

# Israeli Public Opinion on National Security Issues, 1997

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## I. The Setting

The survey upon which this report is based was conducted during the last half of February and the first weeks of March 1997, some eight months after the beginning of the term of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. The government's stated policy of "secure peace" had seen a lessening of terror attacks, the redeployment from Hebron, and further discussion between Israel and the Palestinian Authority. Most of the interviewing was completed before the decision by the Israeli government to begin construction on Har Homa in Jerusalem in March 1997.

The public mood in February-March 1997 was reserved. When asked to evaluate the condition of the country, only 3 percent said it was very good, 29 percent answered good, 45 percent so-so, 17 percent replied not good, and 6 percent said very not good.

When asked to assess the government's handling of the issues the country faced, a third (34%) gave the government a positive evaluation (3% very good and 31% good), and two-thirds (66%) were very dissatisfied (16%) or dissatisfied (50%) with the government's performance (see Figure 1).

The 1997 rate for a positive government assessment was low compared to other recent years. 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 worse in 1995 (29% positive) immediately before the Beit Lid bombing, with Yitzhak Rabin prime minister. In 1994, 40 percent gave the government a good rating.

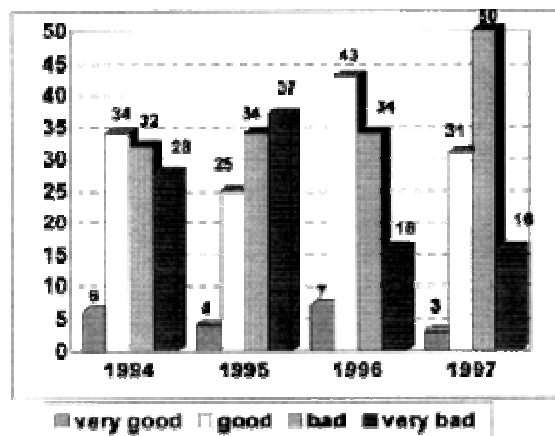


Figure 1. Evaluation of the Government

## II. The Mood

**Assessment of the Arabs.** The situation of the country impacts on the country's mood and the mood of the country feeds into policy decisions. The samples in this project have been asked regularly to characterize their assessment of the aspirations of the Arabs. The response most often chosen over the years was that the Arabs ultimately wanted to conquer Israel and to destroy a large portion of the Jewish population. After years of persistent suspicion on the part of the Jewish sample regarding those aspirations, the continued erosion of this attitude in the survey results was evident (see Figure 2).

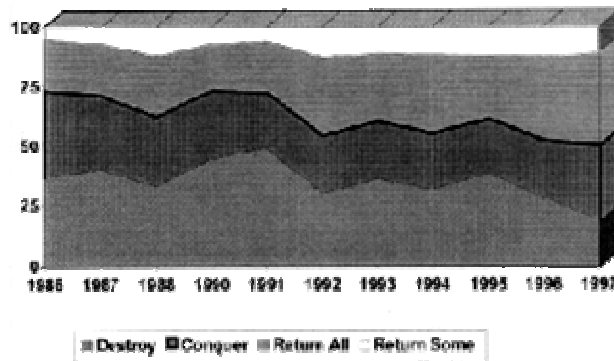


Figure 2.

The array of responses for 1997 was quite different compared with those of earlier years, but continued the pattern observed in 1996. Of the eleven surveys which contained the question, this was the lowest percentage (19%) that said that the Arabs were out to destroy the state of Israel and to kill the Jews of the country, compared to a high of 49 percent who gave that response in 1991.

The largest response in 1997 was that the Arabs wanted to regain all the territories lost in the 1967 war: 39 percent chose that compared with 35 percent in 1996, 26 percent in 1995, and 33 percent in 1994. An additional 31 percent in 1997 (24% in 1996, 25% in 1995, 23% in 1994) thought the Arabs "only" wanted to conquer Israel; 11 percent said that the Arabs wanted back some of the territories (13% in 1996, 12% in both 1994 and 1995).

The differentiation continued between the views of various Palestinians rather than seeing them as an undifferentiated enemy, indicating the continued impact of the peace process. Respondents were asked whether Palestinians had a variety of opinions about the relations they desired with Israel, or whether they all basically thought the same thing.

In 1997, 73 percent of the Israeli Jews interviewed in this survey replied that among Arabs there are a variety of opinions regarding Israel, compared to 71 percent in 1996, and 60 percent in 1995. Of the remaining portion of the sample, 22 percent reported that Palestinians are all alike in their aspirations about Israel's future -- and that their blueprint is negative (a quarter of the

sample in 1996, and more than a third in 1995). Only three percent (four percent in both 1995 and 1996) thought of Palestinians as sharing positive orientations regarding Israel.

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-Israel conflict. In 1997, 65 percent said yes, compared with 49 in 1996, 41 in 1995, 53 percent in 1994 and 52 percent in 1993.

