

Christian Zionist Discourse and US Support for Israel during the Gaza War, 2023-2025: A Constructivist-Securitisation Analysis

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ABSTRACT

This study examines how Christian Zionist ideas contributed to the public legitimization of United States support for Israel during the Gaza war from October 2023 to December 2025. It treats Christian Zionism as an influential religious-political discourse rather than as a complete explanation of US foreign policy. The study uses qualitative document analysis and theory-guided discourse analysis. A purposive corpus of official presidential and congressional texts, statements by US political figures, publications by Christians United for Israel, public-opinion evidence, and contextual reporting was coded for covenantal obligation, civilisational identity, existential threat, exceptional policy measures, political mobilisation, and humanitarian counter-frames. Constructivism and securitisation theory guide the interpretation. Christian Zionist discourse repeatedly framed Israel as a moral and spiritual ally, represented the conflict through a binary of good and evil, and linked support for Israel to American security. Evangelical advocacy also connected religious language with concrete lobbying for military assistance. However, the corpus shows important limits: strategic arguments, bipartisan institutions, humanitarian language, and internal evangelical differences remained significant. Christian Zionism operated primarily as a legitimating and mobilising framework that reinforced existing strategic and partisan commitments. It did not independently determine policy. The persistence of US support for Israel is best understood through the interaction of religion, identity, security discourse, institutions, and material interests.

Keywords: Christian Zionism, Constructivism, Evangelical Politics, Gaza War, Securitisation, US-Israeli Relations

INTRODUCTION

United States support for Israel is usually explained through a combination of strategic cooperation, domestic politics, military partnership, regional power calculations, and the activity of organised pro-Israel groups. These explanations remain essential. Yet they do not fully capture the moral and religious language through which support for Israel is often presented to sections of the American public. Christian Zionism supplies one of the most durable forms of that language. It interprets the modern State of Israel through biblical covenant, prophecy, restoration, and the belief that Christians have a religious duty to stand with Israel. In American politics, these ideas overlap with conservative evangelical identity, Republican mobilisation, support for a strong military posture, and narratives of the United States and Israel as allied democracies confronting common enemies (Ariel, 2013; Hummel, 2019; Spector, 2009; Weber, 2004).

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The war that followed the attacks of 7 October 2023 made these connections unusually visible. Senior officials described support for Israel as vital to American national security, while evangelical organisations framed military assistance and opposition to a ceasefire in explicitly moral and biblical terms. Christians United for Israel (CUFI), for example, mobilised religious leaders to lobby Congress and praised legislators for acting in accordance with both history and the 'Word of God' (Christians United for Israel [CUFI], 2024b, 2024c). At the same time, official US discourse was not purely religious. President Joe Biden combined strong security commitments to Israel with references to Palestinian dignity, humanitarian assistance, the laws of war, and a two-state solution (Biden, 2023). This combination shows why Christian Zionism should not be treated as a single or sufficient cause of policy.

The article therefore asks a narrower and more researchable question: how did Christian Zionist discourse contribute to the legitimisation and political mobilisation of US support for Israel during the Gaza war between 2023 and 2025? The word contribute is important. The study does not attempt to prove that religious belief directly caused every decision on aid, diplomacy, or military support. Instead, it examines how religious ideas made particular policy positions appear moral, natural, urgent, and consistent with American identity. It also considers how those ideas interacted with national-security claims and with institutions capable of converting advocacy into political pressure.

This approach addresses two problems in the existing discussion. First, popular commentary often reduces Christian Zionism to end-times prophecy. Scholarly work shows a more complex movement shaped by biblical literalism, covenantal theology, affection for Jewish people, conservative identity, anti-communism, post-September 11 security narratives, and organised relations among evangelical leaders, American Jewish organisations, Israeli officials, and political parties (Ariel, 2013; Hummel, 2019; Inbari et al., 2021; Spector, 2009). Second, arguments about influence often move too quickly from religious rhetoric to claims of policy control. Influence is better assessed by tracing discourse, audience mobilisation, institutional access, and policy demands while recognising alternative explanations.

