Asher Arian

Israeli Public Opinion on National Security 2000

JCSS Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies

The purpose of the Jaffee Center is, first, to conduct basic research that meets the highest academic standards on matters related to Israel's national security as well as Middle East regional and international security affairs. The Center also aims to contribute to the public debate and governmental deliberation of issues that are – or should be – at the top of Israel's national security agenda.

The Jaffee Center seeks to address the strategic community in Israel and abroad, Israeli policymakers and opinion-makers and the general public.

The Center relates to the concept of strategy in its broadest meaning, namely the complex of processes involved in the identification, mobilization and application of resources in peace and war, in order to solidify and strengthen national and international security.

Asher Arian

Israeli Public Opinion on National Security 2000

Memorandum No. 56,   July 2000

JCSS

Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies

TEL AVIV UNIVERSITY

The National Security and Public Opinion Project

Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies

The Project, initiated in 1984, monitors Israeli public opinion on issues related to national security. Surveys undertaken and cited in this report were comprised of representative samples of the adult Jewish population of Israel. Since 1998, these have included individuals from kibbutzim and from the territories. The percentage of error of the 2000 survey was 3.1 percent.

The survey presented here was carried out between January 21, and February 26, 2000. During that period the talks with both the Palestinians and the Syrians were at a standstill. After months of relative quiet, the Israel Defense Forces once again suffered casualties.

The dates of the project's surveys were: (1) June 1985; (2) January 1986; (3) December 1987-January 1988; (4) October 1988; (5) March-October 1990; (6) March 1991; (7) June 1992; (8) January 1993; (9) January-February 1994; (10) January-February 1995; (11) February 1996;(12) February-March 1997; (13) January-March 1998; (14) January-March 1999; (15) January-February 2000.

Sample sizes were 1,171 in 1985; 1,172 in 1986; 1,116 in 1987; 873 in 1988; 1,251 in 1990; 1,131 in 1991; 1,192 in 1992; 1,139 in 1993; and 1,239 in 1994; 1,220 in 1995; 1,201 in 1996; 1,126 in 1997; 1,207 in 1998; 1,203 in 1999; and 1,201 in 2000.

All surveys were prepared, conducted, and analyzed by the author. Fieldwork through 1995 was done by the Dahaf Research Institute, in 1996 by Modi'in Ezrachi, and since 1997 by the Almidan/Mahshov Research Institute.

Additional surveys discussed in this report were pre-election surveys conducted in May 1996 and May 1999, supervised by Asher Arian and Michal Shamir. The 1996 survey was conducted by the Modi'in Ezrachi Research Institute, with a sample size of 1,168; the 1999 survey was conducted by the Almidan/Mahshov Research Institute and had a total sample size of 1,225; only the Jewish portion of the sample (*N* = 1,075) is reported here. Those surveys were funded by the Israel Democracy

Institute and the Pinhas Sapir Center for Development at Tel Aviv University.

Asher Arian, Project Director, is Professor of Political Science at the University of Haifa, and Distinguished Professor at the Graduate School of the City University of New York.

Contents

Summary

Ehud Barak began his term as prime minister in May 1999 with an initial flurry of activity on the diplomatic front. But by the time of this survey at the beginning of 2000, the negotiations with both the Palestinians and with the Syrians were on hold and Israeli soldiers were again being killed in action in Lebanon after months of no casualties.

There was a feeling of general malaise among the public and indicators of trust and personal security were low. A majority of Israeli Jews in 2000 reported that they felt very worried about their personal safety. A little more than half thought that most Palestinians wanted peace. Only 43 percent thought that most Syrians wanted peace.

Yet, 63 percent thought that the danger of confrontation with the Arab world was lower than in the past. The perception of threat, as measured by the aspirations of the Arabs, however, was slightly higher than it had been in recent years. Only 45 percent thought that the signing of peace agreements with appropriate security arrangements would mean the end of the Arab-Israel conflict.

The sample was more demanding in its definition of peace than it had been in the past; yet regarding Syria, the sample seemed more prepared than in the past to be satisfied with a peace treaty that featured only security arrangements.

The Israeli-Egyptian peace treaty, which was signed more than 20 years ago, entailed considerable Israeli concessions. Respondents were asked whether they supported the treaty with Egypt despite the concessions. Ninety percent answered affirmatively.

A clear majority (62%) in 2000 supported unilateral withdrawal from Lebanon. The trend in that direction was consistent and continued to grow. Almost all respondents agreed (86% in 2000 versus 74% in 1999) that the security zone was not worth the lives of Israeli soldiers.

A record percentage (15%) supported the complete withdrawal from the Golan Heights while the percentage opposed to returning any of the Golan was as low as it had ever been (30%). In 2000, 78 percent thought that Israel would return the Golan Heights to Syria within the coming years, compared to 54 percent in 1999.

Sixty percent said they would vote "for" in a referendum based on this question: "If a referendum were held and the question was for or against returning all of the Golan in exchange for complete peace and security arrangements that would allow the pull out from Lebanon, how would you vote?" The connection between the Golan and Lebanon seemed to motivate many of the respondents. Fifty-one percent estimated that the referendum would pass.

Security issues were by far the most convincing of the reasons affecting the decision about the sample would vote in the referendum – economic and political reasons less so.

I. The Setting

The survey upon which this report is based was conducted between January 21, and February 26, 2000. Following the election of Ehud Barak as prime minister in May 1999, negotiations with both the Palestinians and Syria resumed at an accelerated pace. By the time of the survey, however, talks on both tracks had been suspended and Israel was again suffering casualties in Lebanon.

The public mood was as reserved as it had been during past surveys. When asked to evaluate the condition of the country, only 2 percent said it was very good, 26 percent answered good, 43 percent responded so-so, 21 percent replied bad, and 8 percent said very bad. This assessment was as low as the one recorded in 1995 but represented a slight improvement over the 1999 summary (see Figure 1).
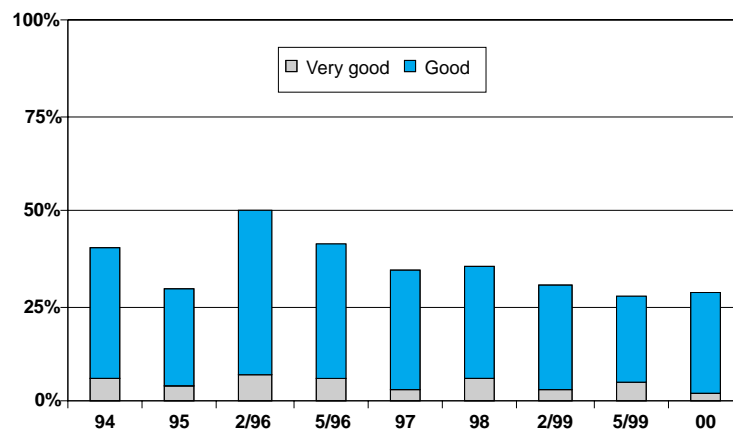

Figure 1. Condition of the Country, 1994-2000

Regarding the government's handling of the issues facing the country, 36 percent of the respondents gave the government a positive evaluation (2% very good and 34% good), and 64 percent a negative evaluation (19% very dissatisfied and 45% dissatisfied) (see Figure 2).
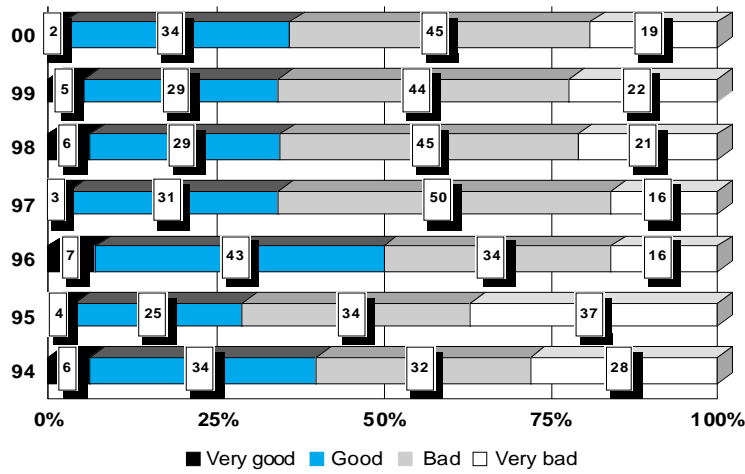

Figure 2. Evaluation of the Government, 1994-2000

The assessment for 2000 was similar to the relatively low rates of the late 1990s. The assessment of the government's performance in this series was best in 1996 (50% positive), with Shimon Peres as prime minister and before the series of suicide bombings, and worst in 1995 (29% positive) with Yitzhak Rabin as prime minister.