Regardless of their greater support for the political process, people continued reporting that they felt very insecure about their personal safety, as they had in previous surveys. The rate of concern that they or members of their family would be injured by terrorist action for 1993 through 1997 is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Concern for Personal Safety

	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
Very worried	48%	37%	46%	35%	31%
Worried	36%	39%	39%	43%	46%
Not worried at all	13%	18%	13%	17%	18%
Not worried	2%	6%	2%	5%	5%

In a separate question dealing with the situations since the peace process began, seventy-three percent reported feeling better about their personal safety in comparison to the pre-peace period (9% much better, 64% better, 24% worse, and 3% much worse).

When asked whether one wanted to live in Israel in the long run, 91 percent answered in the affirmative. This very high level of desire to remain in Israel has been consistent over the years.

An indicator of the concerns of the public and the mood of the respondents is found in the replies to the question in which they are forced to choose between peace talks and strengthening military capacity in order to avoid war with Arab states (see Figure 3). The preference for choosing peace talks over military capacity was expressed by 62 percent in 1997; only in the 1995 survey was military capacity preferred over peace talks.

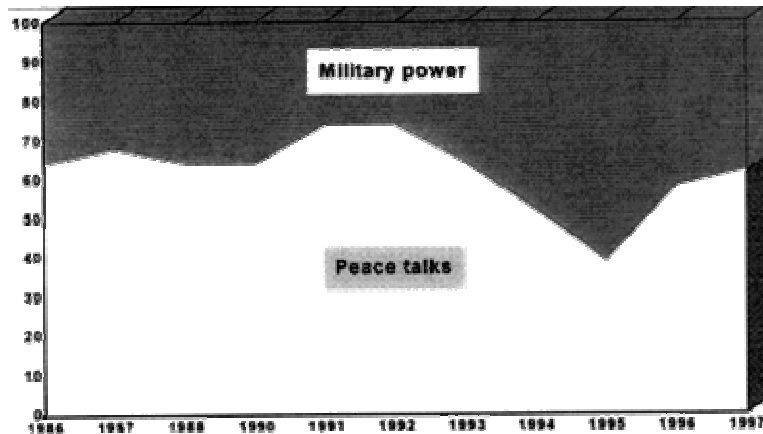


Figure 3.

### III. The Oslo Accords and the PLO

Support for the Oslo accords with the PLO rose to a very high level, with 70 percent maintaining that position. This support reflected the stated policy of the Israeli government to honor the international commitments Israel had undertaken. In the 1996 survey, before the elections, the rate of support for the Oslo accords was 66 percent.

Negotiating with the PLO had become widely accepted by 1997, with 89 percent accepting that reality, and only 11 percent opposing. In the 1996 survey, two-thirds favored discussions with the PLO, and in the 1995 survey, it was the majority opinion, but only by a narrow margin (53%), compared to the level of 60 percent in the 1994 survey.

The Israeli public had become convinced in 1997 (65%) that the PLO had the capacity to control the situation and to stop terror. That rate was 22 percentage points higher than the response rate only a year earlier (43% in 1996). These rates were an increase from the 1995 percentage of 29, and from the 35 percent in 1994 that thought that the PLO was in charge.

In 1997, 60 percent agreed that only through negotiations would be the terror attacks be curtailed; 40 percent thought that negotiations should be stopped if there were terrorist attacks. The parallel numbers for 1996 were 59 and 41 percent.

The public was also becoming convinced that Oslo 2, the agreement which specified the withdrawal of the Israeli Defense Forces from the major cities of the West Bank, would contribute to the security of Israel. In 1997, 62 percent agreed that that the agreement would enhance Israel's security very positively (12%) or positively (50%), compared to 38 percent who answered that the accords would greatly lessen (8%) or would lessen (30%) Israel's security.

The 1996 rate to the same question was less optimistic: at that time the population was almost evenly split, with 49 percent answering that the agreement would enhance security (8 percent greatly enhance and 41

percent enhance), and 51 percent expressed the opinion that it would harm security (14 percent harm greatly and 37 percent harm).

The assessment of the Oslo 2 accord was only slightly affected by characteristics such as age, education, or gender. Those who had served in the army were more supportive than were those who had not served. Political orientation and religious observance were the two best predictors of the respondent's answer. (The breakdown of the responses by demographic characteristics is presented at the end of this report; is given in Table 19.)

#### IV. Peace and War

Optimism about peace persisted in 1997 compared to 1996, but the feeling that there would be a war during the next three years grew. About three-quarters thought that there was a high or moderate probability that peace would persist in the coming three years, but the size of the "high" group became smaller between 1996 and 1997, and the "moderate" group grew. Those who thought that there was a high or moderate probability of war in the next three years grew from 37 percent in 1996 to 47 percent in 1997. Table 2 presents the results for the two samples.

