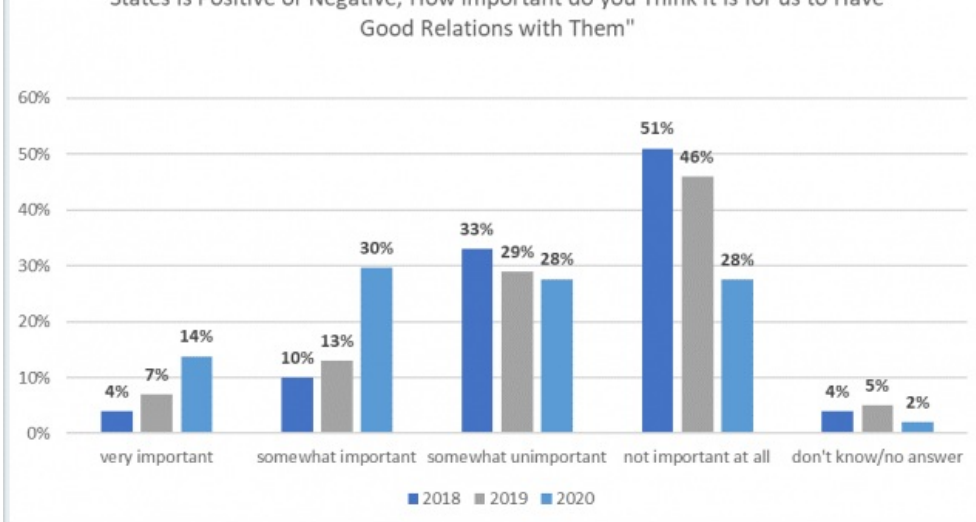
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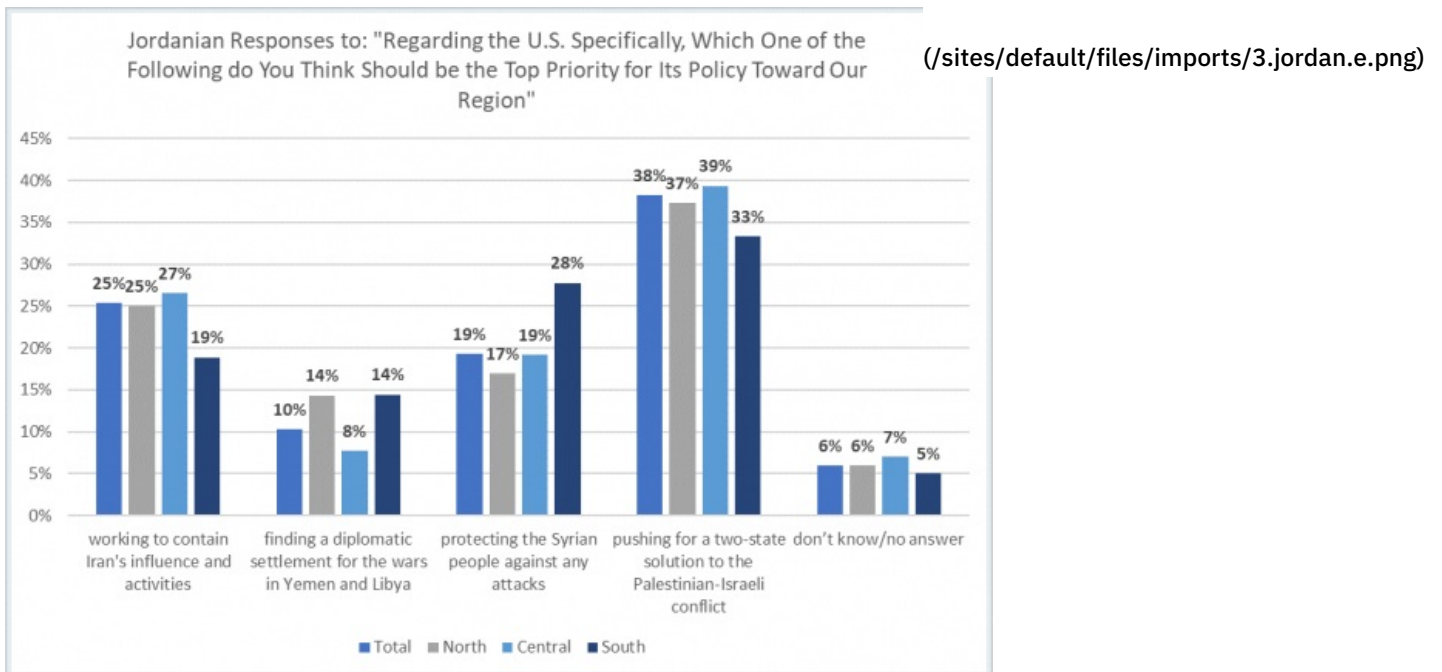
Regarding the Trump plan specifically, a mere 5% of Jordanians express an even “somewhat” positive opinion about it. Nevertheless, a much higher proportion (44%) say it is important for their country to maintain good relations with the United States. And just around 10% voice even a somewhat favorable view of the “Israeli elections last March”*—or agree that “people who want to have business or sports contacts with Israelis should be allowed to do so.”

