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 Program for
Public Consultation

Israeli and Palestinian Public Opinion on Negotiating a Final Status Peace Agreement

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The Anwar Sadat Chair for Peace and Development was established at the University of Maryland, College Park in the fall of 1997 in memory of the late Egyptian President Anwar Sadat. The Chair is under the leadership of the Sadat Professor Shibley Telhami. The Chair was made possible by the commitment of Anwar Sadat's widow, Dr. Jehan Sadat, to her husband's legacy of leadership for peace. With support from all levels of the University, Dr. Sadat created an endowment for the Chair from the generous support of many individual contributors from around the world.

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INTRODUCTION

In July of 2013, the government of Israel and the Palestinian Authority agreed to begin a nine-month period of talks, under U.S. sponsorship, to see if agreement could be achieved on a basic framework for a final settlement of the Israel-Palestinian conflict.

One of the major questions lying behind the talks is: what will be the attitudes of the public on each side if a basic framework for a settlement does emerge? Will either the Israeli public, or the Palestinian public—or both—support such a framework, even if it may have important reservations? Or will the difficulty of the compromises required lead either (or both) publics to reject an agreement?

Existing polling has shown that there are many final status issues on which there are serious gaps between the views of the Israeli public and the Palestinian public. But most poll questions are simply asking people their preferences. Negotiating a deal requires finding a package of proposals that includes elements that are not necessarily preferred but can be tolerated by each side. If these publics were to advise their negotiators, what would they say?

To try to answer this fundamental question, the University of Maryland's Anwar Sadat Chair for Peace and Development and Program for Public Consultation developed and fielded a survey in Israel and the Palestinian Territories.

In addition to standard questions, the survey also included what is called a 'policymaking simulation.' The aim of a policymaking simulation is not to simply ask for reactions but to put respondents in the shoes of a policymaker and to deal with the tradeoffs of making a policy decision. It includes having respondents hear arguments for and against policy options. This provides policymakers with insight into how their publics are likely to respond to arguments as they are presented in the public discourse, and also how the public is likely to respond as they have time to deliberate about the issue.

METHODOLOGY

A Palestinian polling organization, Palestinian Center for Public Opinion, conducted the poll of 1003 adult Palestinians through face-to-face interviews from November 17-28, 2013 throughout the West Bank and Gaza, including residents in the areas of Jenin, Nablus, Ramallah, Bethlehem, East Jerusalem, Hebron, Jericho, Tulkarem, Tubas, Qalqilia, Salfit, Gaza City, North Gaza, Deir El-Balah, Khan Younis and Rafah. The margin of error for the survey is 3.1%.

An Israeli polling organization, Midgam Project, led by pollster Mina Zemach, conducted the poll of 1053 adult Israelis from November 21-25, 2013 throughout Israel, including 902 Israeli Jews and 151 Israeli Arabs. The sample was drawn from Midgam's iPanel database using a strata sampling method using the following criteria: sector, ultra-orthodox Jews, Jewish residents in West Bank settlements, Kibbutz members, other Jews, immigrants and Arabs; the characteristics of town residence, and gender. Among immigrants, additional criteria for country of origin and year of immigration were applied. Surveys were conducted via internet among Israeli Jews, and conducted face to face with Arab Israelis. The survey was translated into Hebrew, and once

approved, was also translated into Arabic and Russian. The margin of error for the survey is 3.0% among all Israelis.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Perspectives on Negotiations for a Peace Agreement

Both Israelis and Palestinians are pessimistic about the negotiations and the long-term prospects for a peace agreement. Only a few express optimism that US mediation efforts will bring an agreement in the next year. Both Israelis and Palestinians express remarkably low confidence that their negotiators will get the best possible deal and that American mediators will try to negotiate a fair deal.

Policymaking Simulation on a Comprehensive Package Deal

All respondents, Israelis and Palestinians, went through a process, called a policymaking simulation, in which they were asked to imagine that they were an advisor to their own government (the Israeli Prime Minister or the Palestinian Authority). They were told to imagine that their delegation in current negotiations has reported back with the best package deal they could get from the other side and are looking for guidance on whether to accept it as a framework or end negotiations. They were then presented a detailed package deal on final status, covering what many experts have regarded for some years as a likely basis for an agreement.