II. Security, Peace, and War

The Israeli public's mood was bleak, and indicators of trust and personal security were low, even though there had been no major terror attacks in the past year.

Feelings of personal security. Israeli Jews in 2000 reported that they felt very worried about their personal safety. The rate of concern that they or members of their family would be injured by terrorist action was as high as it had been in 1996 and 1997, whereas in the years immediately preceding this survey, the rates were lower (see Table 1).

	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	00
Very worried	48%	37%	46%	35%	31%	22%	13%	30%
Worried	36	39	39	43	46	44	45	49
Not worried at all	13	18	13	17	18	26	34	18
Not worried	2	6	2	5	5	8	8	3

Table 1. Concern about Personal Safety, 1993–2000

Asked whether they believe if most Palestinians wanted peace, the answer varied, depending on the reports from the talks between Israel and the Palestinian Authority. Only 52 percent of the respondents in 2000 thought that most Palestinians wanted peace, compared to 64 percent in 1999. Only 43 percent in 2000 thought that most Syrians wanted peace.

Another indication of how the public assessed the situation was reflected in the question about the risk of confrontation with the Arab world today compared with the past. Thirty-seven percent responded that the danger was much greater or greater (7% and 29% respectively) compared with 63 percent who thought that the danger was less or much less (56% and 8% respectively).

The assessment did not appear to be related to the policies of a particular administration. When asked to compare the risk of confrontation under the Barak government compared with the Netanyahu period, similar results were generated: 37 percent said they

felt that the danger had increased (8% much greater, 29% greater) and 63 percent said it had lessened (49% less, and 14% much less).

When asked whether one wanted to live in Israel in the long run, 84 percent answered in the affirmative. This very high level of desire to remain in Israel has been consistent over the years.

Assessment of Arab aspirations. The perceived security situation of the country has an impact on the mood of the citizenry, which in turn feeds on policy decisions. Respondents have been asked over the years to assess the aspirations of the Arabs. The response that the Arabs ultimately wanted to conquer Israel and destroy a large portion of the Jewish population was a dominant one. In the mid-1990s that position began to erode, only to increase again slightly in 2000.

In 2000, 28 percent chose the extreme response that the aspirations of the Arabs was to kill much of the Jewish population (see Figure 3). This was the highest response for this category since 1995. In general, there had been a downward trend for the extreme answers since 1995, but this pattern was broken in 2000. The highest rate for this response was in the 1991 survey at the time of the Gulf War in which 49 percent gave that response.

The largest response in 2000 was that the Arabs wanted to regain all the territories lost in the 1967 war: 36 percent chose this answer, while
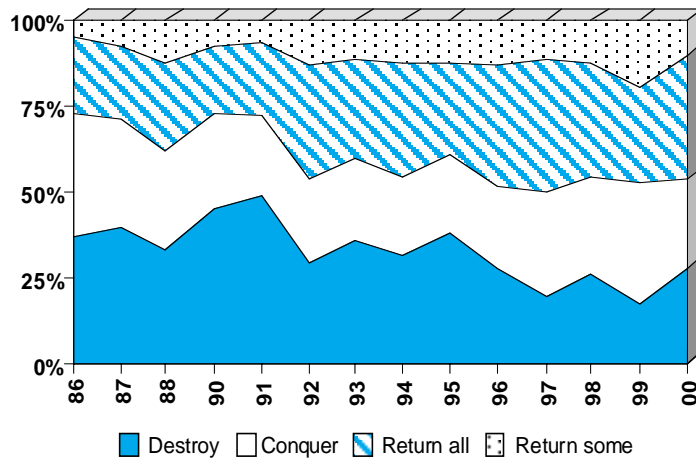

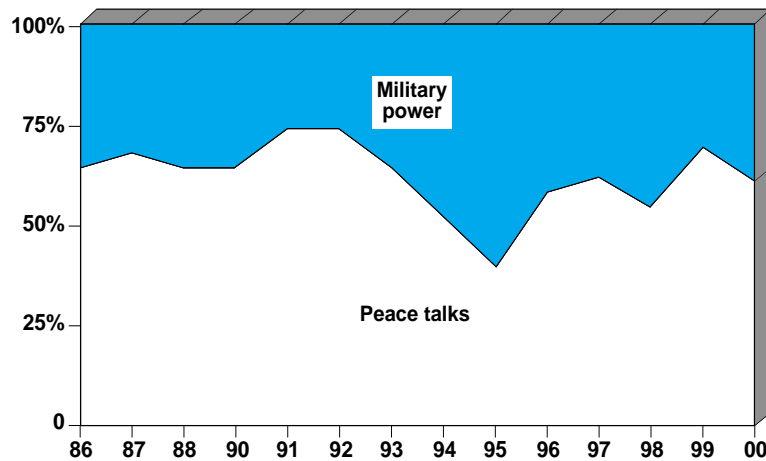Figure 3. Arab Aspirations, 1986-2000

Figure 4. Military Power or Peace Talks, 1986-2000

an additional 26 percent thought the Arabs only wanted to conquer Israel, and 10 percent said that the Arabs wanted back some of the territories.

Another measure of the impact of the period's events on the public mood is the response to the question of whether the signing of peace agreements with appropriate security arrangements would mean the end of the Arab-Israeli conflict. In 2000, only 45 percent answered yes, one of the lowest rates recorded for this question since the middle of the 1990s. Rates for previous years were 67 percent in 1999, 55 percent in 1998, 65 percent in 1997, 49 percent in 1996, 41 percent in 1995, 53 percent in 1994 and 52 percent in 1993.

An indicator of the concerns and mood of the public is found in answers to a question which forced respondents to choose between peace talks and strengthening military capacity in order to avoid war with Arab states (see Figure 4). The preference for choosing peace talks over military capacity was chosen by 61 percent in 2000, much lower than the high 69 percent of 1999. Only in 1995 did a majority of respondents prefer military capacity rather than peace talks.

Seven out of 10 Israeli Jews thought that the chances were good that peace would be sustained over the next three years; almost 40 percent reported a high level of probability that war would break out between Israel and an Arab state within that period. The overlap of those two numbers indicates that some respondents felt it was possible that both

things could take place simultaneously or with different states at the same time.

In 1999, 68 percent, and in 1998, 57 percent thought that there was a high or moderate probability that peace would persist in the coming three years, compared to 76 percent in 1997 and 75 percent in 1996. Those who thought that there was a high or moderate probability of war in the
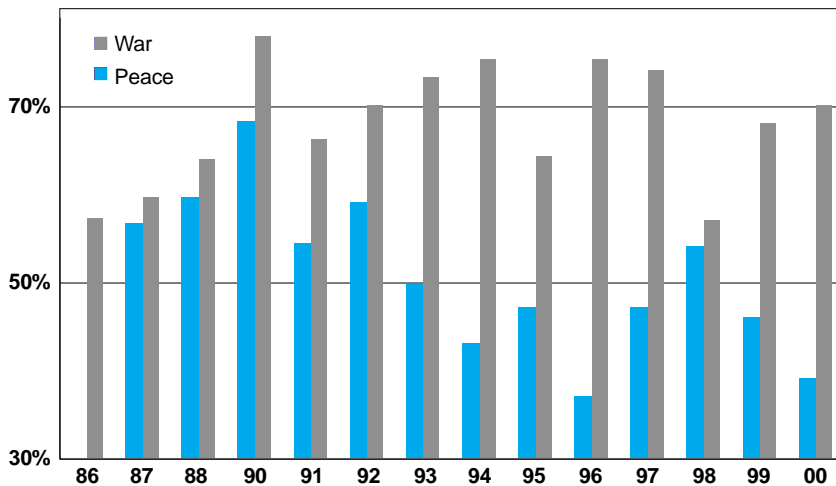
Figure 5. Probabilty of War and Peace, 1986-2000

next three years grew from 37 percent in 1996, to 47 percent in 1997, to 54 percent in 1998, and then down to 46 percent in 1999 (see Figure 5).