The article makes three contributions. It updates the study of Christian Zionism by focusing on the Gaza-war period; it integrates constructivist and securitisation perspectives to explain the connection between identity and emergency policy; and it offers a balanced interpretation that

recognises Christian Zionism as influential without depicting American evangelicals, American Jews, or US political institutions as homogeneous. The findings suggest that Christian Zionism functioned as a powerful legitimating and mobilising framework, especially within conservative politics, but operated alongside strategic interests, partisan competition, institutional routines, and humanitarian counter-discourses.

Historical development of Christian Zionism

Christian Zionism refers broadly to Christian interpretations that attach continuing theological and political importance to the Jewish people, the land of Israel, and the modern State of Israel. The movement cannot be reduced to one church, denomination, or doctrine. Its modern forms emerged from Protestant engagement with biblical restoration, premillennialism, and later dispensationalism. Nineteenth-century advocates of Jewish restoration, including William E. Blackstone, helped move restorationist ideas from theology into public advocacy. In the twentieth century, the Scofield Reference Bible, prophecy conferences, radio and television ministries, pilgrimage, and popular religious publishing expanded the social reach of these beliefs (Ariel, 2013; Weber, 2004).

The creation of Israel in 1948 and the 1967 war transformed these theological traditions. Events that many evangelicals interpreted as fulfilment of biblical promises strengthened emotional and institutional ties with Israel. Hummel (2019) shows that this relationship was not produced by theology alone. It developed through sustained networks connecting evangelical activists, Jewish organisations, Israeli diplomacy, tourism, education, and political advocacy. Spector (2009) likewise rejects a one-dimensional explanation based only on apocalypse. Evangelical support may involve prophecy, but it also draws on gratitude, guilt concerning Christian antisemitism, admiration for Israel, shared democratic identity, concern for Jewish security, and perceptions of common geopolitical threats.

The rise of the American Christian Right from the 1970s increased the political relevance of these networks. Israel became part of a wider conservative agenda that included anti-communism, family values, national strength, and resistance to liberal elites. Organisations and leaders such as the Moral Majority, the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem, John Hagee, and later CUFI helped make pro-Israel activism a recognised component of evangelical political participation. Durbin (2019) demonstrates that CUFI's political activity is presented not as ordinary interest-group behaviour but as religious practice grounded in identity, myth, moral duty, and a narrative of American redemption.

Religion, public opinion, and policy preference

Quantitative research supports the claim that religion is associated with distinct attitudes towards Israel and the Middle East. Mayer (2004) found that Christian fundamentalist beliefs were related to stronger support for Israel and particular Middle East policy preferences. Baumgartner et al. (2008) reported that evangelical identity and religious belief predicted more hawkish attitudes towards the region and stronger support for Israel. More recent research has refined these conclusions. Inbari and Bumin (2020) found important variation among evangelicals on territorial compromise and the Arab-Israeli conflict, while Inbari et al. (2021), using a survey of 1,000 evangelical and born-again respondents, identified biblical literalism, eschatological belief, socialisation, age, and attitudes towards Jews as significant predictors of support for Israel. Their work also identified weaker support among younger evangelicals, challenging the assumption of permanent uniformity.

Survey evidence collected during the Gaza war confirms both strong evangelical support and internal differentiation. In March 2024, Pew Research Center found that 61% of White evangelical Protestants considered Israel's conduct of the war at least somewhat acceptable, 74% regarded Israel's reasons for fighting as valid, and 71% held a favourable view of the Israeli government. These proportions were higher than those recorded for most other Christian groups. At the same time, the survey did not show unanimous support, and age and party remained important sources of variation (Pew Research Center, 2024). Religion therefore shapes political attitudes within a broader field of demographic, partisan, and ideological influences.

From social constituency to political influence

The existence of a supportive constituency does not automatically establish policy influence. Influence requires pathways through which preferences reach institutions. Christian Zionist organisations use voter mobilisation, campaign communication, conferences, media networks, direct contact with legislators, petitions, policy briefings, and relationships with Israeli officials. CUFI represents the clearest contemporary example. It describes itself as the largest pro-Israel organisation in the United States and combines a mass membership model with congressional lobbying and public religious messaging. Its advocacy during the Gaza war included opposition to pressure for an immediate ceasefire, an emergency lobbying visit involving ministry and community leaders, action alerts to Congress, and public support for supplemental military assistance (CUFI, 2024a, 2024b, 2024c).

