

**Asher Arian**

**Israeli Public Opinion on  
National Security 2002**

## Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies

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Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies

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## About the National Security and Public Opinion Project

Initiated in 1984, the National Security and Public Opinion Project monitors Israeli public opinion on issues related to national security. Surveys undertaken and cited in this report were comprised of representative samplings of the adult Jewish population of Israel. Since 1998, these have also included individuals from kibbutzim and from settlements in the occupied territories. The margin of error of the 2002 survey is  $\pm 3.1$  percent.

The survey presented here was conducted between January 29 and February 27, 2002. During that period, the second intifada (the uprising of the Palestinians against Israel) was well into its second year, with terror activities striking roads, towns, and cities within Israel as well as in the settlements.

The Project's annual surveys were conducted at the following times: (1) June 1985; (2) January 1986; (3) December 9, 1987-January 4, 1988; (4) October 2-30, 1988; (5) March 5-October 27, 1990; (6) March 16-31, 1991; (7) June 1-21, 1992; (8) January 1-15, 1993; (9) January 11-February 9, 1994; (10) January 4-February 7, 1995; (11) February 1996; (12) March 1-31, 1997; (13) January 26-March 9, 1998; (14) January 25-March 7, 1999; (15) January 24-February 26, 2000; (16) April 12-May 11, 2001; (17) January 29-February 27, 2002.

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; 1,239 in 1994; 1,220 in 1995; 1,201 in 1996; 1,126 in 1997; 1,207 in 1998; 1,203 in 1999; 1,201 in 2000; 1,216 in 2001; and 1,264 in 2002.

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

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# Contents

Executive Summary / 9

I A Further Turn to the Right / 11

II Expectations and Aspirations / 16

III People and Territories:  
Separation, Settlements, Transfer / 25

IV Security Challenges / 34





## Executive Summary

Israeli public opinion continued to shift to the right in 2002, as the terror campaign waged by Palestinians since September 2000 escalated. This is the primary finding to emerge from the 2002 annual survey of the National Security and Public Opinion Project of the Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies, conducted from January 29 to February 27, 2002, and based on a representative sample of the adult Jewish population of Israel ( $N = 1,264$ ).

Israelis were worried to an unprecedented degree both about their personal security and about the state of Israel's national security, with 92% of the respondents expressing fear that they or a member of their family would fall victim to a terrorist attack.

Responses indicated a shift to less conciliatory postures on almost all issues, including trading land for peace, increasing military strength vs. accelerating peace talks in an attempt to avoid another war, and approving the establishment of a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza.

This past year saw a massive change in national expectations, charted by a dramatic drop both in the percentages of respondents who thought that an end to the Israeli-Arab conflict would be achieved by reaching peace agreements with the Palestinians and the Arab states, and those who supported the Oslo peace process. By their own indication, Israelis became much less prepared for concessions since the intifada began. Twenty-three percent thought that the intifada could be stopped by military means, and 52% were of the opinion that while military action could not stop the intifada, it could curtail it.

Both a perceived threat of war and anxiety about the ultimate aspirations of the Arabs reached record high levels. At the same time, there was skepticism as to people's willingness to make sacrifices commensurate with the problems facing the country.

Support for separation from the Palestinians was high, but that support diminished considerably when the extent of a withdrawal from the territories was delineated. Unilateral establishment of buffer zones that do not require withdrawal of the Israel Defense Forces and the removal of settlements won the support of most respondents in 2002, but less than half supported a separation plan that required the removal of settlements.

The notion of transfer of Arabs reappeared in the political debate in 2002. Forty-six percent supported transfer of Palestinians who live in the territories, and 31% were in favor of the transfer of Israeli Arabs. While startling, the pattern was not a new one; in 1991, the statistics were 38% and 24%, respectively.

Fifty-eight percent of the sample thought that Israel should encourage the United States to attack Iraq. If that attack were followed by an Iraqi strike against Israel that included chemical and biological weapons, 46% thought that Israel should retaliate with the same type of non-conventional weapons. Fifty-eight percent thought that the country was prepared for a missile attack. Most of the respondents (62%) supported Israel's policy of secrecy regarding nuclear weapons.

Fifty-seven percent opposed the renewal of negotiations with Arafat and supported expelling him from the territories, while 17% supported the renewal of negotiations with him and opposed expelling Arafat from the territories.

Attitudes regarding Israeli Arabs were highly negative, with a majority opposing the inclusion of Arab parties in the government and viewing Arabs as disloyal to the state. Eighty percent opposed allowing Israeli Arabs to participate in decisions on essential issues related to determining the state's borders.

When asked to place themselves on a 7-point scale if a choice had to be made between legal procedures and security interests, most Israeli Jews opted for security interests. This year's mean of 2.9 represents a new low level.

## A Further Turn to the Right

Israeli public opinion continued to shift to the right in 2002, as the terror campaign waged by Palestinians since September 2000 escalated. Israelis were gloomier than ever about the prospects for peace and about the state of the nation's security. While there was general support for unilateral separation from the Palestinians, that support diminished considerably when the extent of the withdrawal and its impact on Jewish settlements in Judea, Samaria, and Gaza was delineated. The perceived threat to security was associated with increased support for transfer of Arabs from the territories taken in the 1967 Six Day War, and even for transfer of Israeli Arabs.

By February 2002, the uprising of the Palestinians against Israel (the second intifada) was well into its second year. Acts of terror were carried out against Israel on a regular basis. In fact, February 2002 was one of the bloodiest months both sides of the confrontation had experienced so far since the outbreak of the violence.

In the previous intifada, which erupted in 1987 and continued through the signing of the Oslo Accords in 1993, the Palestinians engaged in protest by stone-throwing and by confronting Israeli forces occupying Palestinian towns and villages, largely without sophisticated arms.

The second intifada was inherently different, owing both to the means of protest and to political changes that had occurred since the signing of the Oslo Accords. Terrorist acts against Israeli forces and against Jewish civilians were rampant both in the Palestinian territories and within Israel itself. Combatants on the Palestinian side included suicide bombers and trained terrorists,

and even involved security personnel from the Palestinian Authority, a body that had not existed prior to the Oslo Accords. Overall, those actively involved in the violence represented less of a cross-section of the Palestinian population than in the previous intifada.

The 2002 annual survey of the National Security and Public Opinion Project of the Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies was conducted between January 29 and February 27, 2002. The sample was representative of the adult Jewish population of Israel ( $N = 1,264$ ) and the survey was conducted by the Almidan/Mahshov Research Institute with a  $\pm 3.1\%$  of error.

### A. The Mood

Because of the frequent killing and indiscriminate terror, Israelis worried about their personal security and were concerned about the state of Israel’s national security. Ninety-two percent of the survey sampled expressed worry that they or a member of their

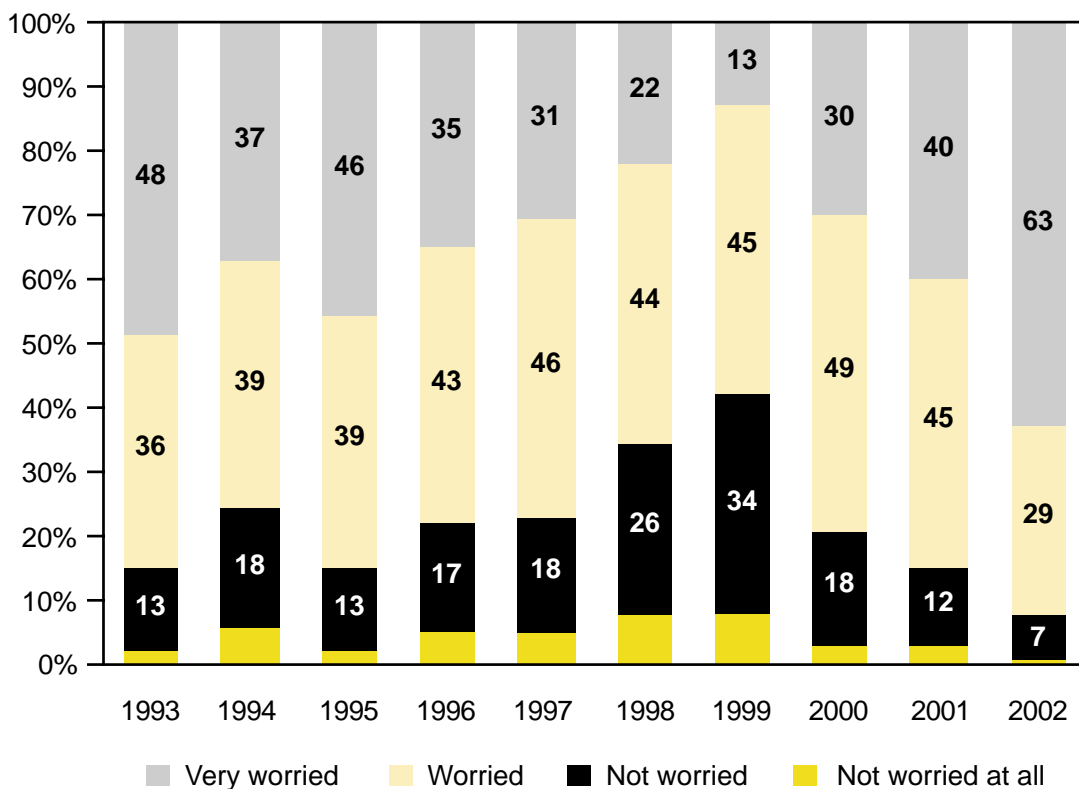


Figure 1: Concern over Personal Safety, 1993-2002

family would fall victim to a terrorist attack, compared with 85% in 2001 and 79% in 2000 (see Figure 1). Reported worry reached a low point in 1999, when the rate fell to “only” 58%. (Note: in Figure 1 and some of the figures that follow, the percentages for very small values are not reported because they unnecessarily clutter the display. Those numbers can be calculated by adding the other numbers and subtracting from 100.)

Seventy-eight percent said that Israeli citizens’ personal security had deteriorated since the peace process began, compared with 66% who felt that way in 2001. In contrast, only 53% said that the personal security of Israeli citizens had worsened since the Sharon government took office in March 2001. The disparity between the higher sense of a worsening situation compared to the lower percentage of respondents who perceived a worsening during the first year of the Sharon government indicates the positive orientation of many of the respondents to Sharon and to his national unity government, despite the much higher fatality rates since his election.

Indeed, as terror and violence spiraled upward, a large majority of public opinion (71%) supported Sharon’s national unity government and its policies to achieve peace and security.