Focusing on the differences in the perceived probabilities of peace and war over the years indicates that the respondents always assessed the chances of peace higher than the chances for war; and that the difference between the two probabilities in 2000 increased as it had in 1999, after being almost identical in 1998. A graphic representation of the differences in the perceived probabilities of peace and war is presented in Figure 6.

Defining peace. The nature of peace was probed by asking the respondents to think of five circles; peace would be defined for the
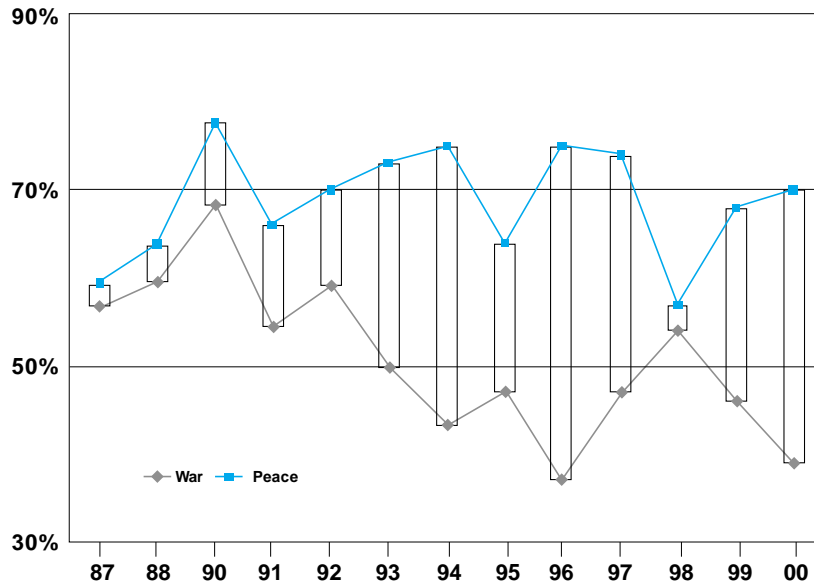
Figure 6. Differences between War and Peace, 1987-2000

respondent by the innermost point mentioned, assuming that the order was cumulative in nature. Respondents were asked to identify the minimal conditions that would define for them a situation of peace. (In certain instances, a "no peace" or "peace will never happen" response was legitimate.) The peace prototypes, with the inner limit in **bold** were:

A. No peace treaty
B. **No war**, and no peace treaty
C. No war, and **a peace treaty with security provisions**
D. No war, a peace treaty with security provisions, and **the exchange of ambassadors**
E. No war, a peace treaty with security provisions, the exchange of ambassadors, and **trade and tourism**
F. No war, a peace treaty with security provisions, the exchange of ambassadors, trade and tourism, and **a feeling of closeness between the citizens of the countries involved**

Israeli public opinion expressed greater expectations of peace during the period between 1994 and 2000. Most respondents in 2000 (30%) identified F as sufficient to meet their minimal conditions for peace (see Figure 7). This was followed by E (28%), D (19%), C (18%), and B (5%). Israelis had raised their expectations since 1996, and even more so since 1994, when this question was first posed. In 1994, 35 percent identified C as sufficient to meet their minimal conditions for peace, followed by E (20%), D (18%), F (17%), and B (9%). With peace treaties with Egypt and Jordan already achieved, the public seemed to want more rather than less.
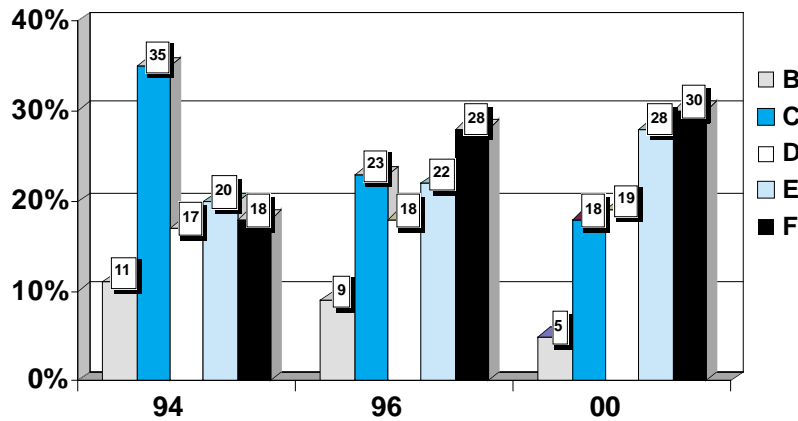
Figure 7. Defining Peace: 1994, 1996, and 2000

Note: "A" is not applicable since peace treaties exist with Egypt and Jordan.

Minimal conditions for peace with Syria. Israeli conditions for peace with Syria changed little over the years (see Figure 8); 19 percent in 2000 (15% in 1994) chose A, indicating they did not believe that peace with Syria would be reached at all.

The percentage of respondents expressing willingness to accept minimal condition C regarding Syria (no war, and a peace treaty with security provisions) grew from 29 percent in 1994 and 1996, to 37 percent in 2000. This level was lower than the desired threshold and evidently reflected the very cold and unproductive atmosphere reported from the negotiations.
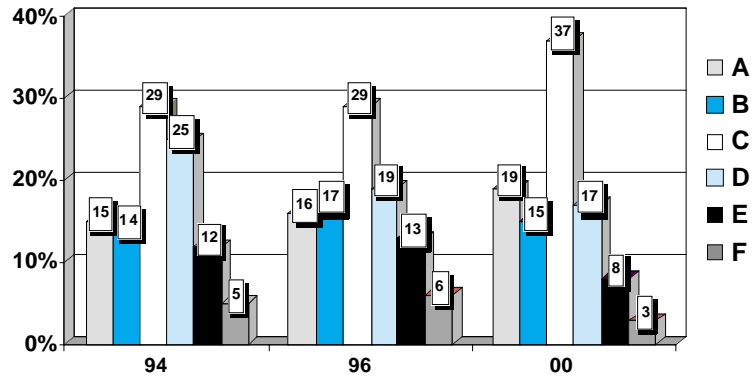
Figure 8. Conditions for Peace with Syria: 1994, 1996, and 2000

Peace with Egypt. The peace treaty with Egypt was signed more than 20 years ago and entailed considerable Israeli concessions, namely, evacuating the Sinai Peninsula, relinquishing its oil fields, and dismantling the settlements established there. Recalling these concessions, respondents were asked whether they supported the treaty with Egypt, 90 percent answered yes.

III. The Palestinian Authority and the Territories

Land for peace and negotiations. Willingness to return land for peace remained relatively high in the 2000 survey. Forty-nine percent agreed to such a plan with varying degrees of intensity, 36 percent rejected the notion, and 14 percent took a middle position between the two extreme answers (see Table 2).

	2/96	5/96	97	98	2/99	5/99	00
Return	43%	53%	53%	44%	47%	51%	49%
Middle position	16	15	14	14	15	13	14
Do not return	41	42	34	42	28	38	36

Table 2. Land for Peace, 1996-2000

Opposition to the talks grew slightly. In the 2000 survey 1999, almost one in four supported the notion of ceasing the peace talks even if it resulted in war, while 64 percent opposed the notion of stopping the peace talks (see Table 3).

	2/96	5/96	97	98	2/99	5/99	00
Stop talks	18%	21%	13%	14%	20%	8%	24%
Middle	15	12	10	13	17	15	12
Do not stop talks	67	67	77	73	63	77	64

Table 3. Stop Peace Talks, 1996-2000

A Palestinian state. When asked directly whether a Palestinian state should be established, 55 percent agreed. In 1999, the number had been 57 percent. These rates were much higher than the 44 percent who agreed in 1998 and reestablished the steady growth of support for the idea (see Figure 9). In 1997, 51 percent supported it, compared to 48 percent in 1996, and 39 percent in 1995. The dip in 1992 is explained by the support the Palestinians expressed for Iraq during the Gulf War.