Nevertheless, the relationship between advocacy and policy should not be overstated. US support for Israel has long been embedded in defence cooperation, intelligence relations, congressional commitments, regional strategy, and bipartisan political structures. The 2024 supplemental

appropriations measure was passed by a large bipartisan House majority and included strategic, military, and humanitarian components (United States Congress, 2024). Christian Zionist mobilisation helped reinforce and legitimate support, but the policy outcome cannot be attributed to evangelical pressure alone. The analytical task is therefore to identify the specific work performed by religious discourse: defining identity, providing moral justification, mobilising audiences, and increasing the political costs of restraint.

Existing scholarship explains the historical growth of Christian Zionism, its organisational networks, and its relationship to public opinion. Less attention has been given to how Christian Zionist language operated during the Gaza war as part of a combined religious and security discourse. The period is analytically important because it brought together mass violence, emergency military assistance, intense congressional debate, mobilisation by evangelical organisations, and competing humanitarian claims. This study addresses that gap through a focused document analysis of discourse and institutional translation between October 2023 and December 2025.

In this article, Christian Zionism is defined as a family of Christian theological and political positions that affirm a continuing divine significance for the Jewish people and the land or State of Israel and that translate this affirmation into support for Israel. This definition is deliberately broad enough to include covenantal, prophetic, moral, historical, and security-based expressions. It is also deliberately limited. Not all evangelicals are Christian Zionists, not all Christian Zionists share dispensationalist end-times beliefs, and political support for Israel can arise from nonreligious motives (Ariel, 2013; Inbari et al., 2021; Spector, 2009).

Evangelicalism is treated as a diverse Protestant movement commonly associated with the authority of the Bible, personal conversion, the centrality of Christ's redemptive work, and active expression of faith. The category includes significant theological, racial, generational, denominational, and political differences. The article therefore avoids using evangelical and Christian Zionist as interchangeable terms. Its empirical focus is on actors and texts that explicitly connect Christian belief with support for Israel.

Constructivism, collective identity and Securitisation

Constructivism argues that state interests are not determined only by material power. They are shaped through ideas, norms, identities, and social interaction. Wendt's (1992) central insight is that political actors create meanings through practice; identities and interests develop within social relationships rather than existing as fixed facts. Applied to US-Israeli relations, this perspective directs attention to how Israel is constructed as more than a strategically useful state. It may be

represented as a fellow democracy, a civilisational partner, a spiritual relative, a refuge for a historically persecuted people, or an extension of a shared Judeo-Christian moral world.

Christian Zionist discourse contributes to this construction by linking biblical narrative with American identity. The relationship is presented as rooted in covenant, moral history, and common destiny. Such representations can make support for Israel appear normal and ethically required before a specific policy debate begins. They also define the boundaries of political community: Israel is located within a moral 'we', while Hamas, Iran, and associated actors are placed outside that community as threats to both Israel and the United States. Constructivism therefore helps explain why religious arguments can reinforce strategic commitments without replacing them.

Securitisation theory examines how political actors present an issue as an existential threat that requires urgent or exceptional action. Buzan et al. (1998) distinguish securitisation from ordinary politicisation: a securitising actor identifies a threat to a valued referent object and seeks audience acceptance for measures that would otherwise require greater justification. Balzacq (2005) emphasises that successful securitisation depends not only on words but also on context, authority, audience, and power.

The Gaza-war corpus contains several possible referent objects: Israeli civilians, the existence of Israel, Jewish security, American citizens, US national security, Western democracy, and, within explicitly religious discourse, God's purposes or the moral standing of the United States. Threats are described through terms such as terrorism, annihilation, evil, and regional expansion. Proposed measures include sustained weapons transfers, rejection of ceasefire pressure, diplomatic protection, and long-term support 'for as long as it takes'. The theory is useful because it connects language to urgency and policy permission. It is also necessary to examine audience acceptance, which appears in congressional voting, public opinion, and the capacity of organisations to mobilise supporters.

The two theories are complementary. Constructivism explains the identity relationship that makes Israel a privileged ally; securitisation explains how a wartime threat activates that identity and supports exceptional policy. The analysis nevertheless tests for counter-frames, including humanitarian law, Palestinian civilian protection, and the two-state solution. Their presence indicates that securitisation is contested rather than complete.