## B. Less Conciliatory Responses

The trend towards less conciliatory positions was evident regarding almost every question asked. For example, 53% of the sample in 1997 fully supported trading land for peace, as did 47% in the 1999 survey; in the 2002 survey that percentage dropped to 37%. In 2002, half the sample objected, and the remaining 13% took an intermediate position.

Respondents were asked if the peace process should be suspended, even if that might lead to war. Twenty-seven percent fully supported this position in 2002, slightly lower than the 28% of 20001; these numbers are significant increases from 20% in 1999 and 13% in 1997. In 2002, 54% fully objected to the idea, and 19% took an intermediate position (see Figure 2).

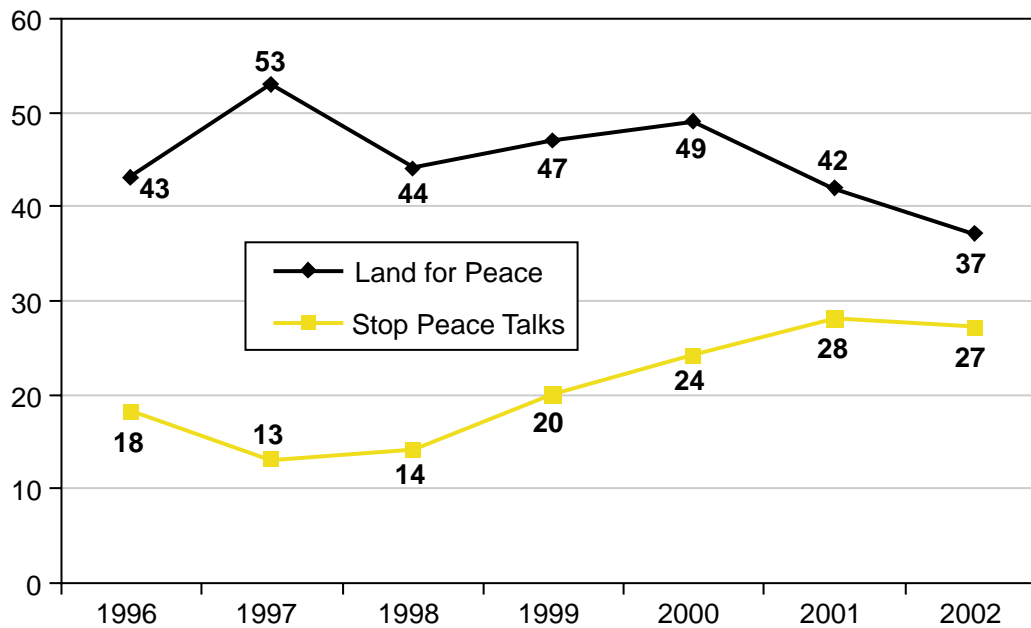


Figure 2: Policy Statements, 1996-2002

Of the other questions (not shown in the figures) that offered the same range of responses, 45% believed that the Arab-Israeli conflict could be solved by military means, compared to 36% who thought it could not; 19% took a middle position. Fifty-four percent firmly supported unleashing the army, 29% fully opposed, and 17% expressed a middle opinion.

As in previous surveys, respondents were asked if increasing military strength was the way to avoid another war with Arab nations or if concentrating on peace talks was the appropriate policy. Fifty-eight percent said the former, 42% the latter. Significantly, the general pattern in the past years has primarily been support for peace talks; Figure 3 shows that 2002 was only the second time since the survey has posed this question that strengthening military capacity was the more frequent answer.

Support for the establishment of a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza within the framework of a peace agreement dropped by 8 percentage points, from 57% in 2001 to 49% in 2002. This response, however, was still much higher than during the first intifada; in 1987 it was 21% and in 1993, 35%. In contrast to

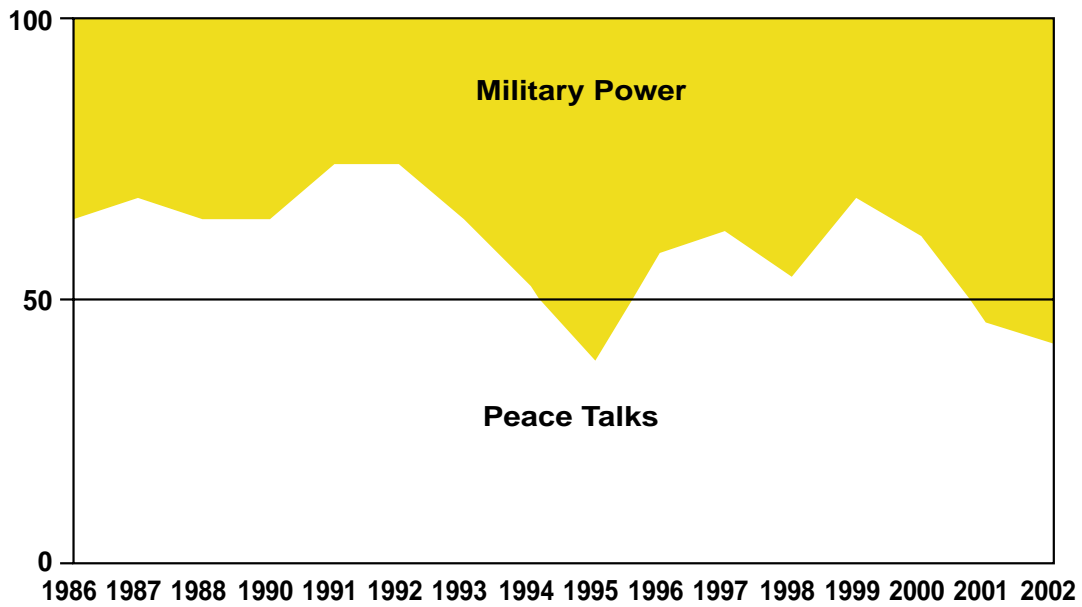


Figure 3: Increase Military Power or Accelerate Peace Talks, 1986-2002

the lower level of support but indicating the same declining trend, 54% thought it likely that a Palestinian state would be established in the next five years, compared with 60% in 2001 and 74% in 2000 (see Figure 4).

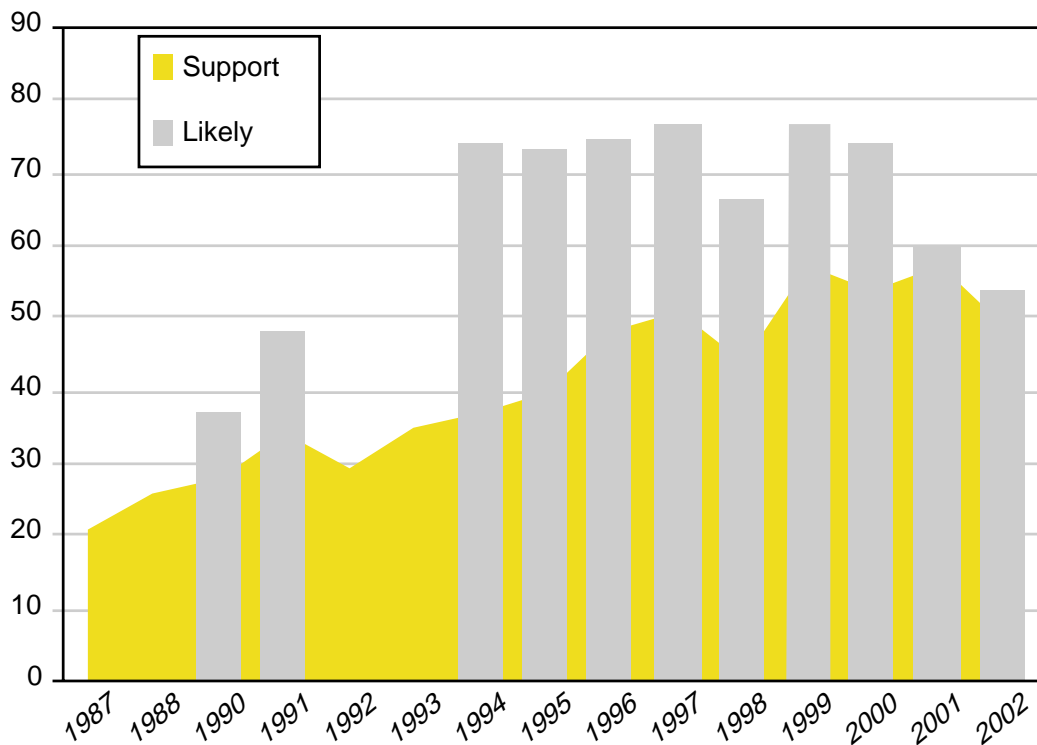


Figure 4: A Palestinian State, 1987-2002

## II

# Expectations and Aspirations

### A. Changed Expectations

A massive change in expectations is the explanation for the shift to the right. There has been a dramatic drop in the percentage of respondents who thought that an end to the Israeli-Arab conflict would be achieved by reaching peace agreements with the Palestinians and the Arab states. In 2002, only 26% thought that signing such treaties would mean an end to the conflict, compared to 30% in 2001, 45% in 2000, and 67% in 1999 (see Figure 5).

This large drop in expectations indicates just how deep was the disillusionment with the peace process. Support for the Oslo process plummeted to 35% in 2002, from 58% the previous year.

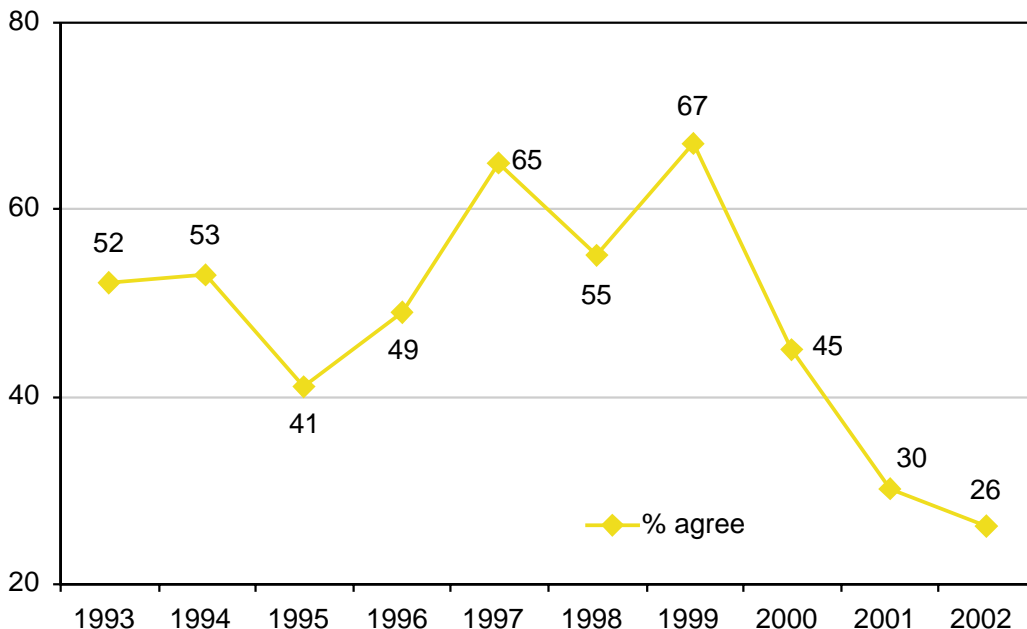


Figure 5: Confidence in Treaties, 1993-2002:  
Will treaties with the Palestinians and the Arab States mean an end to the Arab-Israeli conflict?