Table 2. Probabilities of Peace and War, 1996 and 1997

	1996		1997	
Probability	Peace	War	Peace	War
High	30%	9%	17%	13%
Moderate	45%	28%	59%	34%
Low	17%	40%	18%	38%
Very low	9%	24%	7%	14%

An indication of the changed mood as a result of the cooperation between Israel and the Palestinian Authority was that 65 percent thought that most Palestinians want peace, compared with only 40 percent in 1996.

War clouds are never far from the horizon of the Middle East. What type of war would be supported by the public? Hypothetical situations regarding initiating war were presented in the 1986 and 1987, and 1997 surveys. The results indicate stability in the structure of these attitudes over the years, and in some cases, a lower level of support for initiating war (see Table 3).

Table 3. Initiating War

**"Is it justifiable or not justifiable for Israel to initiate war in each of these situations?"**

	1986	1987	1997
In defense, to prevent the country's destruction	89%	94%	93%
To prevent or stop a war of attrition	76%	81%	72%
To destroy terrorist infrastructure aimed at Israel	na	66%	72%
To prevent recapture of the territories	75%	79%	68%
To destroy enemy's war-making capacity to prevent future threats	44%	62%	46%
In response to intelligence reports regarding intentions			
by neighboring states to increase border attacks	40%	50%	44%
To capture territories to increase country's security	26%	36%	23%
To topple a hostile regime in support of a friendly leader who will agree to make peace	23%	33%	22%
In response to a request from the United States to protect American interests in the region	na	31%	21%
To help friendly forces in the region	na	23%	16%

NOTES: The percentage is the sum of "definitely justified" and "justified"; two negative responses were also offered. "na" = not asked.

High levels of support point to the use of initiated war in a reactive or defensive sense. The values in the public mind that supported these propositions by two-thirds or more were existence, security, and opposition to being forced to alter political arrangements by the use of force, such as relinquishing control of the territories by war or as a result of terrorist acts.

A middle category, which included hypothetical examples of using war in a limited offensive manner, generated lower levels of support for the use of war. About half the samples supported the initiation of war to prevent present or future threats to Israel's security.

The lowest level of support was registered for initiating war in a manifestly offensive manner: to capture additional territories, to overthrow a hostile regime, or to go to war to achieve the interests of an ally.

In many cases, the 1997 rates were more similar to the pre-intifada 1986 rates than they were to those registered in 1987.

## V. The Present and the Future in the Territories

**The Future of the Negotiations.** What should be discussed in the negotiations with the Palestinians (see Table 4)? The samples were asked that question, in 1990, the period before any negotiations, in 1993, after the convening of the Madrid Conference without the PLO, in 1994, after the Israel-PLO accord, in 1995 when the talks seemed stalled, in 1996 after the Oslo 2 accords, and in 1997, with Prime Minister Netanyahu leading the negotiations. With the exception of a Jordanian-Palestinian confederation, support grew for discussing each of the topics with the Palestinians.

Table 4. Support for Discussing . . . in Talks with Palestinians

	1990	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
An independent Palestinian state	26%	30%	41%	44%	48%	52%
A Palestinian state in some of the area with acceptable security arrangements for Israel	NA	45%	51%	50%	53%	64%
A Jordanian-Palestinian confederation	34%	48%	57%	58%	66%	55%
Removing Jewish settlements	32%	43%	50%	45%	49%	53%
East Jerusalem	13%	17%	14%	15%	17%	25%
The right of return	9%	12%	14%	12%	11%	17%

Israeli public opinion seemed to be more flexible toward the Palestinians as the negotiations proceeded, despite terror and the troubled atmosphere.

Which territories Israel will relinquish in the permanent settlement is a most divisive issue. The range of opinion is reported in Table 5; the rate of willingness to return territories between 1996 and 1997 remained the same for the Jordan Valley, but grew for each of the other territories, although in no case did a majority support returning the territory.

Table 5. Territories to be Returned in the Permanent Agreement

	Western Samaria	Jordan Valley	Gush Etzion	East Jerusalem
1994	30%	18%	14%	10%
1995	30%	19%	18%	9%

1996	38%	20%	20%	12%
1997	44%	20%	26%	20%

**The Settlers and the Settlements.** Responses regarding the settlements changed little, Twenty-seven percent of the respondents said that no Jewish settlements in the territories should be removed (30% in 1996). An additional 58 percent were ready to remove those that presented a security problem (53% in 1996). The remaining 15 percent were ready to remove them all immediately (17% in 1996).

Government policy toward Jewish settlers in the territories was seen as too harsh by 17 percent, too soft by 24 percent, and appropriate by 52 percent. The parallel numbers in 1996 were 31, 14, and 55 percent in 1996, and 40, 20, and 40 in 1995.