Assessing Arguments For and Against the Package Deal

When respondents were presented arguments for and against the package they showed intense ambivalence. For the Israelis, three of the six arguments directed to them were found convincing by more than half and three were not, while all arguments against the deal were found convincing by majorities. For the Palestinians all of the arguments for and against the package deal were found convincing, with the arguments against tending to get stronger support.

Conclusions About the Package Deal

Respondents were then asked whether they would recommend that their negotiators accept the deal as a framework for more detailed negotiations, or terminate the negotiations.

Among Israelis--though the arguments against the package had been found more convincing--a modest majority (and half of Israeli Jews) recommended that Israel accept the framework. Among those who initially said they would oppose the deal, only half of them (one in four overall) were fundamentally opposed to the package's terms. The other half said they were so sure the Palestinians would not accept the deal that there was no point in Israel expressing its readiness. Thus when Israeli Jews were asked how Israel should respond if the Palestinians *were* to accept the deal, one in ten shifted their position-- raising support to over six in ten.

Only four in ten Palestinians initially said that they would recommend accepting the framework. But among those who initially said they would oppose the deal, only half of them (three in ten overall) were fundamentally opposed to its terms. The other half said they were so sure the Israelis would not accept the deal there would be no point in the Palestinians expressing their readiness. When Palestinians were asked how their leaders should respond if Israel *were* to accept the deal, two in ten shifted their position, raising support to six in ten—almost identical to the level of support among Israelis.

Identifying Which Elements Were Most Objectionable

The minorities of respondents who consistently opposed the deal were asked what two elements of it were most unacceptable. Among Israelis, the two elements most widely cited were returning to the 1967 borders except for the exchange of 3-4% of territory, and the division of Jerusalem with international control of the Walled City.

Among Palestinians, the most commonly cited element was the division of Jerusalem with international control of the Walled City. The second most cited was Palestinian recognition of Israel as a state of the Jewish people and of all of its citizens.

Final Status Issues Considered Separately

All respondents were then asked to consider final status issues separately in the context of a menu of options, including ones that were more attractive than those in the package deal. In this context, for some issues respondents endorsed positions consistent with the package deal, but for others they showed resistance, making it clear that support for the package deal is not derived from support for the elements, but rather that is only in the context of a total package that either Israelis and Palestinians can overcome their resistances to some of its elements. It should also be noted that in all cases only minorities found the elements of the package completely unacceptable, ranging from 1-in-6 to 1-in-3.

In this context Israelis showed readiness to remove settlers that are deep inside the West Bank as part of settlement based on 1967 borders with land swaps, having international rather than Israeli forces along the Jordan River, and having Israel recognized as a state of all its citizens as well as the Jewish people. However, there was substantial resistance to any Palestinian sovereignty over East Jerusalem and while a large majority was ready to accept Palestinian refugees settling in the new Palestinian state, there was substantial resistance to even a small number of refugees returning to Israel, as well as providing compensation for lost property. At the same time, for all of these terms for which there was substantial resistance, the numbers finding them “completely unacceptable” was approximately one in three.

In this context, Palestinians found at least tolerable the proposal to allow refugees to settle in the new Palestinian state, with a small number allowed to settle in Israel and a modest majority even found it tolerable for refugees to only be allowed to settle in the Palestinian state, but most insisted on recognition of the right of return. A majority showed substantial resistance to all plans for dividing Jerusalem, for Israel to annex West Bank territory, for foreign forces along the Jordan River and for any recognition of Israel as being a state of the Jewish people. At the same time, those finding these options completely unacceptable ranged from 17 to 32 percent.

Scenarios for the Future Other Than a Two-State Solution

Support for the deal, despite the discomfort with many of the elements, may be related to a lack of an attractive and realistic alternative to the two-state solution. Asked to consider the likelihood of eight different scenarios if the two-state solution is deemed no longer possible, for both Israelis and Palestinians the scenario seen as the most likely was that there would be more intense conflict and instability for years to come or that the status quo would continue indefinitely with little change. None of the scenarios were seen as both likely and attractive.

Multilateral UN Security Council Endorsement of Comprehensive Deal

Neither Israelis nor Palestinians express more than moderate interest in having the UN Security Council endorse a possible comprehensive deal with a resolution that would supersede all past resolutions. However, only small minorities of either group are opposed.