The percentage of respondents who thought that most Palestinians want peace slid to 37% in 2002, compared with 46% in 2001, 52% in 2000, and 64% in 1999. Sixty-eight percent in 2002 thought it impossible to reach a peace agreement with the Palestinians, compared with 56% in 2001.

At the time of the 2002 survey, most Israelis believed the Palestinians bore all or some of the responsibility for the continuation of the conflict. Almost half (49%) identified the Palestinians as being solely (14%) or mostly (35%) responsible for the continuation of the conflict, while only 5% thought Israel solely or mostly responsible, and 46% thought that the responsibility was shared. While the division does not necessarily reflect on the respondents' sympathy to the political claims of the Palestinians, the groups that attribute some or all of the responsibility to Israel probably include most Israeli Jews who support a unilateral withdrawal from the territories. Indeed, these may be the target population for future movements of peace and reconciliation.

Talk of moderation and conciliation was replaced by the threat of war and violence. Seventy-seven percent assessed the likelihood of war between Israel and an Arab state within the next three

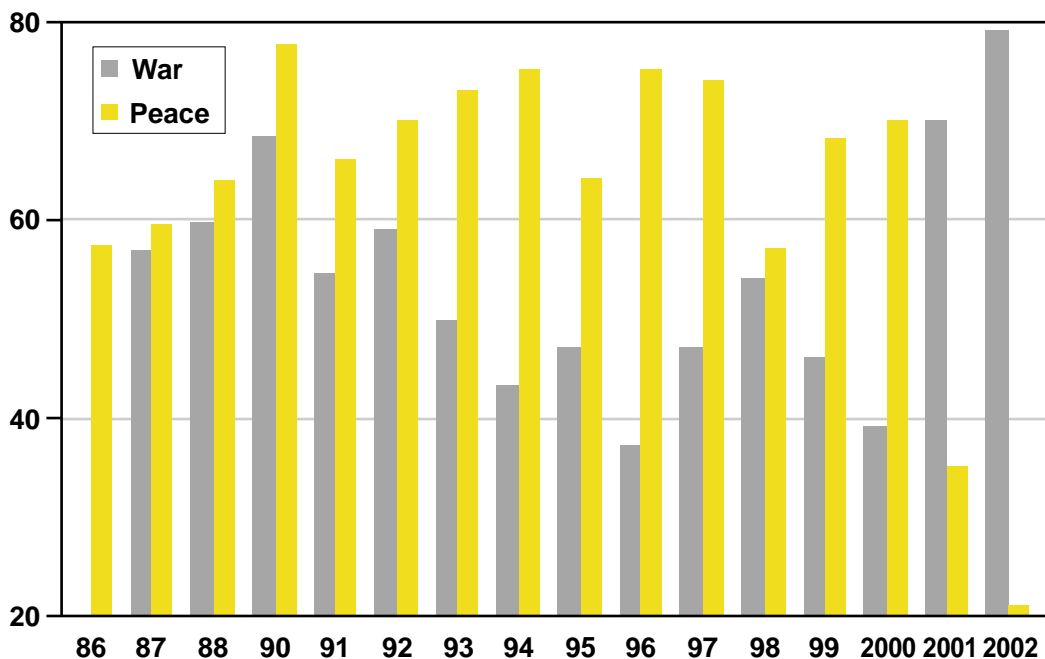


Figure 6: Perceived Likelihood of War and Peace in the Coming Three Years, 1986-2002

years as medium or high, compared with 70% in 2001 and 39% in 2000. Figure 6 portrays that only 21% thought that peace between Israel and Arab states would be strengthened in the next three years. Indeed, the gap between assessments of prospects for war and peace has never been greater (see Figure 7).

Trust and optimism declined dramatically. Thirty-two percent of respondents, compared with 44% in 2001, thought it possible to reach a peace agreement with the Palestinians. Thirty-seven percent of the sample thought that most Palestinians wanted peace, down from 46% in 2001, 52% in 2000, and 64% in 1999.

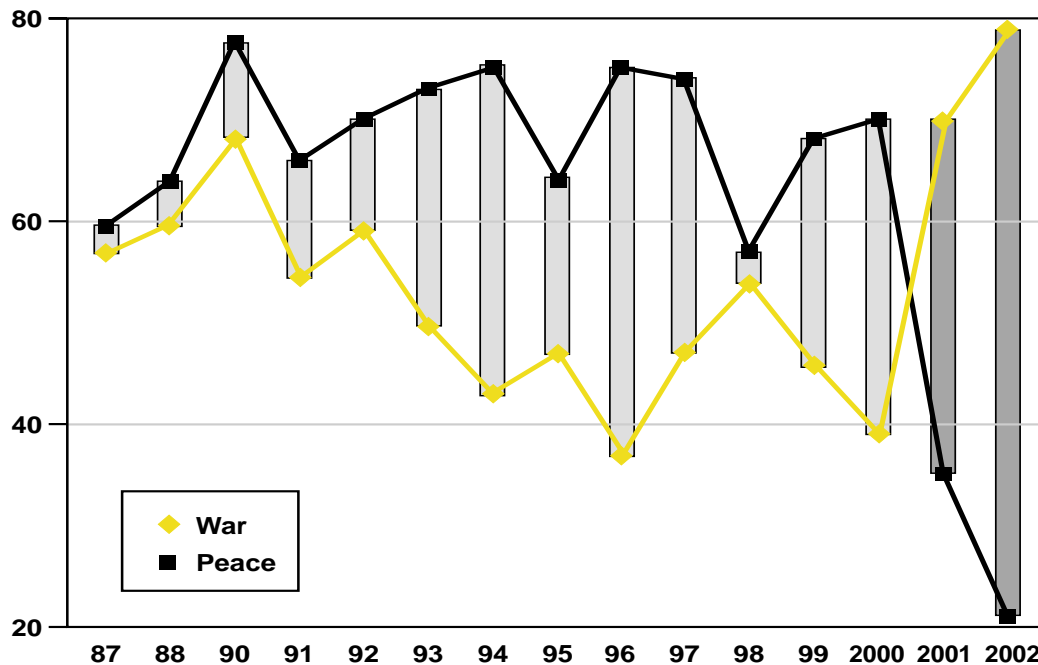


Figure 7: Assessments of Likelihood of War and Peace, 1987-2002

The assessment of the condition of the country reached a new low point in the surveys. Only 4% of the sample considered the condition of the country good or very good, 16% fair, 34% not good, and 46% poor (see Figure 8).

The negative evaluation of the situation included strong disapproval of the government's handling of the problems facing the country. Despite the fact that a national unity government was in power, the public was overwhelmingly displeased: 78% thought that the government's performance was either not good or poor (see Figure 9).