**Preferred and Likely Solutions.** Respondents were asked what solution for the territories they preferred; the results were:

Annexation and transfer 7%

Annexation, no transfer, no full rights for Arabs 12%

Annexation, no transfer, full rights for Arabs 5%

Autonomy 32%

Return most of the territories to Jordan 5%

Jordanian-Palestinian confederation 11%

Palestinian state in territories as part of peace treaty 28%

In addition to their preference, respondents were asked about what they thought was likely to come to pass (see Table 6). These questions were also asked in 1996 (and in 1995; see JCSS Memorandum no. 46). In both 1997 and 1996, autonomy was the favored solution, chosen by 32 percent of the respondents in 1997 (28% in 1996).

In this format, the preference for a Palestinian state grew from 13 percent in 1995, 22 percent in 1996, and 28 percent in 1997. Regarding the most likely thing to come to pass, a Palestinian state was mentioned by 52 percent of the sample in 1997 (43% in 1996, 34% in 1995). The total support for annexation was 24 percent in 1997 (36% in 1995, 24% in 1996).

Table 6. Preferred and Likely Solutions, 1995 and 1996

Solution	1996		1997	
	prefer	likely	prefer	likely
Annexation and transfer	9%	3%	7%	1%
Annexation, no transfer, no full rights for Arabs	11%	5%	12%	3%
Annexation, no transfer, full rights for Arabs	4%	3%	5%	3%
Autonomy	28%	25%	32%	26%
Return most of the territories to Jordan	4%	3%	5%	4%
Jordanian-Palestinian confederation	22%	13%	11%	5%
Palestinian state in territories as part of peace treaty	22%	43%	28%	52%
Status Quo (things will remain the same)	--	5%	--	6%

Four different measures can be assessed using these data:

the difference between preference and assessment of likelihood in the 1997 sample;

the difference between preference and assessment of likelihood in the 1996 sample;

the difference in the rates of preference between the 1997 and 1996 samples;

the difference in the rates of likelihood assessment between the 1997 and 1996 samples.

The numbers in Table 7 are based on the data presented on the previous page, and it presents the appropriate subtraction results, with shaded areas indicating a negative relationship. For example, the difference between the percentage which *preferred* a Palestinian state in the territories as part of a peace treaty rose 6 points from 1996 to 1997, from 22 percent to 28 percent. The difference between those who preferred a Palestinian state solution compared with those who thought it *likely* was minus 24 points (28 minus 52), and hence that cell is shaded.

The preference for annexation and transfer fell between 1996 and 1997. The preferences which rose were autonomy and a Palestinian state, solutions which reduced Israel's role. The solutions the respondents thought likely to occur were of the same type. The role envisaged for Jordan receded sharply.

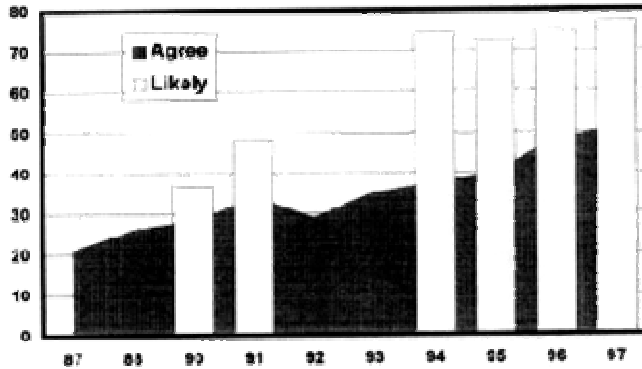
Table 7. Measures of Change, 1996 - 1997

	1996	1997	prefer	likely
Solution	prefer-likely	prefer-likely	1997-1996	1997-1996
Annexation and transfer	+6	+6	-2	-2
Annexation, no transfer, no full rights for Arabs	+6	+9	+1	-2
Annexation, no transfer, full rights for Arabs	+1	+2	+1	0
Autonomy	+3	+6	+4	+1
Return most of the territories to Jordan	+1	+1	+1	+1
Jordanian-Palestinian confederation	+9	+6	-11	-8
Palestinian state in territories as part of peace treaty	-21	-24	+6	+9
Status Quo (things will remain the same)	--	--	--	+1

The greatest disparity in both 1997 and 1996 involved the gap between the preference for the creation of a Palestinian state and the assessment that its establishment was likely. In 1996, the gap between the two was -21, and it was -24 in 1997. Public opinion seemed to be preparing itself for the eventuality of the Palestinian state, even if the rates of endorsement of the idea were much lower.

**A Palestinian state.** When asked directly about the establishment of a Palestinian state, more than half of the respondents supported the proposal in this series of surveys. The rate reached 51 percent in 1997, compared to 48 percent in 1996, and 39 percent in 1995. The dip in the 1992 rate is explained by the support given by Palestinians to Iraq during the Gulf War (see Figure 4) .

In addition to their personal preferences, respondents were also asked "Not taking into account your personal preference, do you estimate that within the next 10 years that a Palestinian state will be established?"