METHODOLOGY

Research design

The study uses qualitative document analysis combined with theory-guided discourse analysis. Document analysis is appropriate because the research question concerns public justification, political mobilisation, and the relationship between discourse and institutional action. The design is interpretive rather than statistical. Its purpose is to identify recurring frames, differences among actors, and evidence of translation from religious advocacy into political demands.

Corpus and sampling

A purposive corpus was assembled from publicly available texts published between 7 October 2023 and 31 December 2025. Documents were included when they met at least one of three criteria: they were issued by a senior US political institution or office; they were published by a major Christian Zionist advocacy organisation and addressed Gaza, ceasefire policy, or military assistance; or they provided credible contextual evidence about evangelical mobilisation and attitudes. Academic sources were used to interpret the corpus rather than counted as empirical documents.

Table 1: Core Documents and Analytical Role

Date	Source	Document	Analytical Role
20 Oct. 2023	White House	Biden national address on Israel, Gaza, and Ukraine	Official security frame and humanitarian counter-frame
25 Oct. 2023	Associated Press	Evangelical mobilisation in the Iowa Republican campaign	Religious language, voter mobilisation, and variation
27 Oct. 2023	US Senate office	Ted Cruz statement on the Israeli ground offensive	National-security urgency and unlimited-duration support
4 Apr. 2024	CUFI	Statement rejecting US pressure for an immediate ceasefire	Organisational opposition to restraint
20 Apr. 2024	CUFI	Statement supporting House passage of Israel aid	Lobbying, mobilisation, and policy demand
23 Apr. 2024	CUFI	Statement supporting Senate passage of Israel aid	Biblical legitimisation and audience reward
24 Apr. 2024	US Congress	Public Law 118-50, Israel security supplemental	Institutional policy output
7 Oct. 2024	US Senate office	Ted Cruz anniversary statement	Moral binary and sustained security support
21 Mar. 2024	Pew Research Center	National survey on the Israel-Hamas war	Audience attitudes and religious-group differences

6 Feb. 2025	Associated Press	Evangelical leaders and the incoming Trump administration	Elite access and continuity into 2025
25 Mar. 2025	Senate Foreign Relations Committee	Hearing on Mike Huckabee nomination	Institutionalisation of an evangelical pro-Israel figure

Analytical procedure

The documents were read in two coding passes. The first pass identified explicit references to religion, scripture, God, covenant, prophecy, morality, democracy, terrorism, existential danger, national security, military assistance, ceasefire, and humanitarian obligation. The second pass organised these references into six theory-guided categories: (1) covenantal or divine obligation; (2) civilisational identification; (3) moral binary; (4) existential threat and security urgency; (5) political mobilisation and exceptional policy demand; and (6) humanitarian or legal counter-frame. Attention was given to the authority of the speaker, the intended audience, and the relationship between language and observable political action.

Triangulation was used in three ways. Organisational claims were compared with official congressional records; elite statements were considered alongside public-opinion data; and contemporary texts were interpreted through established scholarship on Christian Zionism and evangelical political behaviour. Partisan or advocacy sources were treated as primary discourse material, not as neutral evidence of factual causation. Direct causal claims were avoided unless a source documented lobbying activity or institutional access.

FINDINGS

Israel as a moral, spiritual, and civilisational ally

The first pattern is the construction of Israel as a relationship of identity rather than merely interest. Christian Zionist texts frequently treat support for Israel as a duty arising from scripture and moral history. CUFI's April 2024 statement on Senate passage of the supplemental aid package praised legislators for placing themselves on the right side of both history and the 'Word of God' (CUFI, 2024c). This formulation performs two acts at once. It endorses a policy outcome, and it places that outcome within a sacred moral order. A vote for military assistance is therefore represented not simply as a strategic choice but as fidelity to divine truth.

This type of framing is consistent with Durbin's (2019) analysis of CUFI, in which political action is represented as religious practice. Israel functions as a central sign through which Christian identity, national purpose, and moral obedience are expressed. The discourse is covenantal even

when it does not provide a detailed theology. References to blessing Israel, standing with Israel, and recognising a divine promise establish a relationship that is expected to endure independently of the conduct of a particular Israeli government.