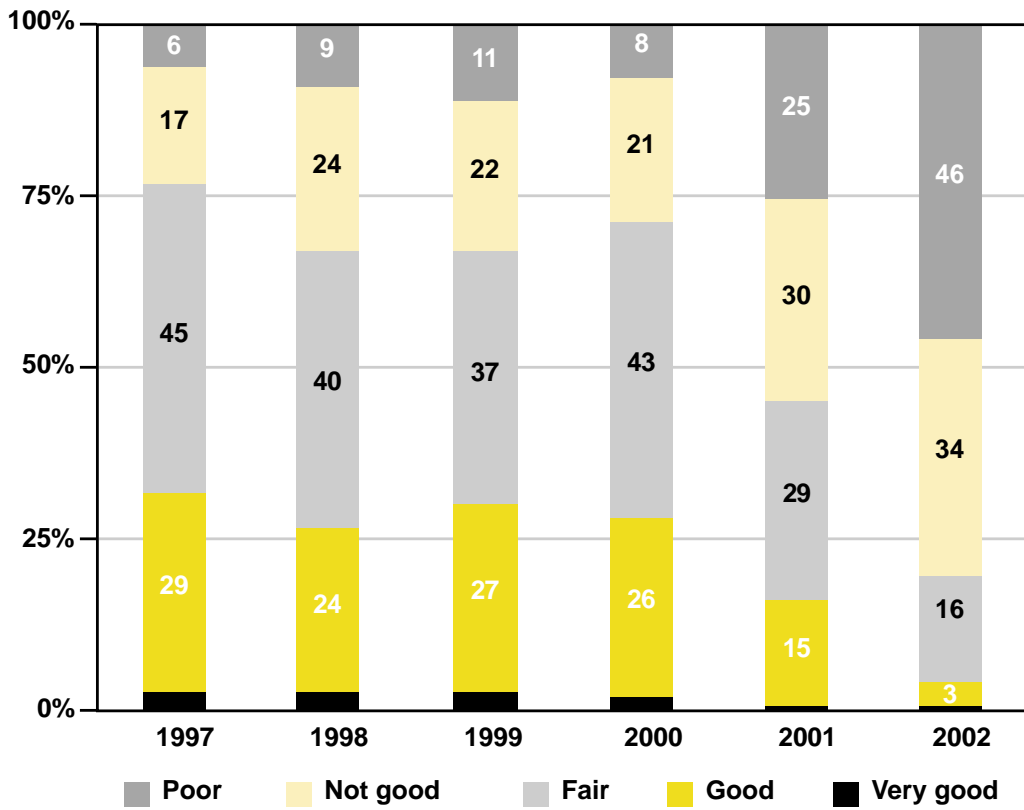


Figure 8: Condition of the Country, 1997-2002

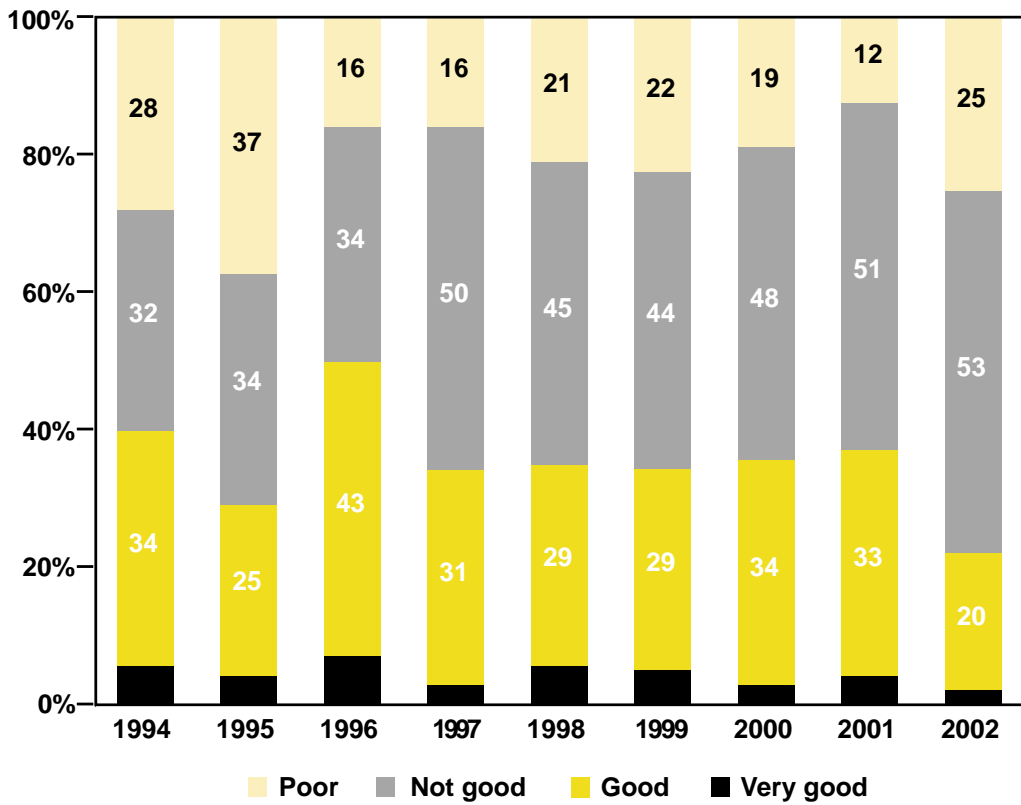


Figure 9: Evaluation of Government Performance, 1994-2002

## B. Willingness for Sacrifice

On the other hand, the public was skeptical as to the willingness of the general population to make sacrifices commensurate with the problems facing the country. A majority (51%) thought the population was less willing than in the past to make necessary sacrifices (e.g., more taxes, longer army service) to achieve the country's security, compared to 21% who said the population was more willing, and 29% who perceived no change from the past. While the 2002 statistics indicated a sense of fatigue on the part of the population, the parallel numbers were even bleaker in the 2001 survey. There the percentages were 64, 14, and 22, respectively.

The public's desire to improve security issues is represented by the responses to questions about the defense budget and taxes. Forty-seven percent wanted the defense budget expanded, 5% wanted it cut, and 48% wanted it to remain the same. This represents a 10-percentage point jump among those wanting to expand the budget, as compared with the 2001 survey; then, 37% wanted the budget increased, 5% wanted it reduced, and 58% favored it as it was. Indeed, until this year, the majority of respondents 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. In 2002, however, the size of the group that wanted the budget increased was almost 10 times bigger than the group that favored its reduction. Furthermore, when asked if one was willing to pay more taxes to increase the defense budget, 36% agreed in 2002, compared with 33% in 2001, continuing the rising trend of the last three years (see Figure 10).

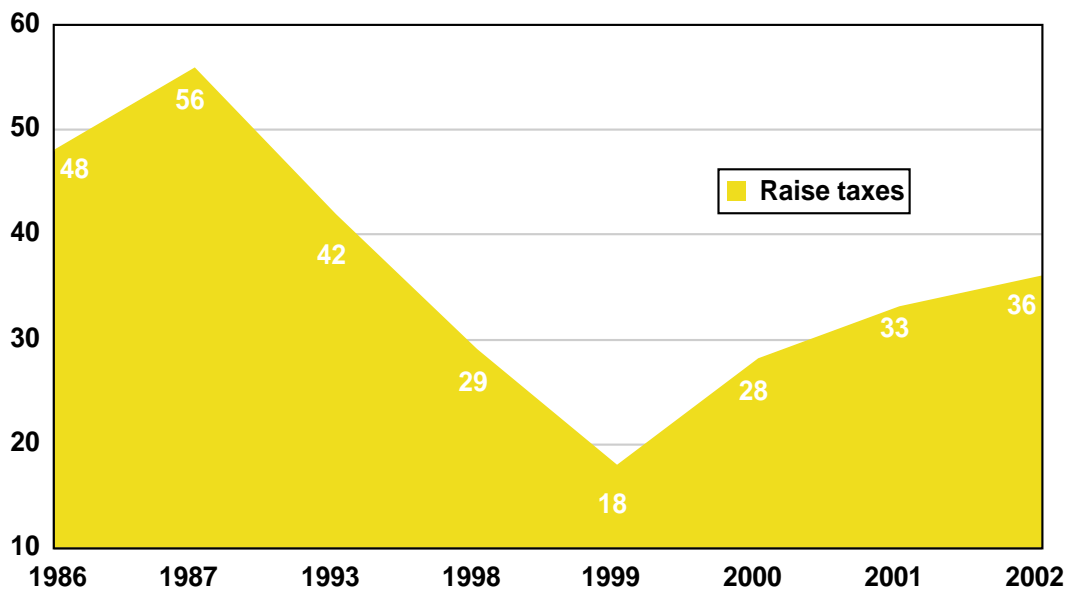


Figure 10: Willingness to Pay More Taxes to Increase Defense Budget, 1986-2002

### C. Arab Aspirations

Despite the claims by Palestinian leaders that Palestinian goals were limited, Israeli public opinion emerged suspicious of the ultimate aspirations of the Arabs, if not outright incredulous. The 2002 responses are reminiscent of those from the mid and late 1980s, when the question of Arab aspirations was first asked in these surveys.

Figure 11 charts that in 2002, 42% of the respondents thought that the Arabs wanted to kill much of the Jewish population of Israel, and an additional 26% thought that their goal was to conquer the State of Israel, together totaling 68%. In contrast, in 1999 a total of 47% gave those two answers. The two other possible views that the survey offered were that the Arabs aspired to recover all the territories lost in 1967 (25% in 2002) or recover only some of those territories (7% in 2002).

The bottom band of Figure 11, which charts the percentage of respondents who believed that the Arabs aspired to conquer the country and kill a large portion of its Jewish population, represents the most variation over the years.

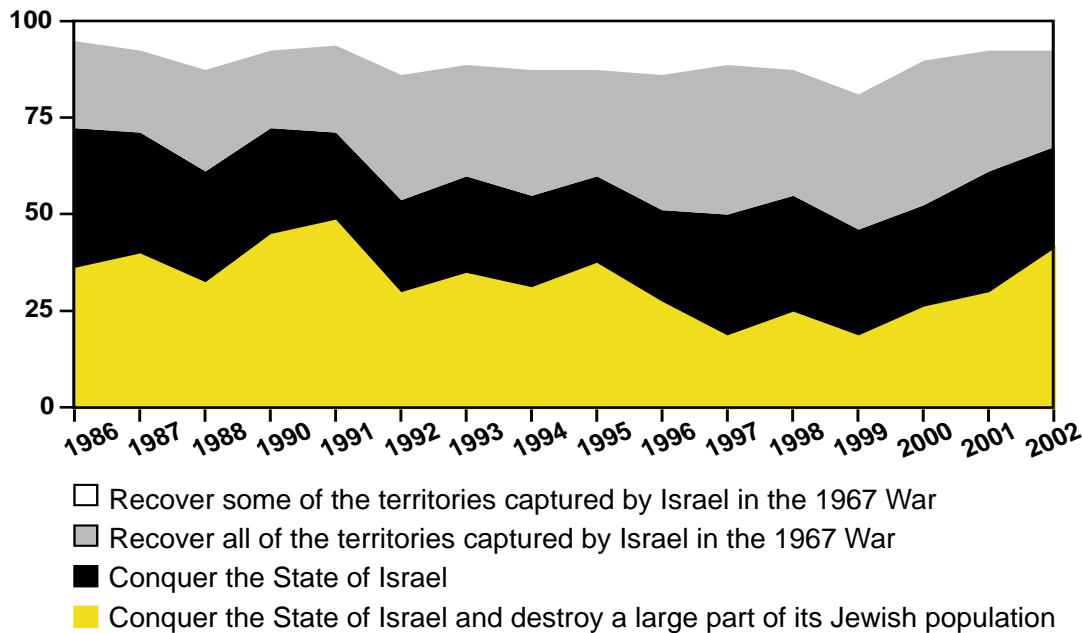


Figure 11: Perception of Arab Aspirations, 1986-2002  
 Question: What do you think are the Arabs' ultimate aspirations regarding Israel?

Israeli public opinion in 2002 was characterized by two patterns – a harsher assessment of the Palestinians and the future, and a parallel weakening of support for positions that might facilitate compromise and conciliation. The rise in the rates of apprehension and perceived threat was greater than the erosion of conciliatory positions. (Threat was measured by the question regarding the aspirations of the Arabs; the two extreme answers were considered to register high levels of perceived threat.)

The expectations of the citizenry changed and concurrently, assessments of policy alternatives evolved. The establishment of a Palestinian state was no longer anathema in Israeli politics, and, as we shall see, even the division of Jerusalem became a legitimate option and or at least an issue that could be debated.

### D. Threat and Policy

The responses of 2002 regarding the threat of a Palestinian state and support for the establishment of a state returned to the pattern of the mid 1990s. Until 1996, the perceived threat of a Palestinian state and levels of support for a Palestinian state were inversely related: Figure 12 displays the high rates of a perceived threat correlating with low levels of support for the establishment of a Palestinian state. As the perception of the threat declined, support for conciliatory positions grew. Thus, until the mid-1990s, the perception of threat and the support for conciliatory policy positions seemed to vary together. In the last years of the 1990s, threat no longer drove policy position. By 2002, however, the early pattern reemerged and conciliation and perceived threat again appeared inversely related.