**Figure 4** presents the results over time regarding a Palestinian state.

The opposition to the idea of a Palestinian state was slowly contracting. In 1997, 25 percent were very opposed, 24 percent were opposed, 35 percent supported the idea, and 18 percent were enthusiastic. The comparable figures for 1996 were 28 percent very opposed, and 24 percent opposed, 35 percent supported the idea, and 13 percent very supportive. The numbers for 1995 were 41 percent very opposed, and 20 percent opposed.

The assessment that a Palestinian state would be established in the territories in the next decade remained strong, reaching 77 percent in 1997 (75% in 1996). That assessment had doubled since 1990. In 1990, 37 percent thought a Palestinian state in the territories would eventually be established, in 1991 48 percent, in 1994, 74 percent, and in 1995, 73 percent.

Respondents with post-high school education and those of European background were more likely to support the establishment of the Palestinian state, as were persons who had served in the army compared with those who did not serve. Secular respondents, as well as those who had supported Peres and the left and Labor in the elections, were also much more supportive of the idea (see Table 20).

Respondents were asked about the establishment in East Jerusalem of the capital of the Palestinian state. This idea was soundly rejected by a margin of 79 to 21. Only 5 percent agreed strongly, 16 percent agreed, while 35 percent disagreed, and 44 percent disagreed strongly. Compared to 1996, there were two significant findings: One was that the rate of agreement grew from 14 percent to 21 percent. The second was that the rate of extreme opposition to the idea fell twenty points from 64 percent to 44 percent during the year. In 1996, 3 percent agreed strongly, 11 percent agreed, while 23 percent disagreed, and 64 percent disagreed strongly.

## VI.Syria

In the 1997 survey there was additional erosion of the position rejecting the return of any of the Golan Heights to Syria. In 1997, the rate of refusing to give back any of the Golan fell to an all-time low of 31 percent (35 percent in 1996).

In the past, the Golan Heights were considered non-negotiable property by most respondents. In surveys conducted by the Guttman Institute between 1968 and 1978, the span of 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, the rate of refusal to return any of the Golan to Syria remained about 50 percent. The rate of willingness to return “some” grew.

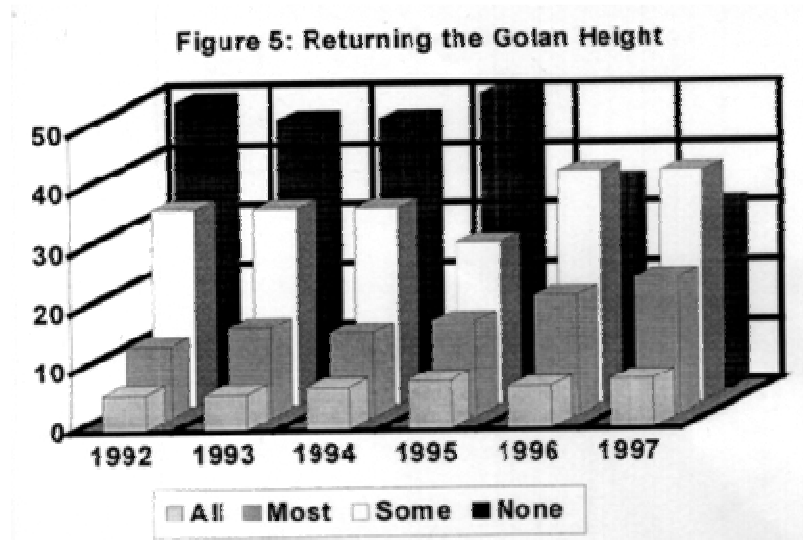


Figure 5 details the responses to a 4-choice question about returning the Golan Heights to Syria in conjunction with security arrangements acceptable to Israel. This question was used in a Dahaf survey in September 1992 ( $N = 582$ ), and in the surveys between 1993 and 1997.

Younger people tended to be less willing to return the Golan than were older respondents; those of European background were also more willing than those of Asian and African background (see Table 21). Religious observance was also strongly related to the topic; those who were more observant were less willing to return the Golan Heights. Party preference and choice for prime minister were also very important.

The percentage of those who thought Israel would return the Golan Heights to Syria within 10 years was 66 percent in 1997 (the same as in 1996), up from 61 percent in 1995.

The assessed probabilities of war and peace with Syria were almost identical (see Table 8), although the correlation between the two responses was low and not statistically significant.

Table 8. War and Peace with Syria in the Next Three Years

Probability of	Peace	War

High	10%	10%
Moderate	38%	36%
Low	37%	38%
Very low	15%	16%

The policy preferences of the respondents regarding the Golan Heights were not good predictors of the assessment of probabilities of war and peace with Syria. One's position regarding returning the Golan Heights was weakly related to assessment of achieving a peace treaty ( $r = .15$ ), but not to the likelihood of war.

Regarding the security zone in Lebanon, 62 percent agreed that it made a positive contribution to Israel's security (down from 72% in 1996, and 77% in 1995), and kept terror from northern settlements; the other 38 percent (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.