The same identity frame appeared in the electoral environment after 7 October. Reporting from the Iowa Republican campaign described pastors and activists connecting candidate evaluation with biblical support for Israel. Political contenders quoted scripture, described the conflict in religious terms, and treated previous pro-Israel decisions as evidence of conservative credibility (Beaumont, 2023). The AP report also noted that evangelical voters were not identical in their views, including disagreement about Palestinian civilians and refugees. Nevertheless, Israel had become a test of religious and partisan identity for a significant constituency.

Official presidential discourse used a different but related vocabulary. Biden's address described Israel as a critical partner and linked its success with the defence of democracy and American leadership (Biden, 2023). His language was not Christian Zionist in a narrow theological sense, but it located Israel within a shared moral and strategic community. Constructivism helps clarify the relationship between these discourses. Religious and secular speakers may use different sources of authority, yet both place Israel inside an American 'we'. Christian Zionism deepens this placement for evangelical audiences by giving it biblical and spiritual meaning.

The conflict as a binary struggle between good and evil

The second pattern is moral polarisation. In the corpus, Hamas was not described only as an armed adversary or terrorist organisation; it was frequently represented as evil in an absolute sense. Biden referred to the 7 October attacks as 'pure, unadulterated evil' and connected Hamas with threats seeking to annihilate a neighbouring democracy (Biden, 2023). Cruz similarly described the conflict as a battle between good and evil and argued that good must triumph (Cruz, 2024). Evangelical campaign discourse in Iowa employed comparable language, with pastors and candidates framing the violence as a clear confrontation between moral opposites (Beaumont, 2023).

Moral condemnation of attacks on civilians is not itself evidence of Christian Zionism. The analytical significance lies in the way an absolute moral binary narrows the range of legitimate policy. When one side embodies evil and the other represents a moral ally, calls for restraint can be portrayed as confusion, appeasement, or assistance to the enemy. CUFI's rejection of Biden's ceasefire pressure illustrates this move. Its leaders argued that demands on Israel would protect Hamas and that support for Palestinians required the defeat of Hamas rather than restrictions on Israeli military action (CUFI, 2024a).

This binary also has a civilisational dimension. Israel is regularly represented as a democracy confronting forces that threaten both Israeli and American security. The framing joins religion with a wider post-September 11 discourse in which the United States and Israel face common terrorist enemies. Baumgartner et al. (2008) found that evangelical identity was associated with more hawkish Middle East attitudes and stronger support for Israel; Durbin (2019) identifies narratives of Islam and internal enemies as important to CUFI's identity production. The Gaza-war texts reproduce this structure without requiring every speaker to invoke prophecy.

A limitation of the moral-binary frame is its treatment of Palestinian political and civilian experience. When the conflict is organised around innocence and evil, Palestinian suffering can be acknowledged while being assigned to Hamas as the sole responsible actor. Biden's address followed this pattern in part, stating that Hamas did not represent Palestinians and that Palestinian civilians were suffering greatly because Hamas used them as human shields (Biden, 2023). Yet his speech also disrupted the binary by affirming Palestinian dignity, self-determination, humanitarian assistance, and equal claims to safety and peace. This counter-frame matters because it shows that official discourse contained competing moral obligations.

Securitisation of Israel's war and US support

The third pattern is securitisation. The corpus repeatedly moved from sympathy with Israel to claims that Israeli military success was necessary for US national security. Biden argued that support for Israel and Ukraine was vital to American security, presented aid as an investment in a safer international order, and requested an unprecedented security commitment to preserve Israel's military advantage (Biden, 2023). Cruz argued that the success of Israel's operation was vital to US security and called for Israel to receive all the weapons and time needed to eradicate Hamas (Cruz, 2023).

These statements identify several referent objects: Israeli citizens, American citizens, the State of Israel, regional stability, democratic order, and US global leadership. Hamas and Iran are represented as connected threats capable of expanding violence beyond Gaza. This framing supports urgency and extended commitment. The phrase 'for as long as it takes' removes an obvious temporal limit, while demands for all necessary weapons reduce the legitimacy of conditionality. In securitisation terms, the threat is presented as severe enough to justify accelerated funding, military transfers, and resistance to diplomatic restraint.

