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Declining support for Israel

Friedrich Merz said at a press conference with Andrej Babiš in Berlin yesterday that Germany and Europe have no interest in an endless war in Iran or in the break-up of Iran's territorial integrity, statehood or economic viability. Babiš said that he agrees with Merz's opinion. Unless Babiš was merely being polite to his host, this can be seen as a notable shift in Czech policy. It's hardly the categoric support for the war expressed earlier by Vice PM Karel Havlíček. Babiš's comment came shortly after an online Deník poll found that 73% of respondents disagree with the attack by the U.S and Israel on Iran. In Feb. 2024, CVVM had found that 47% of respondents agreed with Israel's right to take action in Gaza but that only 34% thought that the response was proportionate. Taken together, these polls suggest a growing disillusionment among Czechs with Israel's policies. Babiš's coalition seems to have anticipated this. Whereas Petr Fiala's government vowed to "develop traditional strategic partnerships with Israel, especially in the areas of security, science, research and innovation," Babiš merely wants to continue the "traditional friendship" with Israel.

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