A majority (59%) opposed unilateral withdrawal from Lebanon; 36 percent were very opposed, 23 percent opposed. An additional 29 percent supported the proposal, and 12 percent were very supportive.

## **VII. Factors Affecting National Security**

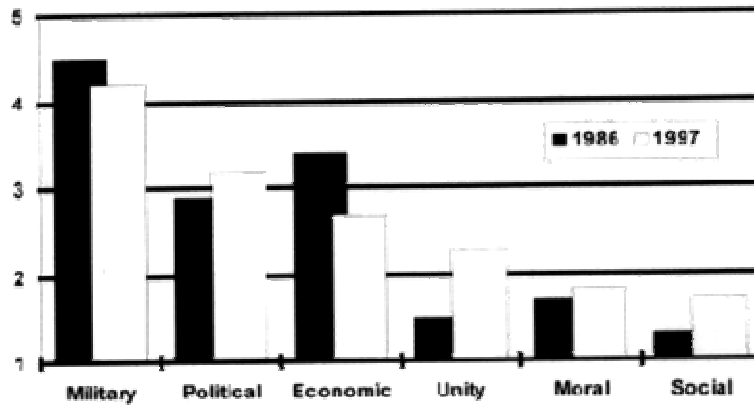
National security is affected by a multitude of factors. One way of assessing the relative importance of some of these factors is to have respondents rank a series of such factors in terms of their contribution to national security. This was done in the 1986 survey and repeated again in 1997. Using this device, we can gain a sense of relative importance and relative change.

Respondents were asked to rank the relative importance of the economic, military, moral, political, social and unity factors in national security. Figure 6 presents the mean ranking for 1986 and 1997. The military factor was the most important in both periods, but it was considered more important in contributing to national security in 1986 than it was in 1997.

In 1997, respondents ranked the political factor higher than they did in 1986, and it rose from third to second. The economic factor, which was second in importance in 1986, fell to third in 1997.

The "softer" factors such as moral concerns, national unity, and social factors were low, but each of them was more important in 1997 on average in 1997 than it was in 1986. This is evidence of a more textured conception of national security on the part of the population.

**Figure 5. Ranking of Factors Affecting National Security**



### VIII. Credibility of Leaders

The credibility of the leadership is a crucial factor in any democracy. The heads of the security establishment enjoy levels of credibility much higher than do the political leaders of the country (see Table 9). Leaders of the security establishment enjoy a 23 point difference in credibility compared to political leaders.

Table 9. Credibility of Statements of Security and Political Leaders, 1997

	Security Leaders	Political Leaders
Strongly rely	31%	8%
Rely	57%	57%
Do not rely	8%	28%
Definitely not	4%	7%

This pattern of credibility for the political leadership has fluctuated since the question was first asked in the 1987 survey. There was a drop off of 13 percentage points between 1986 and 1987, and a drop of another 10 percentage points until the 1996 survey. Between 1996 and 1997 there was a five percentage point increase (see Table 10).

Table 10. Reliance on Statements of Political Leaders

	1986	1987	1996	1997

Strongly rely	13%	10%	9%	8%
Rely	69%	59%	51%	57%
Do not rely	17%	26%	31%	28%
Definitely not	2%	5%	9%	7%

The credibility of both elected and security establishment leaders has deteriorated over the years. When asked whether the country's elected leaders made their decisions regarding security solely on the basis of objective and relevant considerations, or whether other considerations also played a role, 21 percent reported that objective considerations guided their decisions, and 79 thought that extra-security considerations also played a role.

When the same question was asked regarding the leadership of the security establishment, the view was less skeptical, but still far from trusting. Forty-one percent thought that the decisions of the commanders were always motivated only by professional and relevant considerations, and 59 percent thought that other considerations also came into play.

The questions regarding the political and military leadership were asked in both 1986 and 1987, and the response rates were higher for both groups of leaders. For the security establishment, the percent that thought professional considerations were used was 47 and 44 percent, respectively, in 1986 and 1987; for the politicians, it was 32 and 31 percent, respectively (see Table 11).

Table 11. Objective Considerations for Security Decisions

	1986	1987	1997
Elected leaders	32%	31%	21%
Security establishment	47%	44%	41%

## IX. Security Related Issues

**Security budget.** The majority of respondents have consistently thought that the security budget was appropriate; the size of the group which wanted it increased has been between three to six times the size of the group that wanted it reduced (see Table 12). The 1997 survey indicates that the gap has grown between those wanting to increase it and those wanting it decreased. The 1997 pattern is more similar to that of the 1995 survey which was characterized by uncertainty over the future of the Oslo accords; security anxiety was evidently high.