Opposition to the idea of a Palestinian state was higher than in 1999.

In 2000, 25 percent were very opposed, compared to 15 percent in 1999, 32 percent in 1998, 25 percent in 1997, 28 percent in 1996, and 41 percent in 1995.

In addition to their personal preferences, respondents were also asked "Not taking into account your personal preference, do you estimate that a Palestinian state will be established within the next five years?" (Prior to the 2000 survey, the reference was to 10 years.) The assessment that a Palestinian state would be established in the territories was supported by 74 percent, compared to 77 percent in 1999, and 66 percent in 1998. Figure 9 presents the results over time regarding a Palestinian state in terms of support for its establishment and the likelihood that it will be established.
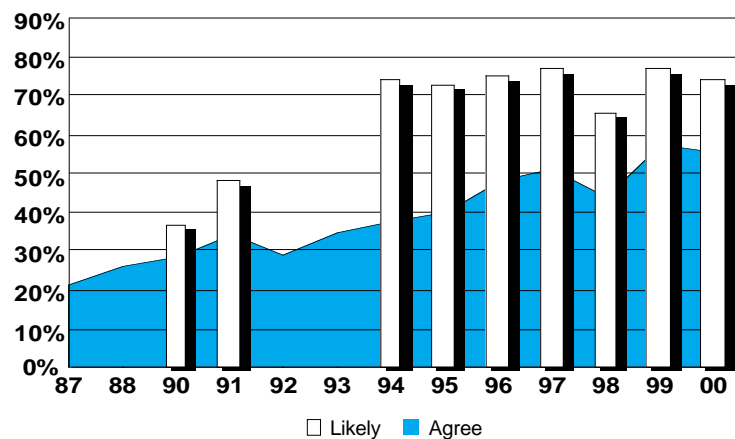
Figure 9. The Establishment of Palestinian State, 1987-2000

If the Palestine Authority were to unilaterally declare the establishment of a Palestinian state, the reaction of the Israeli public, according to the sample, would not be extreme. Twelve percent favored recognizing such a state; 19 percent thought that Israel should do nothing; 44 percent favored ceasing further negotiations with the Palestinians; 15 percent supported annexing the areas of the territories still under Israeli control; and 10 percent were for invading and recapturing the territories (see Figure 10).
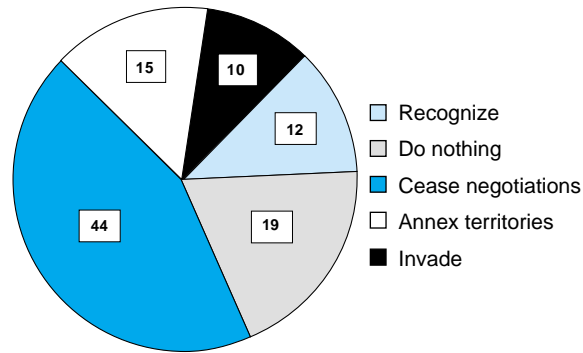
Figure 10. Israel's Response to Unilateral Declaration of a Palestinian State

Territories. Which territories Israel should relinquish as part of the permanent settlement is a very divisive issue. As seen in Table 4, however, the rate of willingness to return territory was uniformly higher than before. The ranking of which territories to return remained as it had in the past. In one case there was even a bare majority in favor of returning territories: 51 percent supported returning western Samaria.

	94	95	96	97	98	99	00
Western Samaria	30%	30%	38%	44%	39%	41%	51%
Gush Etzion	14	18	20	26	26	32	33
Jordan Valley	18	19	20	20	23	23	32
East Jerusalem	10	9	12	20	17	21	24

Table 4. Territories Acceptable to Be Returned in the Permanent Agreement, 1994-2000

Jerusalem. Respondents were asked about the establishment of the capital of the Palestinian state in Greater Jerusalem. This idea was soundly rejected by a margin of 89 percent to 11 percent. In 1999 and 1998, the rates were 86 percent to 14 percent.

Using a different wording in 1997, in which "East Jerusalem" was asked about, the rejection rate was also very high: 79 percent to 21 percent. In 1996, only 14 percent agreed. It is likely that the changed question

affected the response pattern as did the conditions that prevailed at the time of the survey.

The Settlers and the settlements. Responses regarding the settlements changed little compared to past surveys. In 2000, 32 percent of the respondents said that no Jewish settlements in the Golan Heights should be removed, while 26 percent opposed dismantling any settlements in the West Bank. Half agreed to remove some settlements in the Golan, and 59 percent consented to remove some in the West Bank. Eighteen percent of the sample said to remove all Golan settlements, and 15 percent wanted to see all West Bank settlements dismantled.

In 1999, 29 percent said all settlements should be removed (32% in 1998, 27% in 1997, and 30% in 1996). Fourteen percent were ready to remove them all immediately (18% in 1998, 15% in 1997, and 17% in 1996). An additional 57 percent were willing to remove settlements with no strategic importance (50% in 1998, 58% in 1997, and 53% in 1996).

IV. Lebanon and Syria

Lebanon has been on the public agenda for two decades, with the policy debate occasionally reaching intense and vocal levels. During the 1999 election campaign, Prime Minister Barak promised that Israel would leave Lebanon by the summer of 2000, preferably with the agreement of the Syrians and the Lebanese, but without it if necessary. Thus, the security situation in Lebanon was a very hot issue at the time of the survey.

The immediate focus of the debate was the presence of the IDF in the security zone in south Lebanon, established in 1985 after the army withdrew from Lebanon following the 1982 Peace for Galilee Operation. The broader context was Israel's relations with Syria and the future of the Golan Heights, which Israel conquered in the 1967 Six Day War. The Israeli public adopted a more conciliatory position regarding its position on Lebanon, but maintained a militant one regarding concessions to the Syrians.

A large majority in 2000 (62%) supported unilateral withdrawal from Lebanon. The trend was clear and continued to grow. The 1999 poll was the first Jaffee Center survey in which a majority (55%) agreed to unilateral withdrawal from Lebanon. This was up from 44 percent in 1998, and 41 percent in 1997. The breakdown shown in Figure 11 indicates that the "definitely no" respondents decreased from about a third of the sample in 1997 and 1998, to a quarter in 1999, and a fifth in 2000.

Women supported withdrawal at a higher rate than men, as did older people (see Table 14 at the end of the report). Those who were born in Europe or America were more in favor of pulling out than those born in Asia or Africa; the lowest rate of support was among Sephardi Jews born in Israel. The secular were more in favor than the religious, as were supporters of Barak. Those who served in the territories supported withdrawal at a lower rate than those who had not served in the territories or had not been in the army.

Over the years questions have been asked about the rationale of the security zone policy. Between 1995 and 1998, a single question was asked about the role of the security zone in Lebanon. In general, there was a decline in the percentage of those agreeing that it made a positive

	Definitely agree	Agree	Disagree	Definitely disagree
00	25	37	18	20
99	17	38	18	27
98	14	30	23	33
97	12	29	23	36