Jordanian Responses to: "No Matter Whether your Opinion About the United States is Positive or Negative, How Important do you Think it Is for us to Have Good Relations with Them"

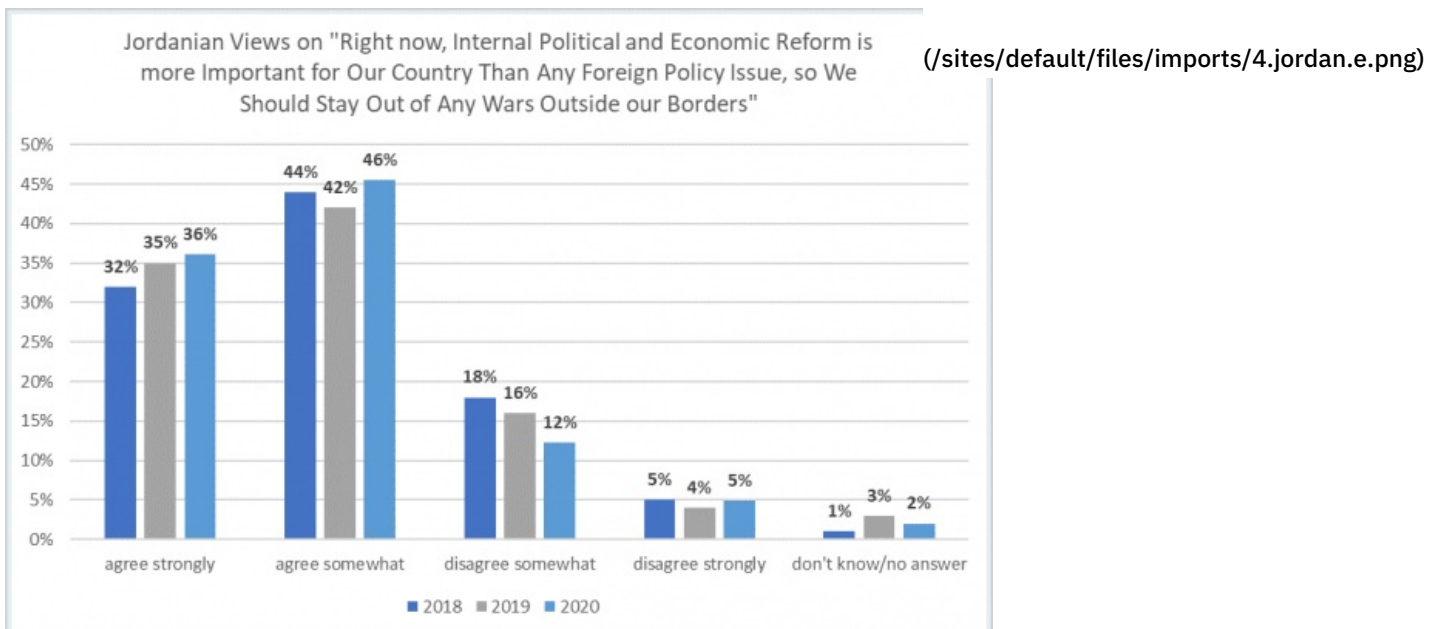
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Surprisingly, though, a third of Jordanians say that “the Israelis and the Palestinians are both to blame for their continuing conflict.” On a related question, asked to prioritize their desires for American policy in the region, a plurality (38%) choose “pushing for a two-state solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.”



But this whole issue is by no means at the top of popular priorities. A narrow majority of Jordanians put other U.S. actions in first place: “working to contain Iran’s influence and activities” (25%); “protecting the Syrian people against any attacks” (19%); or “finding a diplomatic settlement for the wars in Yemen and Libya (10%). Moreover, the large majority—82%—say that “right now, internal political and economic reform is more important for our country than any foreign policy issue.”