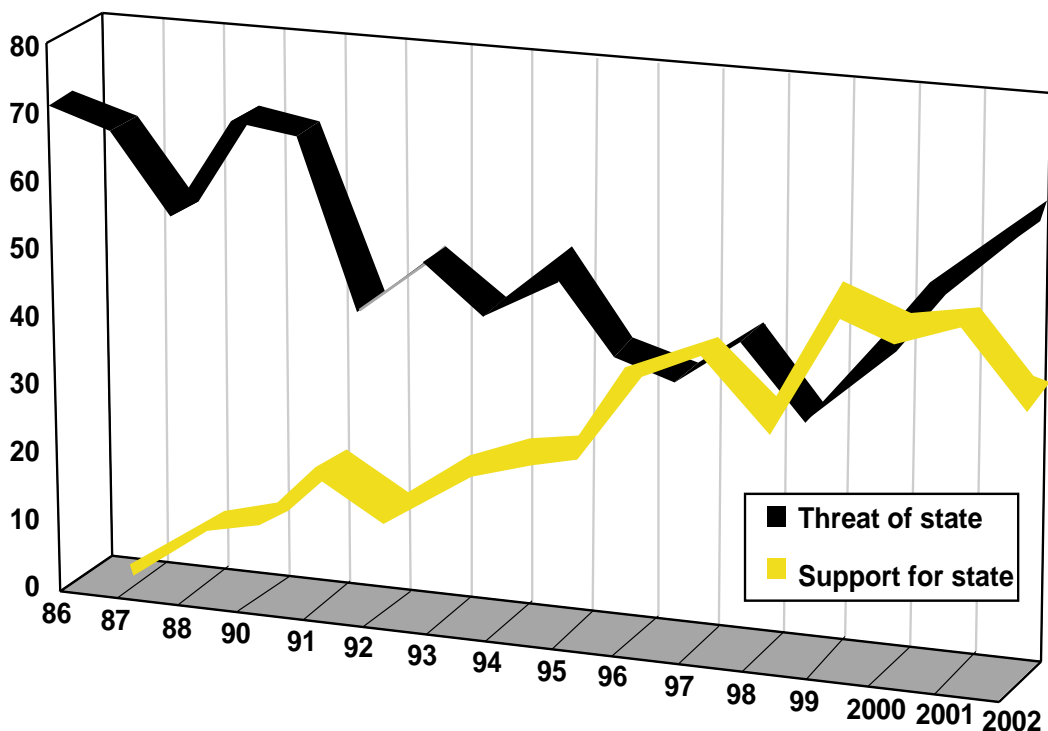


Figure 12: Perceived Threat of and Support for a Palestinian State, 1986-2002

Questions were also posed concerning the goals of the two leaders, Yasir Arafat and Ariel Sharon. Half of the respondents thought that Arafat was out to destroy Israel, with a quarter identifying his goal as forcing Israel to abandon the settlements.

There was much less agreement regarding Sharon's aspirations. About a quarter of those sampled thought he wanted to achieve a peace agreement with the Palestinians. Another quarter felt that he wanted an interim agreement without a Palestinian state, and another quarter that he was prepared to agree to a limited Palestinian state. Other responses were that Sharon aspired to retain the status quo, or to topple Arafat and the Palestinian Authority and re-conquer the territories.

Sixty-six percent said that their opinion of Arafat had dropped because of the intifada, with only 1% reporting an improved opinion of him, and 33% reporting no change. Regarding Sharon, 20% expressed a more negative evaluation since he took office, 19% a more positive one, and 62% reported no change.



### III

## People and Territories: Separation, Settlements, Transfer

The demographic facts behind the intifada are that three million Arabs live in the territories, that Arabs comprise some 20% of Israel's citizenry, and that a quarter of a million Jews live in settlements in the territories. Both Israelis and Palestinians understand the importance of settlement patterns in determining future borders. That is why right-wing Jewish groups put such a high premium on settling, why left-wing Jewish groups staunchly oppose settlement, and why most Palestinians see the settlements as a blatant form of occupation and colonialism.

### A. Permanent Status Arrangements

Attitudes in 2002 were equivalent to or slightly more militant than those recorded in the 2001 survey regarding Israel's policies until the renewal of final settlement talks with the Palestinians (see Table 1).

Support for invading Area A, the territories under Palestinian security control, increased by 15 percentage points. Concurrently, there was a jump of five percentage points in favor of unilaterally withdrawing from settlements to make defending the border easier. It is likely that the increased support for unilateral withdrawal stemmed from tactical considerations, i.e., how to protect Jewish lives most effectively, rather than a rush to establish a Palestinian state. Support for relinquishing territories as part of the third withdrawal decreased by eight percentage points.

Table 1. Until the Renewal of Talks, 2002 and 2001

Until the renewal of talks with the Palestinians about a final settlement of the conflict, Israel should:	2002 support	2001 support
Eliminate (assassinate) those active in terror	90%	89%
Use tanks and fighter aircraft against the Palestinians	80%	71%
Use closures and economic sanctions	73%	68%
Invade Area A	72%	57%
Sign an interim agreement for the next few years	48%	50%
Withdraw unilaterally from settlements in Gaza to make defending the border easier	47%	Not asked
Agree to station an international force between Israel and the Palestinians	46%	48%
Withdraw unilaterally from settlements to make defending the border easier	38%	33%
Relinquish territories as part of the third withdrawal	25%	33%

## B. Separation

In general, support for separation from the Palestinians was high, but that support diminished considerably when the extent of the anticipated withdrawal was spelled out. Thus, the unilateral establishment of separation zones that do not require withdrawal of the Israel Defense Forces and the dismantling of settlements won the support of 81% of respondents in 2002. In contrast, less than half (48%) supported a separation plan that required the removal of settlements, and only 38% agreed to a plan that called for Israel to withdraw from 80% of the West Bank and retain 20% of the territory for future permanent status negotiations.

Similar questions were posed in the 2001 survey, albeit in a slightly different manner, and in that survey, 74% supported separation between Israelis and Palestinians. In both 2001 and 2002, 62% thought that such separation was a feasible idea.

### C. Jewish Settlements

Jewish settlement in the West Bank and Gaza is a major focus of the current public debate. The issue is particularly sensitive and controversial, as many Jews see settlement as part of their return to their homeland, while many Arabs see settlement as an expression of occupation. In addition, the future of the settlements impacts on questions of security and the ultimate borders of the country. Israeli Jewish public opinion is split regarding the settlements.

In 2002, 50% of the respondents agreed to abandon all but the large settlement blocs as part of a permanent status agreement, as compared with 55% in 2001. A third of the sample rejected the notion of removing any settlements. Fifty-seven percent disagreed that settlements are an obstacle to peace.

### D. Transfer

Dismantling settlements is one form of solution to one of the most contentious problems between the Israelis and the Palestinians. Another might be reducing the Arab population. Respondents have been asked over the years if they thought the Israeli government “should encourage the emigration of Arabs from Israel.” In the 2002 survey there were two questions regarding “the government encouraging Arabs to leave the country.” Sixty percent agreed to the government encouraging voluntary emigration of Israeli Arabs, and 53% agreed to a more general idea of “encouraging Arabs to leave the country” without stipulating whether this was forced or voluntary, or whether it involved Israeli Arabs or Arabs in the territories.

The vague formula of “the government encouraging Arabs to leave the country” was supported by about two-thirds of the respondents in the early and mid 1990s, but support for the idea dropped by the end of the decade (see Figure 13). The responses of 2002, therefore, continue the pattern begun in the previous year of climbing towards the previously higher levels.

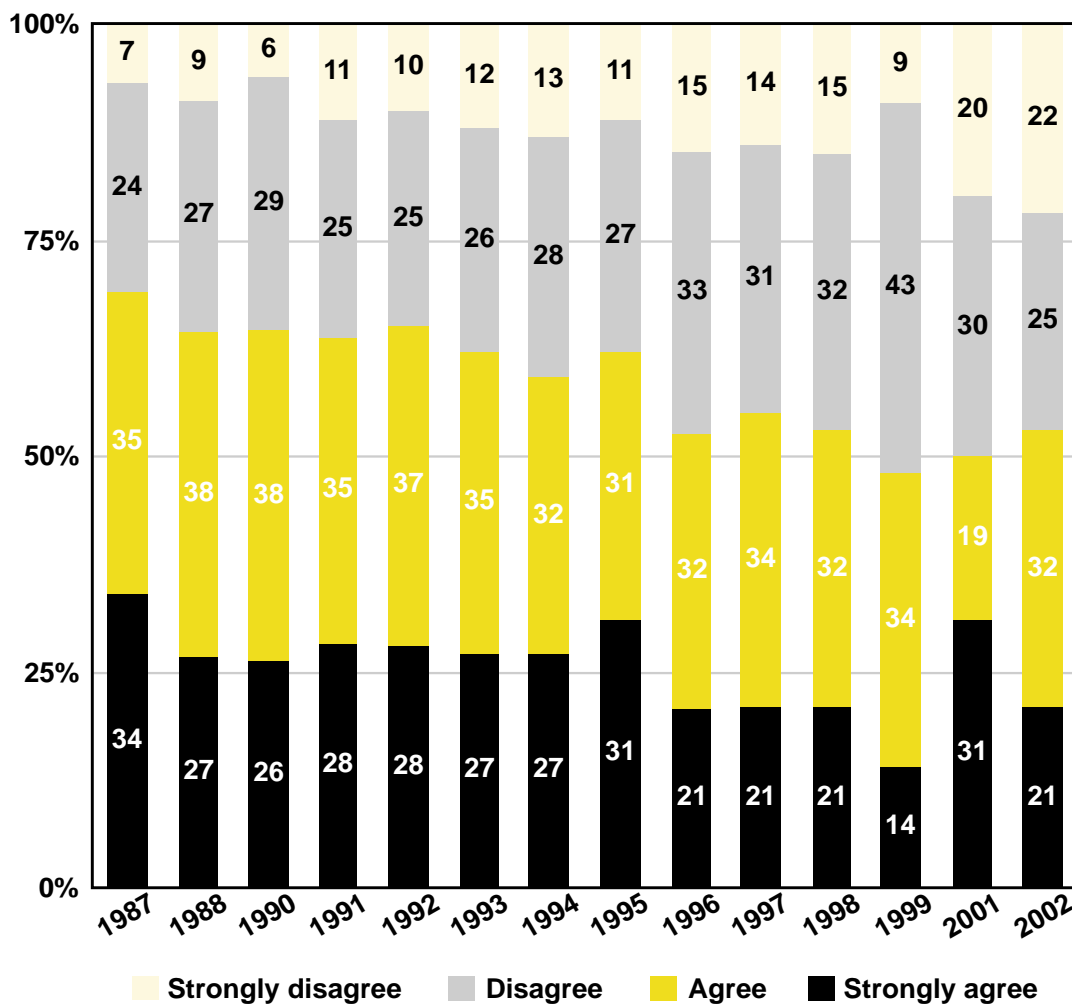


Figure 13: Encourage Emigration of Arabs, 1987-2002

Evaluating the repertoire of solutions, some Jews supported distancing from the Palestinians through separation of the two peoples, and some by removing (i.e., transferring) Arabs from the territories. The notion of transfer of Arabs, prominent in the 1980s and before the Oslo accords, resurfaced in the political debate in 2002. A much harsher idea than what had been posed in the surveys of the previous few years, its usage reflected the starker lexicon of Israeli inter-group politics.