■ Definitely agree   ■ Agree   ■ Disagree   □ Definitely disagree
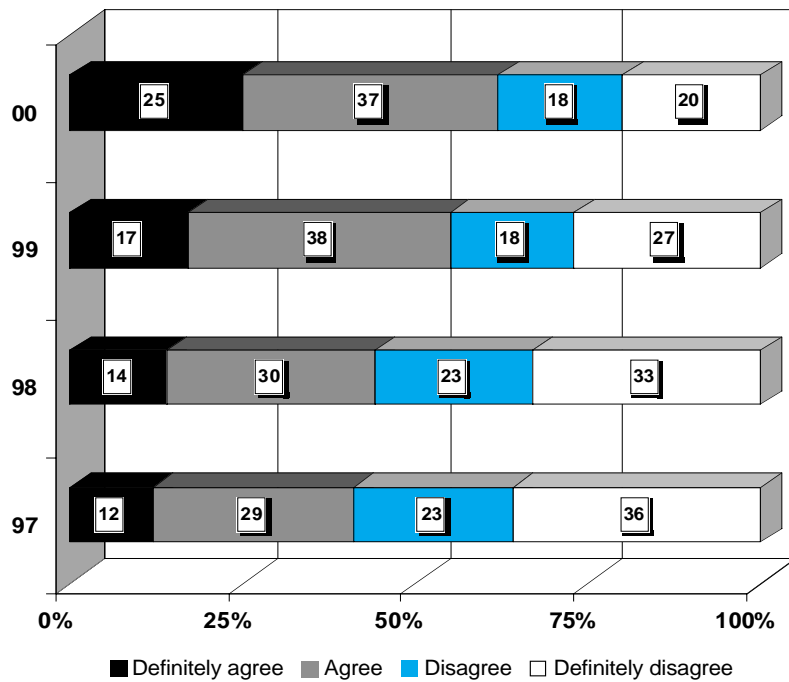
Figure 11. Unilateral Withdrawal from Lebanon, 1997-2000

contribution to Israel's security and protected the northern settlements from terrorism. In 1998, 64 percent agreed; in 1997, 62 percent; in 1996, 72 percent; and 77 percent in 1995. The other 36 percent in 1998 (38% in 1997, 28% in 1996, and 23% in 1995) thought that the security zone was not effective in bringing quiet to the border and that its toll in terms of the lives of Israeli soldiers was too high.

In the 1999 and 2000 surveys, that single question was replaced by a more comprehensive series of questions. Respondents were asked to react a number of statements often heard in the public debate about the security zone. Table 5 contains the rates of agreement to the statements asked in those two surveys. (The wording of two statements were slightly altered.)

	99	00
The security zone is not worth the lives of Israeli soldiers	74%	86%
The security zone is an important bargaining chip in future negotiations with Syria	72	79
The security zone brings quiet to the north of the country	71	75
The problems in Lebanon can be solved without leaving the Golan Heights	70	na
The Lebanon issue can be handled without retreating from the Golan	na	65
Israel should withdraw unilaterally from Lebanon	55	62
We are paying the price in south Lebanon for not negotiating with Syria	72	na
We can achieve peace with Syria without withdrawing from the Golan	na	50
A great part of the disquiet in south Lebanon is due to Israel's policies	34	36

Table 5. Statements Regarding Lebanon: 1999 and 2000

Almost all respondents in 2000 agreed (86%) that the security zone was not worth the lives of Israeli soldiers (74% in 1999). Most (79%) saw it as an important bargaining chip in future negotiations with Syria (72% in 1999); 75 percent said that the security zone brought quiet to the north of the country (71% in 1999); and 65 percent thought that the Lebanon issue could be handled without retreating from the Golan. As reported above, 62 percent favored unilateral withdrawal from Lebanon (55% in 1999).

As willingness to leave Lebanon grew, the percentage of respondents intent on keeping the Golan shrank. In the 2000 survey, the percentage of people supporting complete withdrawal from the Golan was the largest it had ever been (15%) and the percentage opposed to returning any of the Golan was the lowest ever (30%). In the 1999 survey the size of the group that rejected the return of any of the Golan Heights to Syria was 38 percent, and it was 44 percent in 1998. In 2000, 63 percent were

willing to give none, or only a small part of the Golan, compared to 73 percent in 1999.

In the past, most respondents considered the Golan Heights non-negotiable property. In surveys conducted by the Guttman Institute between 1968 and 1978, the rates rejecting the return of any of the Golan Heights ranged from 74 to 96 percent. In 1986, when asked if Israel should be willing to return the Heights to Syria in exchange for a peace treaty, 86 percent said no. Even in 1995, with talks between the Israelis and Syrians in the news and frequent rumors about possible arrangements between the Rabin-Peres team and Assad, the rate of refusal to return any of the Golan to Syria remained about 50 percent. However, the rate of willingness to return "some" grew in 2000.

Figure 12 details the responses to a four-choice question about returning the Golan Heights to Syria in conjunction with security arrangements acceptable to Israel in surveys between 1993 and 2000.
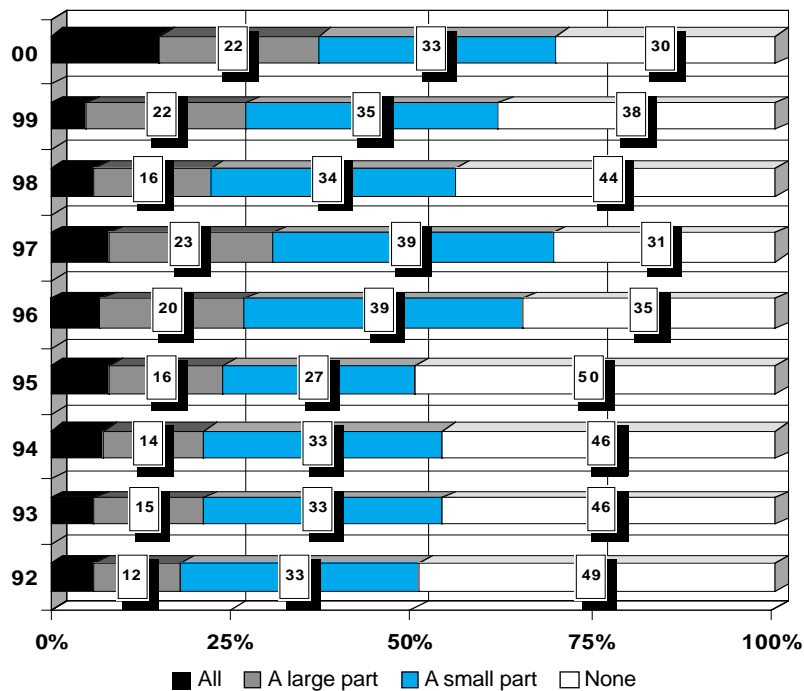

Figure 12. Returning the Golan Heights, 1992-2000

A growing number of Israelis have resigned themselves to the possibility that Israel would return the Golan Heights to Syria. Respondents in 2000 were asked the following question, in addition to their personal preferences: "Not taking into account your personal preference, do you estimate that within the next five years (10 years, in previous surveys) Israel will return the Golan Heights to Syria?" That assessment was shared by 78 percent in 2000, much higher than the 54 percent of 1999. The percentage of those who thought Israel would return the Golan Heights to Syria within 10 years was 48 in 1998, much lower than the 66 percent in 1997 and in 1996, or from the 61 percent in 1995 (see Figure 13).

■ Return all or a small part □ High likelihood that it will be returned
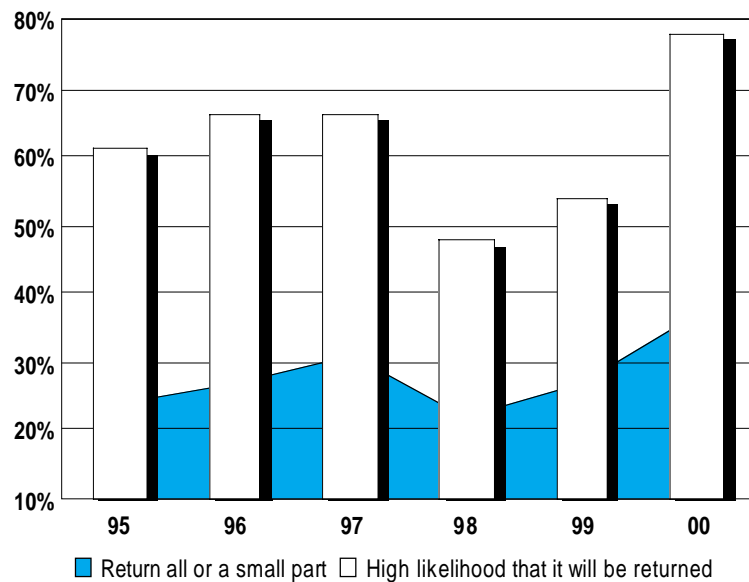
**Figure 13. Agreement to Return the Golan Heights and
Likelihood of Return, 1995-2000**

Relations with Syria and the future of the Golan Heights were important components of any policy regarding Lebanon. In this regard it is important to note that Israeli public opinion regarding Lebanon and Syria became more conciliatory in 2000. This is the background for understanding the response to the question regarding the anticipated referendum regarding the Golan.