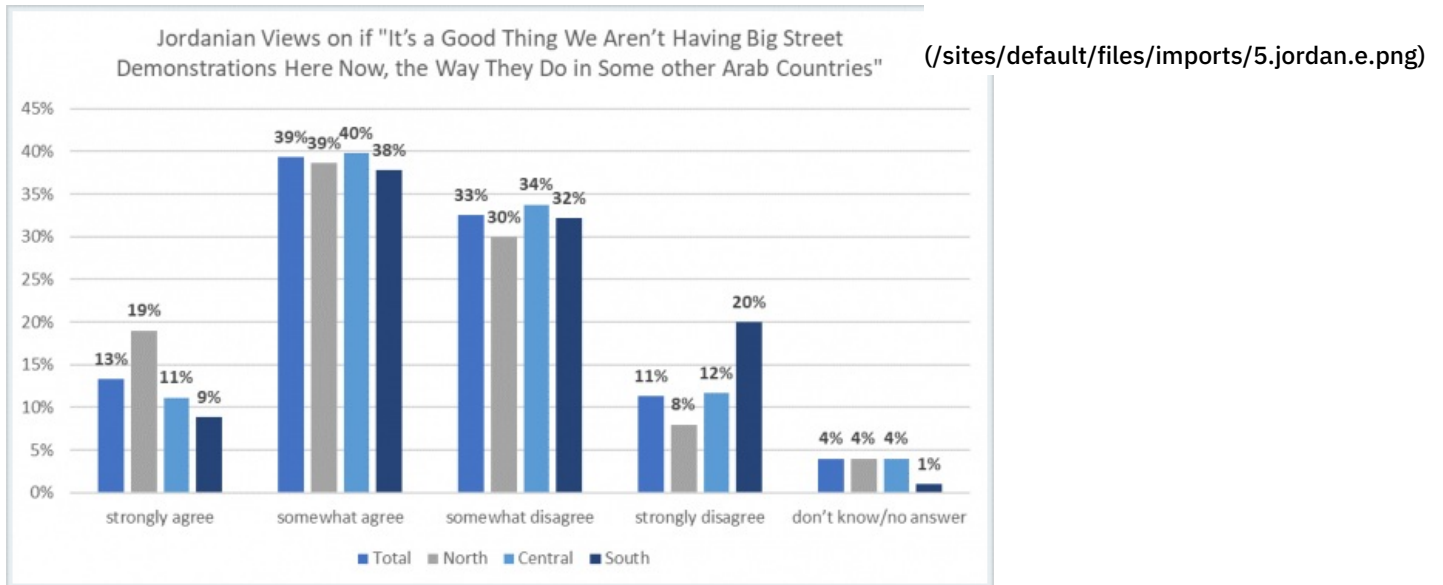


On those internal issues, around half of Jordanians—significantly more than the comparable proportion of Egyptians in a companion poll—have a generally favorable attitude toward their government’s policies today. For example, in the midst of the coronavirus crisis, 43% of Jordanians say the authorities are doing “about the right amount” to “ensure people’s health and medical care.” A slightly higher proportion (49%) actually blame outsiders for this malady, agreeing that “the coronavirus is something deliberately started by our foreign enemies.”

Half the Jordanian public is also satisfied with their government’s current approach to two other key challenges: maintaining law and order and preventing religious extremism. One area where popular approval dips, however, is

precisely the question of “paying attention to public opinion about its policies”—where only 39% say the Jordanian government is doing well.

Given these statistics, it is understandable that around half the Jordanian public say “it is a good thing we are not having big street demonstrations here now, the way they are in some other Arab countries.” Similarly, just over half (54%) agree with this proposition: “When I think about what’s happening in Yemen or Syria, I feel our situation here is not so bad.”



Overall, then, the Jordanian “street” is now relatively content with its government’s posture, in spite—or indeed precisely because—of all the turbulence surrounding it. The king’s very vocal opposition to Israel’s West Bank annexation plans responds to a widespread, but not urgent, concern among his people about Jordan’s own long-term prospects in that scenario. And the current popular focus on internal problems appears to give Amman more, rather than less, political margin for maneuver.

These findings are from a face-to-face poll conducted by a highly qualified and credible commercial survey company among a representative national sample of 1,000 Jordanians in June 2020. Respondents were selected according to strict, standard geographical probability procedures. The author has had 30 years of direct personal experience working with this firm, and is fully confident about its technical skills, integrity, and quality controls. The statistical margin of error for the total sample is approximately 3 percentage points; it is somewhat larger for the regional subsamples, in the range of 5%.

**Sentence edited to provide exact quote of polling question. ❖*

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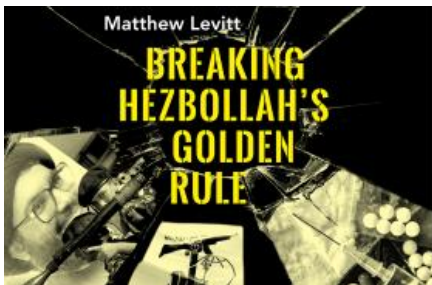
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