Christian Zionist advocacy added sacred authority to this security argument. CUFI's statements did not separate Israel's military needs from religious responsibility. Its April lobbying campaign

linked congressional aid to moral obligation, national interest, and biblical truth (CUFI, 2024b, 2024c). This combination is important: securitisation alone explains urgency, while Christian Zionist identity explains why the threatened ally possesses exceptional moral status for the target audience.

Audience acceptance can be assessed imperfectly through legislation and public opinion. Public Law 118-50 provided large-scale appropriations connected with Israel's defence, replenishment of US stocks, missile-defence systems, regional operations, and related assistance (United States Congress, 2024). The House passed the Israel-specific measure by 366 votes to 58 before the broader package became law. The bipartisan margin demonstrates broad institutional acceptance of the security frame, although it cannot establish that Christian Zionism caused the vote. Pew's survey indicates that White evangelical Protestants were among the religious groups most accepting of Israel's military response and most favourable towards the Israeli government (Pew Research Center, 2024). This provides evidence that the audience most exposed to Christian Zionist discourse was comparatively receptive.

From religious mobilisation to institutional action

The fourth pattern concerns the mechanism of influence. The strongest evidence in the corpus is not a politician's personal faith but organised activity linking a religious constituency to Congress. Before the House vote on supplemental aid, CUFI hosted an emergency Washington meeting involving 250 ministry and community leaders who met their representatives. The organisation also issued an action alert urging congressional support for the aid measure and the procedural rule needed to bring it to the floor (CUFI, 2024b). After Senate passage, CUFI again publicly rewarded supporting legislators and highlighted the same lobbying effort (CUFI, 2024c).

These activities show a plausible pathway of influence: theological identity creates a motivated constituency; an advocacy organisation converts identity into messages and meetings; legislators encounter a policy demand; and the organisation publicly evaluates the resulting vote. The evidence does not show that CUFI was decisive. Many other actors supported the legislation, and the bill served established defence and strategic commitments. It does show that Christian Zionism was not merely private belief. It was organised as political participation and connected to a specific policy outcome.

Elite access continued into 2025. Associated Press reporting on Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's Washington visit described his prioritisation of meetings with prominent evangelical leaders and identified Christian Zionists as an influential component of the political environment surrounding the second Trump administration (Stanley, 2025). In the same year, the nomination

of former governor and Baptist pastor Mike Huckabee as US ambassador to Israel moved a long-standing evangelical supporter of Israel into a formal diplomatic role; his nomination was examined by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in March 2025 (US Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, 2025). These developments do not make the US government a Christian Zionist institution, but they demonstrate the movement's access to senior political and diplomatic networks.

Historical scholarship helps place this access in context. Hummel (2019) documents decades of relationship-building among evangelical figures, Israeli officials, and American Jewish organisations. Ariel (2013) examines the unusual religious and political relationship through which evangelicals sought engagement with Jews and Jewish history. The Gaza-war period therefore represents an intensification of established networks rather than the sudden creation of a new lobby.

Humanitarian counter-frames and the limits of Christian Zionist explanation

The fifth finding is that the dominant pro-Israel discourse was neither uniform nor uncontested. Biden's national address combined a strong security commitment with explicit statements that Palestinians have a right to dignity and self-determination, that Israel should follow the laws of war, that humanitarian assistance was urgently needed, and that both peoples deserve safety and peace (Biden, 2023). These claims did not prevent extensive US military support, but they established moral and legal limits that Christian Zionist advocacy frequently treated as secondary to defeating Hamas.

Public opinion also complicates the idea of a single evangelical bloc. Although White evangelical Protestants were strongly supportive of Israel in Pew's 2024 survey, substantial minorities did not endorse every aspect of the war, and younger Americans were generally more critical of the Israeli government's conduct (Pew Research Center, 2024). Inbari et al. (2021) found weaker attachment to Israel among younger evangelicals even before the war. The movement's political strength therefore coexists with demographic change and internal disagreement.

Finally, strategic and institutional arguments appeared throughout the corpus. Biden justified support through US security, deterrence, alliances, and global leadership. Cruz described Israel's campaign as necessary to protect Americans and restore deterrence. Congressional appropriations were tied to weapons replacement, missile defence, regional operations, and defence production. These reasons cannot be reduced to theology. Christian Zionism reinforced the alliance by adding identity, moral certainty, and constituency mobilisation to an existing material and institutional relationship.