Table 12. The Security Budget

	1986	1987	1995	1996	1997
Increase	31%	29%	39%	30%	40%
Leave as is	60%	64%	54%	61%	54%
Decrease	9%	7%	7%	8%	6%

**U. S. guarantees.** A very large majority (80%) of Israelis were very confident or confident in promises made by the United States to Israel regarding its security (28% very confident; 52% confident), the same as in 1996 (81%).

**Curtailing civil rights.** Respondents were asked if civil rights should be curtailed to allow the security forces to deal with internal dissension, and 58 percent agreed, compared to 51 percent in 1996. The intense disagree positions and the moderate agree positions grew compared with 1996. See Table 13.

Table 13. Curtail Civil Rights to Deal with Dissension

	1996	1997
Definitely	12%	13%
Yes	39%	45%
No	29%	28%
Definitely not	19%	14%

**Obeying orders.** There has been a steady decline in the percentage who think it permissible for a soldier to disobey orders for removing Jewish settlers from the territories (see Table 14). This pattern indicates an impressive upholding of the authority of the army and the rule of law.

Table 14. To Disobey Orders

	1994	1995	1996	1997
Permissible	32%	29%	20%	13%
Not permissible	68%	71%	80%	87%

**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 15).

Table 15. Likelihood of Civil War

	1994	1995	1996	1997
Very likely	9%	8%	6%	3%
Likely	24%	22%	30%	29%
Unlikely	34%	35%	33%	45%
Very unlikely	33%	36%	32%	24%

**The media.** “To what extent do you think the media tend to be responsible when reporting on security matters?” The majority response (see Table 16) remains “responsible”.

Table 16. Responsible Coverage by the Media

	1986	1987	1993	1996	1997
Very much	11%	5%	12%	6%	8%
Yes	56%	46%	49%	51%	53%
No	24%	35%	25%	31%	28%
Not at all	9%	21%	17%	9%	11%

## X. Party Images

The Likud was perceived as better able to secure a Jewish majority, land and peace, and to fight terrorism. Labor was seen as better able to bring true peace and democracy **See Figure 7**.

**Differences among major parties.** Respondents perceived differences between the two major parties. However, the perceived differences were more evident in the period before the 1996 than they were almost a year into the new administration. The clearest differences were reported regarding peace and security, and Jerusalem (see Table 17). The greatest change in perceived differences between 1996 and 1997 concerned the fight against terror. Six of ten respondents reported differences between the parties in the

fight against terror before the elections; a year later, fewer than three of ten said they felt that way.

**Table 17. “Very Great” and “Great” Differences among Major Parties**

	Peace and territories	Jerusalem	Security policy	Fighting terror	Economics
pre-election 1996	79%	54%	na	61%	30%
February-March 1997	57%	41%	35%	28%	28%

**Arab parties in the coalition.** After surging in 1996, the distribution of responses to this question has returned to its previous pattern. The majority opposes the inclusion of Arab parties in the government coalition. The increase in 1996 evidently reflected the peace process during the period of the Labor government (see Table 18).

**Table 18. Arab Parties in the Coalition**

	1993	1994	1996	1997
Strongly support	10%	12%	10%	13%
Support	23%	27%	35%	26%
Oppose	21%	21%	28%	24%
Strongly oppose	47%	41%	28%	37%

**National Unity Government.** When asked about the establishment of a national unity government, 58 percent of the sample supported the idea. With no prompting, twenty percent made the establishment of such a unity government conditional on which party would head it. The complete distribution was as follows:

Definitely 14%

Yes 24%

Yes, but only if headed by the Likud<sup>a</sup> 11%

Yes, but only if headed by Labor<sup>a</sup> 9%

No 26%

Definitely not 16%

Responses not offered to the respondent; volunteered by him/her.

**Choice for Prime Minister.** Netanyahu, Peres, and Barak led in an open-ended question. In a runoff between Netanyahu and Barak, Barak was 8 percentage points ahead of Netanyahu. If the Netanyahu-Peres contest were held again, Peres would win by about the same margin.

**Who is your choice for Prime Minister?**

Benjamin Netanyahu	17%	Dan Meridor	4%	Chaim Ramon	1%
Shimon Peres	17%	Ariel Sharon	4%	Yossi Sarid	1%
Ehud Barak	15%	David Levy	2%		
Benny Begin	8%	Rafael Eytan	2%	Other	3%
Yossi Beilin	6%	Efraim Sneh	1%	No decision	19%

Candidate	If the final vote were between Netanyahu and Barak, for whom would you vote?	For whom did you vote in 1996?	If elections were held today between Netanyahu and Peres, for whom would you vote?
Benjamin Netanahu	33%	41%	35%
Shimon Peres	41% (Barak)	39%	42%
No vote; No Answer	26%	20%	23%

**Table 19. Does the Oslo 2 agreement (redeployment of the IDF from the big cities of the West Bank) add to or harm Israel's security? (in %)**