The question was "If a referendum were held and the question was for or against returning all of the Golan in exchange for complete peace and security arrangements that would allow the pull out from Lebanon, how would you vote?" Sixty percent said they would cast a yes ballot.

Fifty-one percent estimated that the referendum would pass; 40 percent thought it would fail; three percent felt there would be no agreement; and six percent thought there would be no referendum.

Women were much more supportive of the peace agreement than men were, as were those with higher levels of education (see Table 15 at the end of the report). Respondents originating from Asia or Africa supported the agreement at a lower rate than those coming from Europe. Religious observance is the most striking indicator for support or rejection of the referendum. A third of the very observant supported it, compared to three-quarters of secular respondents.

When broken down by whom they voted for as prime minister in 1999 (see Table 6), almost all Barak supporters (83%) said they would cast a favorable vote, as well as 30 percent of Netanyahu voters. The groups most evenly divided were new voters (young people and new immigrants) and those who refused to answer how they voted for prime minister.

Referendum	Barak	Netanyahu	No answer; No right to vote in 1999
For (60%)	83%	30%	47%
Against (40%)	17	70	53

Table 6. The Referendum by 1999 Vote For Prime Minister

Respondents were asked to react to statements regarding returning or not returning the Golan, and to indicate if they thought they were convincing statements. The rates for both types of statements are presented in Tables 7 and 8 as a percentage of the total sample as broken down by position on the referendum.

	Total	For (60%)	Against (40%)
Peace with Syria will solve the problems with Lebanon and will bring our soldiers home	35%	35%	35%
If there is no agreement with Syria, there will be war sooner or later	15	13	17
Peace with Syria will strengthen Israel's international standing	14	15	12
Peace with with Syria means peace with the other Arab nations	10	10	9
Peace with Syria will bring economic growth and will better our standard of living	9	11	7
Holding on to territory is less important in the age of modern weapons	4	3	4
Peace with with Syria will mean less army service	3	2	6
There is a window of opportunity now that will not be available after Assad dies	2	2	4

Table 7. The Most Convincing Reason to Return the Golan to Syria: 2000

	Total	For (60%)	Against (40%)
If the Syrian army returns to the Golan Heights, the Galilee will be endangered	29%	37%	16%
The Golan is a strategic area that should not be given up at any price	22	19	29
Peace with Syria will threaten our water supply and our control of the Sea of Galilee	18	18	15
The Golan is part of the land of Israel and is therefore not to be returned	11	5	19
Peace with Syria will be a cold peace and it is not worth returning the Golan for that kind of peace	6	6	7
We should not uproot settlers from their homes after the state sent them to settle there	6	5	6
Assad is sick and there is no telling who will replace him or what his policy will be	4	4	4
Syria is weak and there is no reason to give in to it when negotiating a treaty	3	3	3
Removing the settlements and building new defense lines will cost money that could be used for better purposes	1	3	1

Table 8. The Most Convincing Reason Not to Return the Golan to Syria: 2000

Security reasons are by far the most convincing of the reasons for concluding a peace agreement with Syria, both for the total sample and for those for and against the agreement. Economic and political reasons were less persuasive.

The same is true for convincing reasons not to return the Golan Heights to Syria. Those who support the deal are concerned about the possible presence of the Syrian army on the Golan in terms of the safety of the Galilee; those who oppose the agreement express the same concern by identifying the Golan as an indispensable strategic possession.

V. Meeting Defense Challenges

Overcoming challenges. Israelis have been consistently confident in their ability to overcome security threats. Figure 14 displays the rates of that belief regarding war with Syria, terror, a revolt by Israeli Arabs, the lowering of US aid, and all out war by all Arab countries. Levels of confidence decreased regarding each of these, except overcoming the lowering of US aid. Especially sharp was the drop-off in 2000 regarding overcoming all out war by all Arab countries.
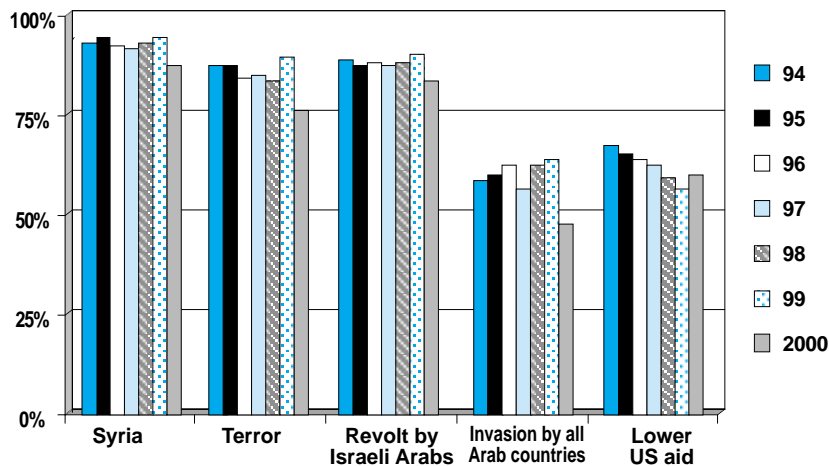
Figure 14. Challenges Israel Can Overcome, 1994-2000

Other issues asked about in the 1999 and 2000 surveys are displayed in Figure 15. The respondents' assessment was positive about the ability to overcome ground-to-ground missiles and internal problems, such as political polarization and social diversity in the country. About half the respondents in 2000 were confident about the ability to overcome biological, chemical, and atomic weapons in the hands of Israel's enemies.

The Israel Defense Forces. The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) has always been associated with Israeli might, pride, and independence. The army is often described as a major facilitator of integration and socialization for immigrants to the country.

Key:

1. Ground-to-ground missiles
2. Political polarization in the country
3. Social diversity in the country
4. Weapons of mass destruction in the hands of Israel's enemies (not asked in 2000)
5. Biological and chemical weapons in the hands of Israel's enemies (not asked in 1999)
6. Atomic weapons in the hands of Israel's enemies (not asked in 1999)
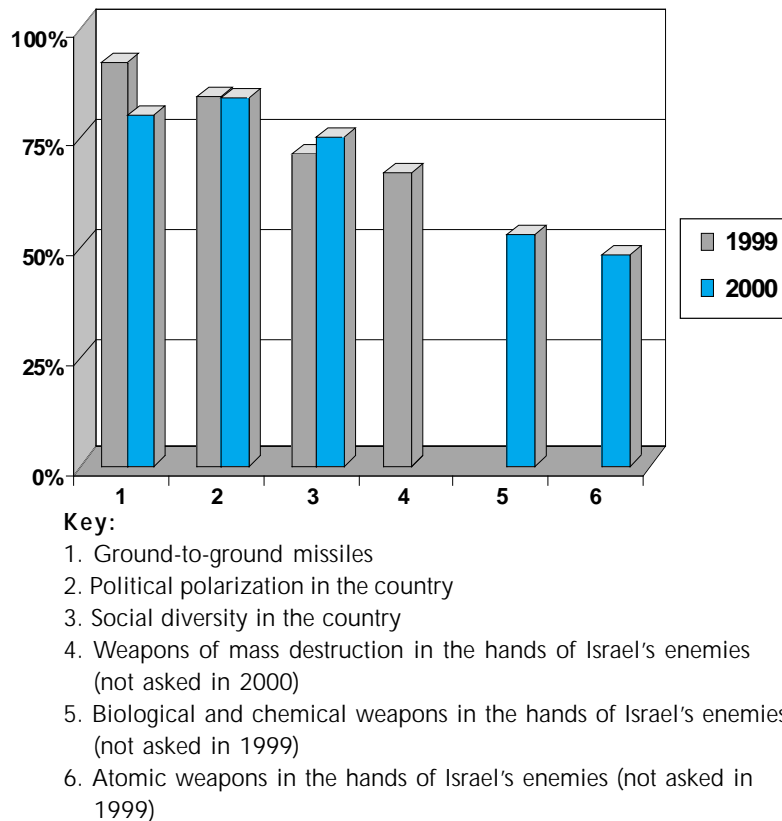
Figure 15. Challenges Israel Can Overcome, 1999, 2000

Over time, however, many of these assumptions have been questioned. The introduction of technological advances to warfare questions the need for a large standing army. The IDF has been assigned many police functions in the territories, or has been faced with static situations as in Lebanon, tasks which do not lend themselves to daring, initiative, and swift victories. Although army service is compulsory for Jews, many yeshiva students do not serve, thus raising questions of universality, equality, and motivation.