DISCUSSION

The findings support a qualified version of the article's central proposition. Christian Zionism contributed to US support for Israel during the Gaza war by legitimating Israel's exceptional status, mobilising a politically active constituency, and linking biblical duty with security policy. It was especially visible in conservative evangelical advocacy and in the networks surrounding Republican politics. Yet the evidence does not support the stronger claim that Christian Zionism independently determined US foreign policy or replaced strategic calculation.

From a constructivist perspective, the movement's main effect was to reproduce a durable collective identity. Israel was framed as part of the moral and civilisational community of the United States. For Christian Zionist audiences, this community was also spiritual and covenantal. This identity shaped the range of acceptable arguments: support became evidence of faithfulness, while pressure on Israel could be represented as moral failure. The identity relationship also helped bridge different policy rationales. A politician could speak in the language of national security, a pastor in the language of scripture, and an advocacy organisation in both languages without treating them as contradictory.

Securitisation explains how the war activated this identity. The attacks of 7 October were described as an existential and transnational danger. Threat language expanded the referent object from Israeli civilians to democracy, US citizens, regional order, and American leadership. Once the issue was framed at that level, exceptional assistance and reduced tolerance for restraint became easier to justify. Christian Zionism strengthened audience acceptance by presenting the threatened ally as divinely and morally significant.

The analysis also shows the importance of context and institutional power, as Balzacq (2005) argues. The effectiveness of a security claim did not arise only from vocabulary. It depended on authoritative speakers, memories of terrorism and antisemitism, established US-Israeli defence relations, partisan competition, congressional procedures, and organisations capable of mobilising supporters. CUFI's lobbying is therefore analytically more important than isolated apocalyptic statements: it connects identity to political action.

Alternative explanations remain substantial. Defence cooperation, intelligence sharing, regional deterrence, domestic party politics, the executive branch's alliance commitments, and established congressional support all contributed to the policy response. The bipartisan aid vote indicates that support extended beyond the conservative evangelical constituency. Similarly, humanitarian and legal counter-frames within the administration show that pro-Israel policy did not erase all concern

for Palestinian rights or civilian protection, even when critics regarded those concerns as insufficiently reflected in practice.

The most defensible conclusion is therefore relational. Christian Zionism matters because it interacts with material interests and institutions. It gives established commitments a moral language, provides political energy, strengthens particular elite networks, and raises the electoral and symbolic costs of policy restraint. Its influence is strongest where religious identity, conservative partisanship, and security discourse converge.

CONCLUSION

This study examined how Christian Zionist discourse contributed to the legitimization of US support for Israel during the Gaza war from 2023 to 2025. Through qualitative analysis of official statements, congressional records, CUFI publications, survey evidence, and contextual reporting, it identified five connected patterns: the construction of Israel as a moral and spiritual ally; the representation of the conflict as a struggle between good and evil; the securitisation of Israeli military success as an American interest; the translation of religious mobilisation into lobbying and institutional access; and the persistence of humanitarian, legal, and strategic counter-frames.

The evidence shows that Christian Zionism is more than an external pressure group and less than a complete theory of US foreign policy. It is a networked ideological and organisational force embedded particularly within conservative evangelical politics. It contributes to policy by shaping identity, moral judgement, audience mobilisation, and elite access. During the Gaza war, it helped represent extensive support for Israel as both a security necessity and a religiously meaningful obligation.

At the same time, US policy remained the product of multiple forces. Strategic alliance, defence institutions, bipartisan congressional support, presidential leadership, public opinion, and regional calculations were indispensable. The article therefore rejects both reductionism and dismissal. Treating Christian Zionism as the sole cause exaggerates its power; ignoring it misses a major source of legitimacy and political mobilisation.

Future research should extend the corpus to congressional speeches, campaign finance and lobbying records, evangelical media, sermons, and interviews with policymakers and advocacy leaders. Comparative work should also examine generational, racial, and denominational differences among evangelicals, as well as Palestinian Christian responses to Christian Zionism. Such research would clarify when religious discourse merely accompanies policy and when it changes political incentives or decisions.

Data Availability Statement

All documents analysed in this study are publicly available through the official or archival webpages listed in the references. No private or restricted dataset was used.

Conflict of Interest Statement

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