A question about transfer was asked in 1991 and in 2002. In the 2002 survey, 46% supported transfer of Palestinians who live in the territories, and 31% favored the transfer of Israeli Arabs. These numbers are startling, but the pattern is not a new one. In the 1991 survey, the responses to the same questions were 38% and 24%, respectively (see Figure 14).

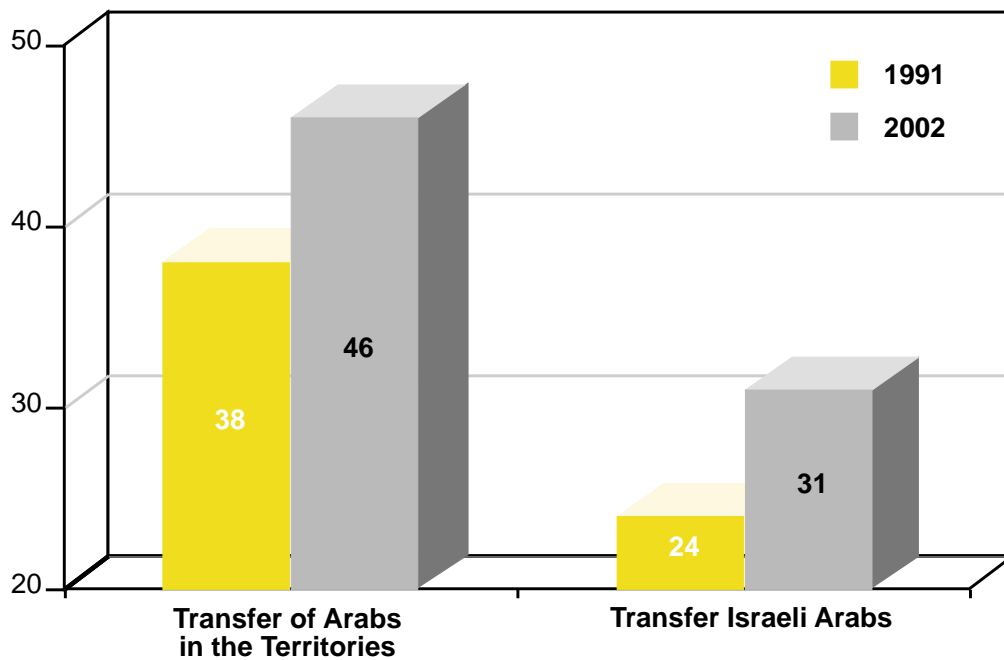


Figure 14: Support for Transfer, 1991 and 2002

The possible permutations of the two factors, transfer and separation, generated four substantial groups, two of them equal in size, as represented in Figure 15. The polarized nature of Israeli opinion is clear: two groups of 26% each opposed separation, with one group favoring transfer, and the other opposing. 29% supported separation but not transfer, and 19% supported both separation and transfer.

Traditional profiling suggests that the “separation and no transfer” group probably includes many who support a return to the 1967 borders, while the “no separation and transfer” group represents many who think in terms of retaining Jewish sovereignty over the entire country. Therefore, at least two sets of conflicting values are at play here: one regarding the land of Israel

with its strategic, historical, religious, and emotional ramifications on the one hand, and the Arabs who live on the land and concern for their collective and individuals rights on the other hand. Significantly, neither ideology commands a majority for its political vision, making the groups in the middle crucial to any government's policy-making efforts.

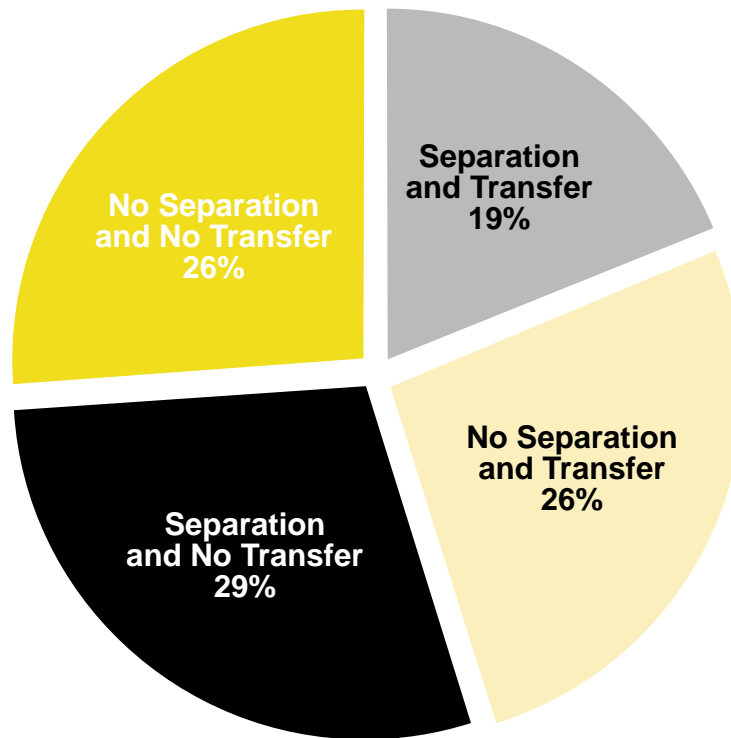


Figure 15: Views on Separation and Transfer, 2002

The correlation between unilateral separation and opposition to transfer was .17, which represents a weak although statistically significant relationship. Figure 16 portrays the positions regarding transfer against support for the idea of a unilateral separation that would include the removal of settlements. Many who supported one policy did not support the other. In a situation such as this, where there is no sharp connection between the ideas, credible, persuasive leadership could mold public opinion to fit policy options.

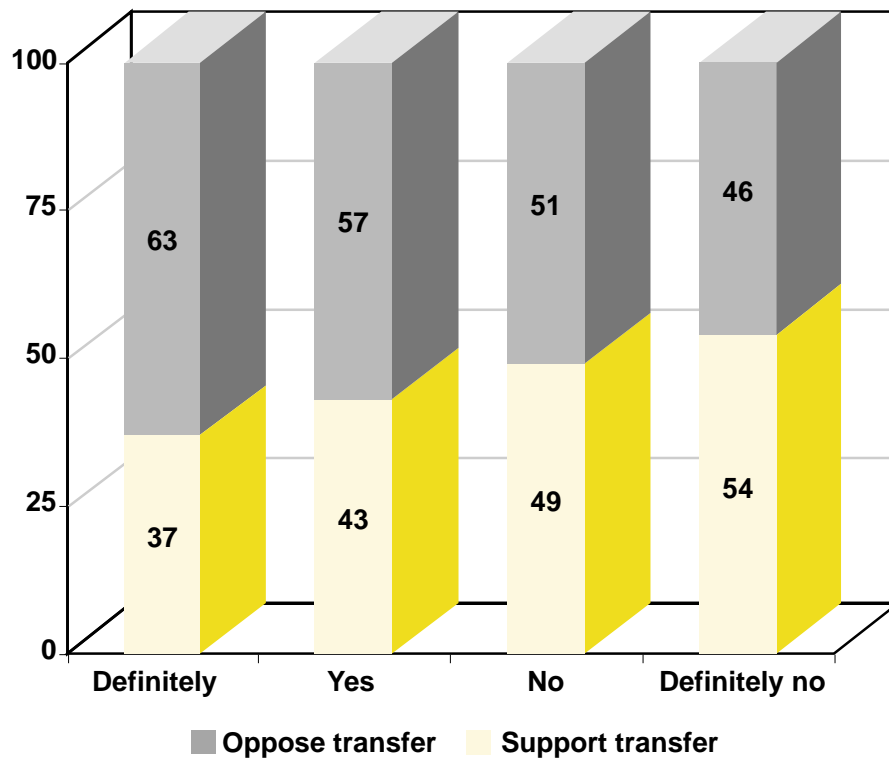


Figure 16: Support for Transfer of Arabs from the Territories by Extent of Agreement with Unilateral Separation, 2002 (in %)

Those who supported unilateral separation including removal of settlements and opposed the transfer of Arabs in the territories fit the profile of the Israeli political left. Their positions were especially pronounced among respondents over the age of 60, those with more than 12 years of education, respondents of European or American background, those who observed none of the religious tradition, and those who would vote in Knesset elections for Meretz, Labor, or Shinui. On the other hand, those who opposed a unilateral separation that included removal of settlements and supported the transfer of Arabs in the territories had the profile of the political right. Those attitudes were found especially among younger respondents, those with lower levels of education, respondents who reported observing most or all of the religious tradition, and those who would vote in Knesset elections for right-wing parties, religious parties, or the Likud (see Table 4 at the end of the study).

## E. Returning Territories

Support for returning territories to the Palestinians as a price for a permanent agreement that would end the conflict was generally lower than in 2001, but in some respects not much lower than previous years' levels (see Table 2). Those in favor of returning Western Samaria (31%) were fewer than in 2001, but similar to the percentage of the mid 1990s. The percentage of those willing to cede the Jordan Valley (19%) was likewise similar to rates of the mid-1990s, although slightly higher than in the previous year.

Table 2. Support for Territories to be Returned, as part of a permanent solution that would lead to the end of the conflict

	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Western Samaria	30%	30%	38%	44%	39%	41%	51%	39%	31%
Gush Etzion	14%	18%	20%	26%	26%	32%	33%	31%	29%
Jordan Valley	18%	19%	20%	20%	23%	23%	32%	18%	19%
East Jerusalem	10%	9%	12%	20%	17%	21%	24%	51% <sup>a</sup>	40% <sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup> In 2001 and 2002, "Arab neighborhoods of Jerusalem"

Support for ceding the Arab neighborhoods of Jerusalem in the framework of a peace agreement was 40%. The corresponding number in 2001, following the abortive Clinton-Barak initiative, was 51%.

