



By: [Emre Alkin](#)

# US support for Israel: was it really worth it?



When we look at the Middle East, it is impossible to understand the present without acknowledging the past. Since 1948, the conflicts shaped around Israel's security policies – from the Arab–Israeli wars to interventions in Lebanon, from the Palestinian issue to the current devastation in Gaza – have formed a continuous line of tension.

This is not merely a regional security problem; it has evolved into a mechanism that consistently generates global economic costs.

The **situation in Gaza** today represents one of the heaviest links in this chain. Tens of thousands of lives lost, infrastructure largely destroyed, and economic damage estimated in the range of \$20–30 billion.

In Lebanon, years of accumulated crises combined with recurring conflicts have resulted in an economic contraction exceeding 40%. Yet the real issue is that these losses do not remain confined to the region.

The Middle East sits at the heart of the global energy system, and every disruption there transmits directly to the world economy.

Since the 1973 oil crisis, one fact has remained unchanged: when there is conflict in the Middle East, there is inflation in the world. As risk rises in the region, oil prices increase; as oil rises, production costs, transportation expenses, and food prices follow.

Empirical studies suggest that every \$10 increase in oil prices pushes **global inflation** up by approximately 0.3–0.5 percentage points. What appears to be a modest shift translates into trillions of dollars in global welfare loss.

## Triggering chain of geopolitical consequences

This brings us to the central question: was US support for Israel worth this cost?

The annual \$3–4 billion in direct **military aid** from the US to Israel is only the visible part.

The real cost emerges from the chain of geopolitical consequences triggered by that support. Considering that the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan cost between \$5–6 trillion, the fiscal burden of prolonged engagement in the region becomes clearer.

Today, as **oil prices** once again move towards and above \$100, inflationary pressures in the US intensify, complicating the Federal Reserve's path towards easing and placing additional strain on economic growth.

## The economic ripple effects of support for Israel are not external – they are deeply internal

These costs are not limited to macroeconomic indicators. Rising energy prices directly affect American households. When petrol prices increase, when logistics costs rise, when food becomes more expensive, consumption weakens and investment appetite declines.

In other words, conflict in the Middle East can shape monetary policy decisions in Washington and alter spending behaviour in New York.

There is also a political dimension. As the United States approaches the midterm elections, the economy remains the decisive factor. American voters respond less to foreign policy narratives and more to their purchasing power.

When inflation rises and real incomes decline, political consequences follow. Thus, the economic ripple effects of support for Israel are not external – they are deeply internal.

## Cycle of action and reaction

Another critical layer is how such policies are formed. Lobbying is an institutionalised and legal part of the US political system. Pro-Israel groups, through campaign contributions and policy advocacy, hold influence within the decision-making process.

This is not unique to them; defence contractors, energy firms, and other interest groups operate within the same framework.

However, in the case of Israel, this influence is more visible and more intensely debated. It is not a matter of control, but it undeniably constitutes a significant sphere of influence.

On the ground, these policy choices manifest as a cycle of action and reaction. A move by Israel triggers responses in the region; those responses lead to further retaliation.

**In times of heightened geopolitical tension, citizens of major powers may face growing caution or resistance abroad**

As long as this cycle continues, risk premiums remain elevated, energy prices volatile, and the global economy trapped in persistent uncertainty.

At the international level, US credibility is also affected. In recent years, growing criticism across Europe, Latin America, and parts of Asia has increasingly questioned Washington's neutrality and its claim to global leadership.

This shift has implications not only for diplomacy but also for trade and financial cooperation. More subtly, such changes in perception can extend to individuals; historically, in times of heightened geopolitical tension, citizens of major powers may face growing caution or resistance abroad.

## Unconditional support?

At this point, we have reached the most sensitive – and perhaps critical – dimension of the debate. A number of experienced American strategists and former security officials have begun to argue that **US support** for Israel should not be unconditional.

Their concern is not abstract; it is rooted in the risk of uncontrolled escalation and the

strategic consequences that may follow.



*Geopolitical choices may generate short-term strategic gains, but they inevitably produce long-term economic and systemic costs - Emre Alkin*

Israel, when faced with what it perceives as existential threats, has historically demonstrated a willingness to act with extreme decisiveness. Some analysts caution that in such scenarios, escalation risks may extend beyond conventional boundaries.

This is precisely why a growing number of voices within the US policy community argue that support must be calibrated, conditional, and aligned with clear diplomatic objectives.

Unconditional backing, they warn, does not necessarily strengthen strategic partnerships – it can amplify systemic risks.

This brings the question into sharper focus. US support for Israel may be explained by historical alliances, strategic calculations, and domestic political dynamics.

But the economic costs are rising, inflation risks are intensifying, growth is under pressure, political consequences are accumulating, and international credibility is eroding.

And when the risk of uncontrolled escalation is added to this equation, the question becomes unavoidable:

Was it worth it?

History has repeatedly shown that geopolitical

choices may generate short-term strategic gains, but they inevitably produce long-term economic and systemic costs. And more often than not, those costs are not borne solely by the decision-makers – but by the entire world.

\*Public support for Israel in the United States is undergoing a notable shift. According to Al Jazeera, 41% of Americans now sympathise more with Palestinians, while 36% favour Israelis, indicating a reversal of previous trends. Data from the Pew Research Center also show a sharp rise in unfavourable perceptions: 60% of US adults hold a negative view of Israel, and the share expressing a “very unfavourable” opinion has increased from 10% in 2022 to 28%. This shift is not uniform across society; it is particularly pronounced among younger Americans and Democratic voters. Approximately 8 in 10 Democrats view Israel unfavourably, while although support remains relatively stronger among Republicans, negative perceptions are also rising among younger Republicans.