Group		Adds a lot	Adds	Harms	Harms a lot
Total		13	50	30	7
Gender					
	Female	12	51	30	7
	Male	14	48	31	7
Age					
	18-34	13	50	30	8
	35-54	12	53	28	7
	55+	16	45	34	5
Education					
	thru 8 yrs	12	64	17	7
	9-12 yrs	12	47	34	8
	13+ yrs	16	54	25	5
Place of Birth					
	Israel/Father Israel	15	50	27	8
	Israel/Father Asia or Africa	7	51	32	10
	Israel/Father Europe or America	20	50	25	6
	Asia or Africa	11	41	40	9
	Europe or America	13	54	30	3
Religious Observation					

	Fully observant	8	23	46	23
	Observant to a great extent	8	35	46	12
	A little observant	11	58	26	5
	Not at all observant	23	59	17	1
Army Service in Territories?					
	Yes	16	49	28	7
	No	9	58	27	6
	No Army Service	17	35	38	10
Vote in 1996					
	Left	32	62	7	0
	Labor	24	67	9	0
	Likud	3	41	44	12
	Religious Parties	1	35	52	12
	No vote	18	12	44	26
	Netanyahu	4	36	48	13
	Peres	25	67	8	0

**Table 20. Should Israel agree to the establishment of a Palestinian state in the territories as part of the permanent agreement? (in %)**

Group	Defini- tely	Yes	No	Defin- itely not
Total	18	33	24	25

Gender					
	Female	16	38	25	21
	Male	19	30	25	26
Age					
	18-34	18	34	24	24
	35-54	18	35	21	25
	55+	19	28	34	20
Education					
	thru 8 yrs	21	24	40	16
	9-12 yrs	15	32	27	26
	13+ yrs	22	36	21	22
Place of Birth					
	Israel/Father Israel	18	36	23	22
	Israel/Father Asia or Africa	12	32	27	30
	Israel/Father Europe or America	27	36	21	16
	Asia or Africa	7	33	32	28
	Europe or America	23	29	25	24
Religious Observation					
	Fully observant	3	12	27	58
	Observant to a great extent	7	27	32	34
	A little observant	19	35	26	21
	Not at all observant	32	44	16	9

Army Service in Territories?					
	Yes	18	33	25	24
	No	18	39	23	20
	No Army Service	15	25	29	31
Vote in 1996					
	Left	57	37	4	2
	Labor	29	50	16	6
	Likud	5	21	35	39
	Religious Parties	1	24	36	39
	No vote	3	7	35	55
	Netanyahu	4	20	34	43
	Peres	34	47	15	5

**Table 21. Should Israel agree to returning the Golan Heights to Syria as part of a treaty which is acceptable to the IDF? (in %)**

Group		None	Some	Most	All
Total		31	38	23	8
Gender					
	Female	34	37	23	6
	Male	26	40	26	9

Age					
	18-34	33	40	20	8
	35-54	26	41	27	7
	55+	29	35	29	8
Education					
	thru 8 yrs	41	26	9	24
	9-12 yrs	35	40	19	7
	13+ yrs	21	37	34	8
Place of Birth					
	Israel/Father Israel	29	41	20	10
	Israel/Father Asia or Africa	37	42	19	3
	Israel/Father Europe or America	17	35	38	10
	Asia or Africa	42	36	16	5
	Europe or America	25	35	39	11
Religious Observation					
	Fully observant	53	32	10	6
	Observant to a great extent	42	39	16	3
	A little observant	27	43	25	6
	Not at all observant	16	33	35	16
Army Service in Territories?					
	Yes	23	43	28	7
	No	30	40	23	8

	No Army Service	41	30	21	8
Vote in 1996					
	Left	3	16	62	19
	Labor	12	37	38	13
	Likud	46	46	7	2
	Religious Parties	42	40	16	2
	No vote	42	44	10	4
	Netanyahu	47	43	9	1
	Peres	11	33	42	15

**Table 22. Demographic Characteristics of the Sample**

Group		N	%
Gender			
	Female	657	46.0
	Male	560	54.0
Age			
	18-34	477	42.0
	35-54	418	36.8
	55+	241	21.2
Education			

	thru 8 yrs	38	3.3
	9-12 yrs	665	57.0
	13+ yrs	463	39.7
Place of Birth			
	Israel/Father Israel	289	24.1
	Israel/Father Asia or Africa	262	21.8
	Israel/Father Europe or America	238	19.8
	Asia or Africa	184	15.4
	Europe or America	226	18.9
Religious Observation			
	Fully observant	108	9.1
	Observant to a great extent	256	21.4
	A little observant	543	45.4
	Not at all observant	288	24.1
Army Service in Territories?			
	Yes	414	34.0
	No	485	41.7
	No Army Service	265	22.8
Vote in 1996			
	Left	91	9.9
	Labor	344	37.2
	Likud	325	35.2

	Religious Parties	133	14.4
	No vote	32	3.4
	Netanyahu	484	50.3
	Peres	478	49.7

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