## F. The Clinton Proposals

The issue of Jerusalem was raised in an additional context. As in 2001, the 2002 survey included a series of questions concerning the bridging proposals reportedly put forward by US President Bill Clinton before both he and Prime Minister Ehud Barak left office in early 2001. These proposals for a peace agreement with the Palestinians required considerable Israeli concessions. When asked about the entire proposal, 68% of the sample rejected it in 2002, compared with 60% in the 2001 survey. When presented



with the details of the proposals, a smaller fraction of the 2002 sample supported the proposals than in 2001 (see Table 3).

Table 3. Support for Details of the Clinton Plan, 2002 and 2001

Do you support or oppose each of the following concessions to the Palestinians as part of a peace agreement?	2002 support	2001 support
Establishment of a Palestinian state on 95% of the West Bank and Gaza, with Israel retaining clusters of settlements	40%	43%
Transferring Arab neighborhoods in Jerusalem to the Palestinians	39%	41%
Exchanging territories	38%	44%
Assigning the Temple Mount to Palestinian control, with the Western Wall to be retained by Israel	31%	33%
Israel yielding control of the Jordan Valley in a number of years	16%	18%
Allowing a limited number of Palestinian refugees to return to Israel	14%	22%

Statistics thus indicate that public opinion became less conciliatory than at the beginning of 2001 after the Palestinians rejected the overtures made by President Clinton and Prime Minister Barak. When formed in early 2001, the Sharon national unity government was buttressed by two very different emotions: relief among the right that the Clinton-Barak offer had been rejected, and disillusionment among the left, stemming from the Palestinian rebuff of what many considered a generous offer.

## IV

# Security Challenges

### A. Iraq and Nuclear War

The sense of unfinished business lingering from the 1991 Gulf War was in the air when George W. Bush became president of the United States in January 2001. His father, former President George Bush, successfully waged the war to oust Iraq out of Kuwait, but by the end of the war Saddam Hussein was still in power. Colin Powell, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff of the US Armed Forces during the Gulf War, was now US Secretary of State. For Israel, part of the Gulf War legacy was that it had sustained SCUD missile attacks without reacting.

In 2002, 58% of the sample thought that Israel should encourage the United States to attack Iraq. If that attack were followed by an Iraqi strike against Israel that included chemical and biological weapons, 46% thought that Israel should retaliate with the same type of non-conventional weapons. Other responses were that Israel should let the US handle the matter (22%), that the response should be nuclear (17%), and that the response be with conventional arms (16%).

Fifty-eight percent thought that the country was prepared for a missile attack.

If Israel determined that a country in the region had nuclear capacity, 54% of respondents favored removing that capacity, 20% favored asking for American protection, and 20% opted for open nuclear deterrence.

Most of the respondents (62%) supported Israel's policy of secrecy regarding nuclear weapons.

## B. The Intifada

By their own indications, Israelis became much more militant since the intifada began. Forty-one percent said that they were prepared to make fewer concessions to the Palestinians than they were before the intifada, compared to 10% who said their opinions had become more conciliatory. Over the years of the first intifada, from 1987 to 1993, 20% reported becoming more militant, and 20% more conciliatory. The rest claimed no change.

Regarding the intifada, 75% believed that it could be controlled by military activity, with 23% saying that it could be stopped altogether, and 52% of the opinion that while military action could not stop the intifada, it could curtail it. Fourteen percent thought military action would make the conflict more intense, and 10% felt that it would make no difference. These numbers are very similar to those generated in 1987-1993, during the first intifada.

A majority (57%) of the respondents thought that the measures employed to ensure quiet in the territories were too lenient, compared to 9% who thought they were too harsh, and 34% who thought they were appropriate. These results were similar to those reported in the past (see Figure 17).

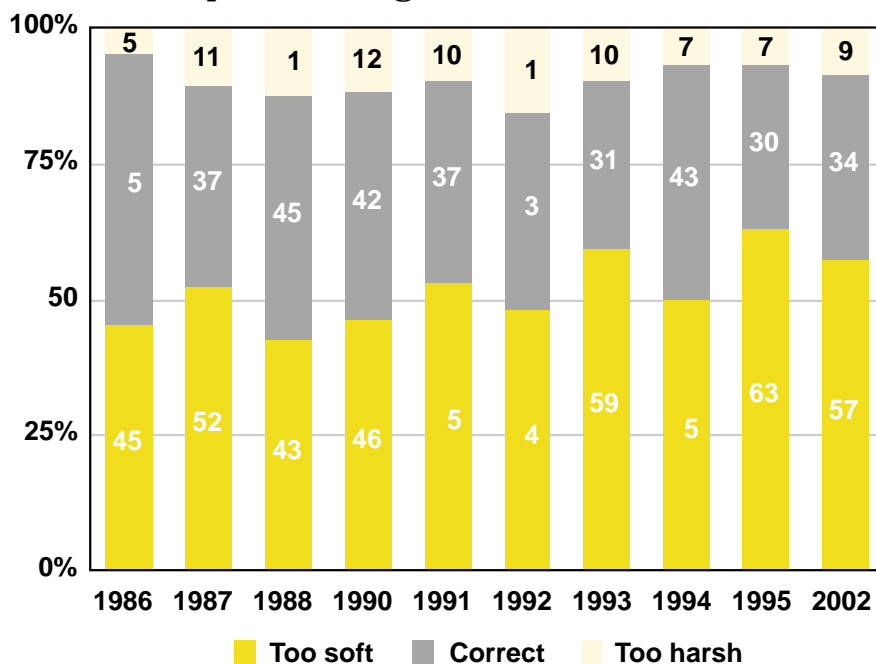


Figure 17: Attitude toward Government Policy in Territories, 1986-1995, and 2002

### C. Arafat and a Unilateral Declaration of Independence

The majority of the sample was opposed to recognizing a Palestinian state in case of a unilateral declaration of independence. When asked how Israel should respond in the event of such a declaration, the responses were as follows:

Recognize the new state and negotiate with it	23%
Recognize the state, but annex Areas B and C	16%
Neither recognize the state nor negotiate with it	39%
Do not recognize, and invade the declared state	22%

Israelis also lost confidence in Arafat as a credible Palestinian leader. Sixty-five percent favored delaying talks until Arafat was out of power, and 75% sided with the plan of expelling Arafat from the territories and not allowing him to return. Table 5 presents the responses to these questions both by the collective sample and broken down by demographic variables.

Fifty-seven percent opposed the renewal of negotiations with Arafat and supported expelling him from the territories, while 17% supported the renewal of negotiations with him and opposed expelling Arafat from the territories.

Respondents with lower levels of education, those from Asian or African extraction, those with more religious observance, and supporters of religious and right-wing parties favored not renewing negotiations with Arafat as well as expelling him from the territories. Those with the opposite profile tended to support renewal of contact with Arafat and opposed expelling him (see Table 5 at the end of the study).

### D. Attitudes Regarding Israeli Arabs

The country's sour mood also had domestic implications, specifically regarding attitudes toward Israel's Arab citizens. In the 2002 survey, 72% opposed the inclusion of Arab parties in the governing coalition, compared with 67% in 2001 and 54% in the

2000 survey (see Figure 18). More respondents than in the past said that Israeli Arabs are disloyal to the state. Eighty-percent opposed allowing Israeli Arabs to participate in decisions on vital matters related to determining the state’s boundaries, compared with 75% in 2001 and 64% in the survey of 2000.

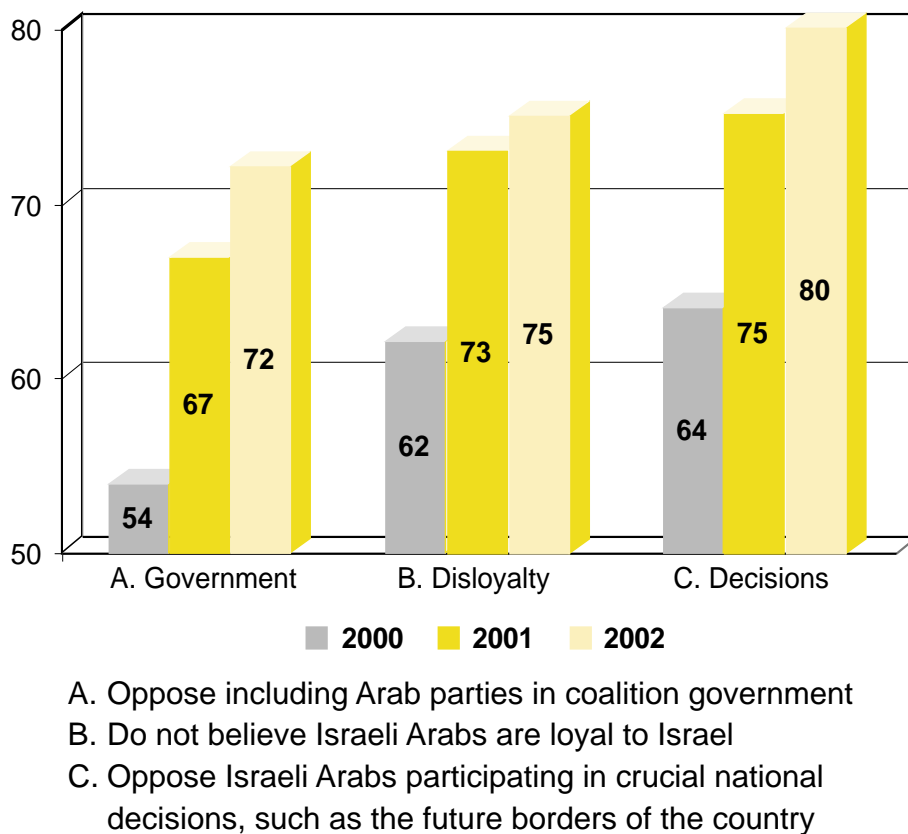


Figure 18: Israeli Arabs, 2000-2002

When asked if regarding Israeli Arabs, Israel should emphasize law enforcement over achieving equality with Israeli Jews, 58% chose the former.

Only 10% thought that Israel was solely (2%) or mostly (8%) responsible for the current situation of Israeli Arabs, while 43% thought that the Arabs were solely (10%) or mostly (33%) responsible, and 47% thought that the responsibility was shared.

## E. Rule of Law and Security

Faced by violence and terror, the heightened right-wing and non-conciliatory positions extended to views on Israeli Arabs as well. The further movement to the right underscored the reality that this was perceived as a time of struggle, and not of bargaining.