Since 1987 respondents have been asked whether the army is getting stronger or whether its strength is eroding. Figure 16 displays the array of responses over the years. While in the past, almost half of the samples stated that the IDF was becoming weaker or much weaker, the number in 2000 was only 30 percent; 42 percent thought things are staying about

Figure 16. Assessing the IDF, 1987-2000

the same; and 28 percent said that the IDF is getting stronger. This is the first time that the sense of a weakening army seems to have shifted.
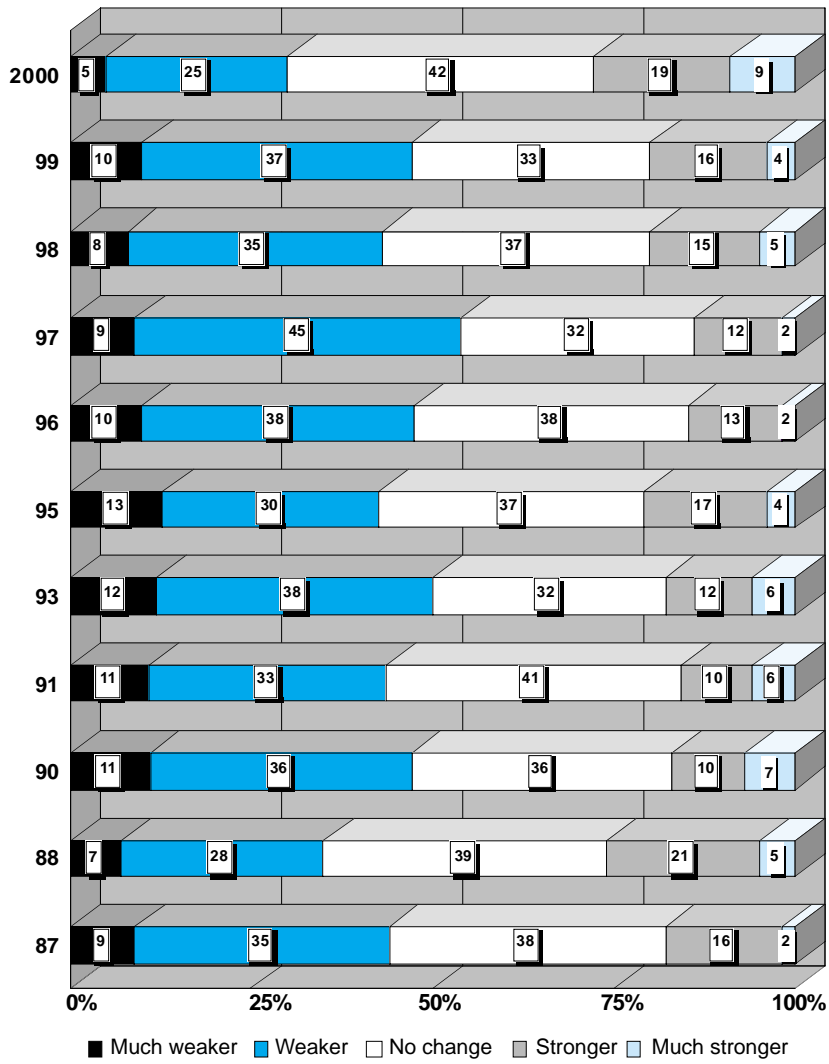
The defense budget and taxes. The majority of respondents in past surveys have consistently thought that the defense budget was appropriate; the size of the group that wanted it increased has been

between three to six times the size of the group that wanted it reduced. This was true in 2000 as well: 39 percent wanted the security budget expanded, 7 percent wanted it cut, and 53 percent wanted it to remain the same. When asked if one was willing to pay more taxes to have greater security, about half the respondents agreed in the 1980s, 42 percent agreed in 1993, 29 percent agreed in 1998, 18 percent agreed in 1999, and 28 percent in 2000 (see Figure 17).
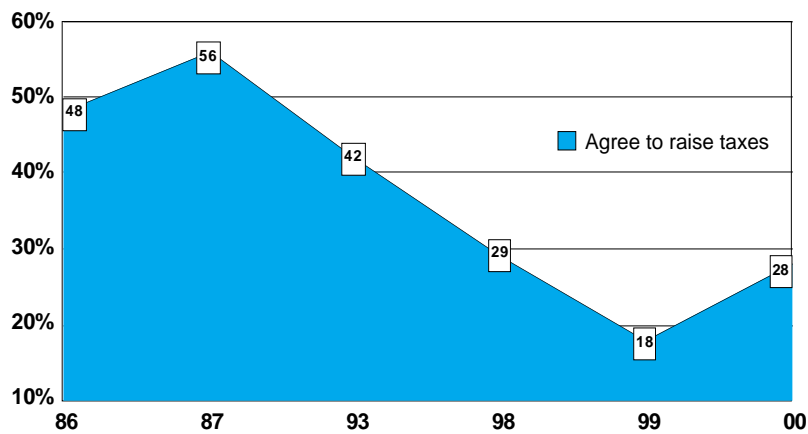
Figure 17. Raise Taxes for Security Budget, 1986-2000

Conscription service or a volunteer army? Although most respondents were not ready to increase taxes for defense, they were very firm in their support for the form of mandatory conscription that exists today. The notion of a volunteer army was very unpopular, but gained more support in 2000 than it had in 1999 (see Table 9).

	Definitely volunteer	Maybe volunteer	Maybe conscription	Definitely conscription
1999	3%	10%	30%	57%
2000	7	16	26	51

Table 9. Volunteer Army: 1999 and 2000

The credibility of the leadership is a crucial factor in any political system, and certainly in a democracy. The heads of the security organizations enjoy levels of credibility higher than the political leaders of the country. In 1999, they enjoyed a 23-point difference in credibility compared to political leaders, and in 2000, a 15-point lead (see Table 10).

	Security	Political
Strongly rely	28%	14%
Rely	50	49
Do not rely	19	29
Definitely not	3	8

Table 10. Reliance on Statements of Security and Political Leaders: 2000

The overall pattern of credibility for the political leadership has been in a downward trend. There was a 26-percentage point gap in 1999 between the results that year and the 1986 survey in which the question was first asked (see Table 11). The difference between 2000 and 1986 was 19 points.

	86	87	96	97	98	99	00
Strongly rely	13%	10%	9%	8%	12%	10%	14%
Rely	69	59	51	57	53	46	49
Do not rely	17	26	31	28	28	36	29
Definitely not	2	5	9	7	7	8	8

Table 11. Reliance on Statements of Political Leaders: 1986-2000

Civil war. The assessed probability of civil war resulting from political decisions regarding the future of the territories remained at about a third of the samples. The size of the groups which assessed civil war as being very likely and that it was very unlikely shrank over the years (see Table 12).

	94	95	96	97	98	99	00
Very likely	9%	8%	6%	3%	5%	5%	7%
Likely	24	22	30	29	29	30	30
Unlikely	34	35	33	45	43	48	32
Very unlikely	33	36	32	24	24	18	26

Table 12. Likelihood of Civil War, 1986-2000

Arab parties in the coalition. Less than half of the sample accepted the notion of including Arab parties in the government coalition. This was a lower rate of support than recorded in 1999 (see Table 13).