When asked to place themselves on a 7-point scale if a choice had to be made between legal procedures and security interests, most Israeli Jews favored security interests. Although the mid-point is 4, in each survey the mean has consistently been lower (see Figure 19). In 2002, the mean of 2.9 indicated a decline to a new low level.

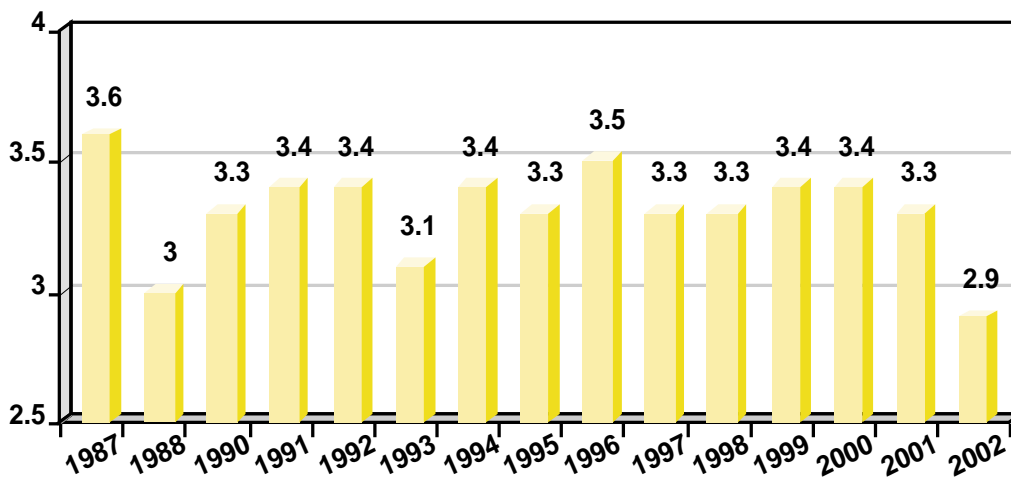


Figure 19: Choosing between Legal Procedures and Security Interests, 1987-2002

## F. The Israel Defense Forces

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

Change, however, has led to questioning many of the old assumptions. The introduction of technological advances to warfare challenges the need for a large standing army. The army has been assigned many police functions in the territories and plays an essential role regarding terror and the intifada. In addition, it has had to endure "standoff" situations such as in

Lebanon, 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, equity, and motivation.

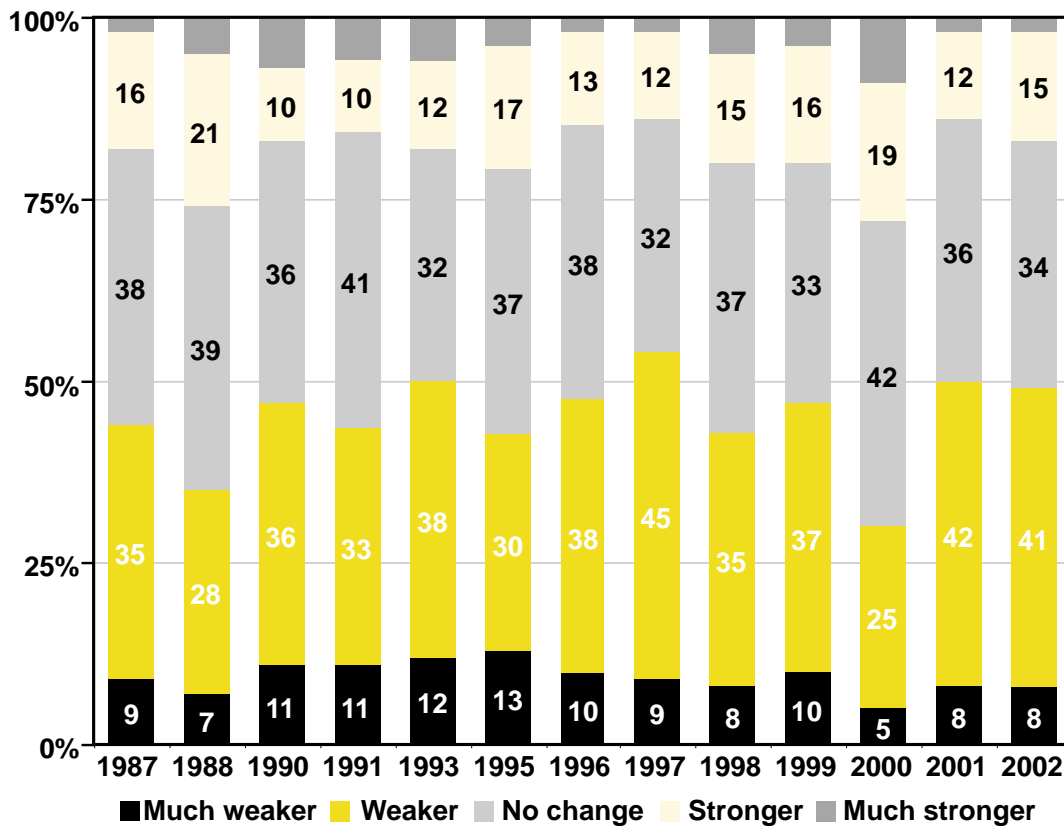


Figure 20: Perceiving Changes in the IDF, 1987-2002

Since 1987, respondents have been asked whether they perceive the army’s strength to be increasing or eroding; Figure 20 displays the range of responses over the years. In 2001, half of the sample stated that the IDF has become weaker or much weaker; 36% felt there was no change; and 14% said that the IDF is getting stronger. In contrast, the 2002 responses indicate a higher percentage of those who consider the army stronger than before.

Overall, the IDF was seen as at least as efficient as other institutions in Israel. A third thought it was more efficient, 22% less efficient than other institutions, and 45% felt it was comparable in efficiency to other institutions in the country.

## G. Leadership

The credibility of the leadership is a crucial factor in any political system, and certainly in a democracy. The heads of the security organizations in Israel continue to enjoy levels of credibility higher than the country's political leaders, although the gap is narrowing. In 2002, security leaders' credibility was rated seven percentage points higher, compared with 10 points in 2001, 15 points in 2000, and 23 points in 1999. In 2002, 75% of the respondents felt they could rely on the statements of security leaders, compared to 68% who felt they could rely on the statements of political leaders. The statistics for 2001 were 76% and 66%, respectively.



**Table 4. Support for or Opposition to Unilateral Separation and to Transfer of Arabs from the Territories (in %)**

	Unilateral Separation (including removal of settlements)	Support	Support	Oppose	Oppose
	Transfer of Arabs from Territories	Support	Oppose	Support	Oppose
Group <sup>1</sup>					
Total		19%	29	26	26
Gender					
Male		18%	28	28	26
Female		21%	30	25	24
Age					
18-29		21%	26	29	24
30-59		20%	28	25	27
60+		13%	37	24	26
Education					
through 8 years		15%	21	27	38
9-12 years		21%	24	29	26
+12 years		17%	41	21	22
Place of birth					
Israel, father Israel		18%	29	29	24
Israel, father Asia or Africa		19%	21	29	31
Israel, father Europe or America		20%	41	20	19
Asia or Africa		24%	21	25	30
Europe or America		18%	37	25	20
Extent of religious observance					
Observe none		20%	40	17	23
Observe some		20%	28	27	25
Observe most		18%	19	33	29
Observe all		12%	13	46	29
Army service in territories					
Yes		18%	32	24	26
No		20%	33	21	26
No army service		19%	21	36	25
If Knesset vote today					
Right (Halhud HaLeumi, Yisrael Beiteinu)		26%	4	55	14
Religious (Shas, Mafdal, Yahadut HaTorah)		8%	12	46	34
Likud		22%	12	35	31
Shinui		31%	51	9	9
Labor		14%	51	11	25
Meretz		10%	66	4	19
No decision		20%	37	21	22
Would not vote		19%	37	23	22

<sup>1</sup> The distribution of demographic characteristics is charted in Table 6.

**Table 5. Support for or Opposition to Negotiating with Arafat and Expelling him from the Territories (in %)**

	Renew Negotiations with Arafat	Support	Support	Oppose	Oppose
	Expel Arafat from Territories	Support	Support	Support	Oppose
Group <sup>1</sup>					
Total		18%	17	57	8
Gender					
Male		15%	18	57	10
Female		21%	17	55	7
Age					
18-29		20%	18	55	7
30-59		16%	15	60	9
60+		19%	25	47	9
Education					
through 8 years		12%	12	70	7
9-12 years		18%	13	60	9
+12 years		19%	28	46	7
Place of birth					
Israel, father Israel		16%	21	56	7
Israel, father Asia or Africa		16%	11	67	6
Israel, father Europe or America		18%	26	43	13
Asia or Africa		19%	11	64	6
Europe or America		23%	20	45	12
Extent of religious observance					
Observe none		21%	25	44	9
Observe some		17%	15	60	8
Observe most		18%	10	66	6
Observe all		9%	6	81	5
Army service in territories					
Yes		15%	17	58	10
No		19%	22	51	8
No army service		20%	10	63	7
If Knesset vote today					
Right (Halhud HaLeumi, Yisrael Beiteinu)		2%	2	91	5
Religious (Shas, Mafdal, Yahadut HaTorah)		5%	9	81	5
Likud		15%	6	70	9
Shinui		17%	27	44	12
Labor		34%	33	23	10
Meretz		13%	68	16	3
No decision		17%	22	54	7
Would not vote		23%	12	55	10

<sup>1</sup> The distribution of demographic characteristics is charted in Table 6.

**Table 6. Demographic Characteristics of the Sample**

	%	N
Gender		
Male	53	664
Female	47	600
Age		
18-29	41	514
30-59	44	550
60+	15	189
Education		
through 8 years	6	69
9-12 years	34	791
+12 years	30	370
Place of birth		
Israel, father Israel	22	282
Israel, father Asia or Africa	34	424
Israel, father Europe or America	16	161
Asia or Africa	11	142
Europe or America	17	209
Extent of religious observance		
Observe none	31	377
Observe some	45	543
Observe most	16	191
Observe all	8	90
Army service in territories		
Yes	31	379
No	43	525
No army service	27	332
If Knesset vote today		
Right (Halhud HaLeumi, Yisrael Beiteinu)	4	43
Religious (Shas, Mafdal, Yahadut HaTorah)	5	66
Likud	41	502
Shinui	4	49
Labor	13	166
Meretz	6	69
No decision	17	218
Will not vote	10	128

Note: The uncharted numbers that complete the sample size of 1264 in each category represent unavailable data about those demographic characteristics.

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