	93	94	96	97	98	99	00
Strongly support	10%	12%	10%	13%	9%	17%	15%
Support	23	27	35	26	29	33	31
Oppose	21	21	28	24	23	29	24
Strongly oppose	47	41	28	37	40	21	30

Table 13. Accepting Arab Parties in the Coalition, 1993-2000

**Table 14. In your opinion, do you support a unilateral withdrawal
from Lebanon?**

Group	Not at all	No	Yes	Definitely
Total	20%	18%	37%	25%
Gender				
Female	21	17	36	26
Male	20	20	37	23
Age				
18-29	19	19	39	23
30-54	21	18	35	26
+55	25	15	35	26
Education				
thru 8 years	39	17	28	17
9-12 years	20	21	34	25
+12 years	20	14	41	25
Place of birth				
Israel, father Israel	16	21	38	25
Israel, father Asia or Africa	23	19	34	26
Israel, father Europe or America	19	12	46	24
Asia or Africa	30	16	32	22
Europe or America	20	21	32	27
Extent of religious observance				
Observe all	52	19	16	13
Observe most	22	27	32	19
Observe some	18	14	42	24
Observe none	12	17	38	33
Army service in the Territories				
Yes	17	19	41	22
No	21	18	35	25
No army service	26	17	35	22
Choice for prime minister 1999				
Netanyahu	33	25	26	16
Barak	12	13	44	30

Table 15. If a referendum were held and the question was for or against returning all of the Golan in exchange for complete peace and security arrangements that would allow the pull out from Lebanon, how would you vote?

Group	For	Against
Total	60%	40%
Gender		
Female	65	35
Male	56	44
Age		
18-29	62	38
30-54	56	44
+55	65	35
Education		
thru 8 years	58	42
9-12 years	55	45
+12 years	67	33
Place of birth		
Israel, father Israel	65	35
Israel, father Asia or Africa	51	49
Israel, father Europe or America	66	34
Asia or Africa	57	43
Europe or America	63	37
Extent of religious observance		
Observe all	32	68
Observe most	46	54
Observe some	65	35
Observe none	75	25
Army service in the Territories		
Yes	60	40
No	63	37
No army service	55	45
Choice for prime minister 1999		
Netanyahu	30	70
Barak	83	17

Table 16. Demographic Characteristics of the Sample

	%	N
Gender		
Female	47	568
Male	53	633
Age		
18-29	44	514
30-54	44	510
+55	12	145
Education		
thru 8 years	2	19
9-12 years	57	660
+12 years	42	481
Place of birth		
Israel, father Israel	34	399
Israel, father Asia or Africa	24	280
Israel, father Europe or America	17	203
Asia or Africa	11	131
Europe or America	13	156
Extent of religious observance		
Observe all	10	113
Observe most	19	229
Observe some	48	573
Observe none	23	269
Army service in the Territories		
Yes	32	368
No	50	571
No army service	18	214
Choice for prime minister 1999		
Netanyahu	40	412
Barak	60	622

Project Publications

Asher Arian and Sigalit Olzaeker, "Political and Economic Interactions with National Security Opinion: The Gulf War Period in Israel," *Journal of Conflict Resolution,* February 1999, 58-77

Asher Arian, "Opinion Shift in Israel: Long-Term Patterns and the Effects of Security Events," in Daniel Bar-Tal, Dan Jacobson, and Aharon Klieman (eds.), **Concerned with Security: Learning from the Experience of Israeli Society**, JAI Press, 1998, 267-287

Asher Arian, **Israeli Public Opinion on National Security**, JCSS Memorandum, #49, July 1998; #47, April 1997; #46, March 1996; #45, February, 1995; #43, March, 1994

Asher Arian, **Security Threatened: Israeli Public Opinion on Peace and War**, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995

Michal Shamir and Asher Arian, "Competing Values and Policy Choices: Israeli Public Opinion on Foreign and Security Affairs," *British Journal of Political Science*, 24:1994, 111-33

Asher Arian and Carol Gordon, "Political and Psychological Impact of the Gulf War on the Israeli Public," in **The Gulf War: Leaders, Publics, and the Process of Conflict**, edited by Stanley Renshon, University of Pittsburgh Press, 1993

Asher Arian, "Democracy and National Security: Public Opinion in Israel," in **National Security and Democracy in Israel**, edited by Avner Yaniv, Lynne Rienner Press, 1993

Asher Arian, **Israel and the Peace Process: Security and Political Attitudes in 1993**, JCSS Memorandum #39, February, 1993

Asher Arian, "Security and Political Attitudes in Israel," *Public Opinion Quarterly*, Spring 1992

Asher Arian, Michal Shamir and Raphael Ventura, "Public Opinion and Political Change: Israel and the Intifada," *Comparative Politics*, 1991

Asher Arian, "Security and Political Attitudes: The Influence of the Gulf War," in **War in the Gulf: Implications for Israel**, edited by Joseph Alpher, Boulder: Westview, 1992

Asher Arian, "Perceptions of Threat in Israel," in **Debating National Security**, edited by Hans Rattinger and Don Munton, Peter Lang, 1991, 7-26

Asher Arian, "Israeli Public Opinion and the Intifada", in **The Intifada**, edited by Robert O. Freedman, Florida International University Press, 1991, 269-292

Michal Shamir and Asher Arian, "The Intifada and Israeli Voters: Policy Preferences and Performance Evaluations" in Arian and Shamir, eds., **The Elections in Israel – 1988**, Westview, 1990

Asher Arian and Raphael Ventura, **Public Opinion in Israel and the Intifada: Changes in Security Attitudes 1987-88**, JCSS Memorandum #28, August 1989

Asher Arian, "A People Apart: Coping with National Security Problems in Israel," *The Journal of Conflict Resolution*, December 1989, 605-31

Asher Arian, Ilan Talmud and Tamar Hermann, **National Security and Public Opinion in Israel**, Westview Press and The Jerusalem Post (JCSS Study #9), 1988

Asher Arian, **Israeli Public Opinion and the War in Lebanon**, JCSS Memorandum #15, Oct. 1985

JCSS Publications 1998 -

Annual

Shlomo Brom and Yiftah Shapir (eds*.), **The Middle East Military Balance 1999-2000.** Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press and Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies, 1999.

Books

Abraham Ben-Zvi, **Eisenhower, Kennedy and the Formation of the American - Israeli Alliance, 1953-62**. New York: Columbia University Press, 1998.

Aharon Yariv, **Cautious Assessment: Writings by Aharon Yariv.** Tel Aviv: Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies and Ma'archot — IDF's Publishing House, 1999. (Hebrew)

Asher Arian, **Security Threatened: Surveying Public Opinion on Peace and War.** Tel Aviv: Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies, Tel Aviv University, and Papyrus, Tel Aviv University, 1999. (Hebrew)

Nachman Tal, **Islamic Fundamentalism: The Cases of Egypt and Jordan.** Tel Aviv: Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies, Tel Aviv University, and Papyrus, Tel Aviv University, 1999. (Hebrew)

Aharon Klieman, **Compromising Palestine.** New York: Columbia University Press, 1999.

Memoranda

July 1998, No. 49
Asher Arian, **Israeli Public Opinion on National Security 1998**

August 1998, No. 50
Shmuel Even, **Trends in the World Oil Market: Strategic Implications for Israel** (Hebrew)

July 1998, No. 51
Aharon Levran, **Iraq's Strategic Arena** (Hebrew)

August 1998, No. 52
Abraham Ben-Zvi, **Partnership under Stress: The American Jewish Community and Israel** (English)

July 1999, No. 53
Asher Arian, **Israeli Public Opinion on National Security 1999**

August 1999, No. 54
Shmuel Even, **Trends in Defense Expenditures in the Middle East** (Hebrew)

February 2000, No. 55
P. R. Kumaraswami, **Beyond the Veil: Israel-Pakistan Relations**

July 2000, No. 56
Asher Arian, **Israeli Public Opinion on National Security 2000**

Special Studies

Emily Landau (Repporteur)**, Challenges to Global and Middle East Security: Conference Report,** Special Memorandum, December 1998.

The Interim Agreement and the Israeli Elections, May 99-Israeli Palestinian Relations Prior to a Final Status Agreement, Report No. 1.

Mark A. Heller, (ed.) **Europe & The Middle East: New Tracks to Peace?** Herzliya: Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Israel Office, 1999.

Shlomo Ben-Ami. **Israel's Foreign Policy Agenda**, Herzliya: Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Israel Office, 1999.

Shlomo Brom, **Israel and South Lebanon Prior to Peace Agreement with Syria,** September 1999. (Hebrew and English)