Post-Deal Israel-Palestinian Relations

If Israel and the Palestinian Authority were to come to agreement on a deal that leads to two states, Israelis are divided on whether the two states should keep interactions to a minimum or have more societal interactions, while a Palestinian majority wants minimal interaction. A large majority of Israelis would favor a truth and reconciliation commission, while Palestinians are divided.

PERSPECTIVES ON NEGOTIATIONS FOR A PEACE AGREEMENT

Israelis

Israelis express much pessimism about the current negotiations and for the long-term prospects for a peace agreement. Only a tiny number—4%—expressed optimism that current US mediation efforts will bring an agreement in the next year. Half of Israelis (48%) said that they believe that a peace agreement will never be reached; one third (33%) believe an agreement is inevitable but it will take more than five years, and one in six (15%) believe that a peace agreement will be reached in less than five years.

Prospects for Peace Agreement - Israelis -

Which of the following statements are closest to your view about the prospects of a peace agreement between Israel and the Palestinians?

The current American mediation effort will succeed in reaching an agreement in the next year



A peace agreement will be reached within the next five years



A peace agreement is inevitable, but it will take more than five years



I don't believe a peace agreement will ever be reached



Israelis express remarkably low confidence that Israeli negotiators will get the best possible deal and that American mediators will try to negotiate a fair deal. However, these views are more widely held among Israeli Jews than among Israeli Arabs.

When a representative sample of all Israelis were asked, “How confident are you that Israeli negotiators will get the best possible deal in the negotiations?” only a quarter—24%—expressed confidence and only 6% said they were very confident; while 76% were not very (49%) or not at all confident (27%).

Israelis were also asked: “How much confidence do you have that the American mediators will try to negotiate a fair deal?” Only a minority expressed confidence the mediators would be fair—28% (Israeli Jews, 25%).

Palestinians

Palestinians were similarly pessimistic about the prospects of a peace agreement. Nearly half of Palestinians (47%) said that they believe that a peace agreement will never be reached. One in five (22%) believed an agreement is inevitable but will take more than five years; just one in five (19%) believed that a peace agreement will be reached in less than five years. Only one in ten (11%) expressed optimism that current US mediation will bring an agreement in the next year.

Prospects for Peace Agreement - Palestinians -

Which of the following statements are closest to your view about the prospects of a peace agreement between Israel and the Palestinians?

The current American mediation effort will succeed in reaching an agreement in the next year



A peace agreement will be reached within the next five years



A peace agreement is inevitable, but it will take more than five years



I don't believe a peace agreement will ever be reached



Palestinians (like Israelis) express remarkably low confidence that their negotiators will get the best possible deal: only 31% were at least somewhat confident (very, 6%). When asked whether about whether American mediators will try to negotiate a fair deal, only 28% expressed confidence in this.

POLICYMAKING SIMULATION ON A COMPREHENSIVE PACKAGE DEAL

All respondents, Israelis and Palestinians, went through a process, called a policymaking simulation, in which they were asked to imagine that they were an advisor to their own government (the Israeli Prime Minister or the Palestinian Authority).

They were told “As you may know there are currently negotiations occurring between Israel and the Palestinian Authority with the United States as a mediator” and that their delegation in current negotiations has “reported back saying that after extensive negotiations they have the best package deal they were able to get the Palestinians to agree to and are looking for guidance on whether to agree to accept it as an overarching framework or to end the negotiations.”

They were then presented a detailed package deal that covered the contentious final status issue. This package of eight points was presented, covering what many experts have regarded for some years as a likely basis for an agreement should one take place. Both Israelis and Palestinians were presented exactly the same package. It went as follows:

TERMS OF A PROPOSED FINAL STATUS PACKAGE DEAL

I would like you to imagine that you are an advisor to the [Prime Minister/Palestinian Authority] and the [Israeli/Palestinian] delegation have reported back saying that after extensive negotiations they have the best package deal they were able to get the [Palestinians/Israelis] to agree to and are looking for guidance on whether to agree to accept it as an overarching framework or to end the negotiations. So the terms of the package deal are as follows:

1. A sovereign Palestinian state would be established. The boundaries would generally be based on 1967 borders, but Israel would annex 3-4% of the West Bank that includes major settlement blocks with comparable land swaps to be negotiated.
2. Gaza and the West Bank would have a secure, unobstructed link, either in the form of a tunnel, highway or bridge.
3. For Jerusalem, Israel would have sovereignty over Jewish neighborhoods, while the new Palestinian state would have sovereignty over Arab neighborhoods. The Walled City would be under a special regime that would include both international control, and Israeli and Palestinian participation.
4. Neither Israel nor the Palestinians would have military forces in the Palestinian state, but Palestinian Security Forces would handle internal security in the Palestinian State. International military forces, such as NATO forces possibly under American command, would be stationed along the Jordan River.
5. Palestinian refugees would be compensated for loss of property, would be allowed to return to the Palestinian state, with a limited number being allowed to return to Israel.
6. Palestinians would recognize Israel as a state of the Jewish people and of all its citizens.
7. Israel and Arab and Muslim states would establish full diplomatic relations and open trade.
8. Israel and the Palestinians state would explicitly agree to end the conflict and Palestinians would relinquish all claims pertaining to the conflict.

Respondents then evaluated arguments for and against accepting the package as the basis for continued negotiations, saying for each argument whether or not they found it convincing. Naturally, the arguments were different for Israelis and Palestinians.

Finally, respondents were asked to come to their conclusions about what course of action they would recommend.

ASSESSING ARGUMENTS FOR AND AGAINST THE PACKAGE DEAL

Israelis - Pro Arguments

Arguments in support of the package deal on the whole were found to be much weaker than arguments against the deal. Only two of the six arguments were found convincing by majorities, albeit modest ones: that a failure to make a deal would lead to a violent intifada, and that the status quo will eventually lead to international pressures to include Palestinians as citizens, threatening Israel's Jewish identity.

Thus the two arguments majorities did find convincing both claimed that over time pressures would build on Israel and make its situation untenable. "If the Palestinians don't have independence in their own state, it is only a matter of time before they start another violent intifada, creating a dangerous and costly confrontation for Israel" was found convincing by 59% (Israeli Jews, 55%). Similarly, 54% found convincing that "If we don't make a deal to create a Palestinian state, eventually international pressure will grow to accept Palestinians as citizens, and with the growing Palestinian population, it would threaten Israel's Jewish identity" (Israeli Jews, 51%).

Arguments in Favor of Package Deal Presented to Israelis only	% Found Convincing
If the Palestinians don't have independence in their own state, it is only a matter of time before they start another violent intifada, creating a dangerous and costly confrontation for Israel.	59
If we don't make a deal to create a Palestinian state, eventually international pressure will grow to accept Palestinians as citizens, and with the growing Palestinian population, it would threaten Israel's Jewish identity.	54
This is an opportune time for Israel to make a deal. Today, Israel is strong, even dominant, militarily, with strong support from the United States. Arab states are weakened by the Arab uprisings. In the future, conditions could change for the worse. It is best to make a deal now.	51
If Israel does not come to an agreement with the Palestinians, Israel will likely face increasing international isolation. The trend toward imposing sanctions on Israel will only grow, with both economic and strategic consequences.	49
Israeli-Palestinian peace would make it possible to have normal relations with all Arab and Muslim states. This could lead to coordination with Arab states on common threats and a significant expansion of trade. Peace would also eliminate the vast costs of maintaining the military administration in the West Bank and subsidizing the settlements.	44
We have a moral responsibility to seek a solution to the humanitarian plight of several million Palestinians, living under occupation or in squalid refugee camps for decades.	36

Respondents were divided over two arguments: that failure to make a deal would lead to international isolation and more sanctions against Israel would grow; and that this moment is a particularly opportune one to make a deal.

Majorities found unconvincing arguments based on the moral responsibility to respond to the humanitarian plight of the Palestinians, convincing to just 36% (Israeli Jews, 28%) and on the benefits of improved relations with Arab and Muslim states, convincing to 44% (Israeli Jews, 39%).

Israelis - Con Arguments

All the arguments against the deal were found convincing by majorities. Three arguments were found convincing by very large majorities: that the Palestinians cannot be trusted to keep the deal and would eventually gain military forces and attack Israel, which 74% found convincing (Israeli Jews, 79%); that Hamas may eventually regain control and ignore the terms of the deal, found convincing by 75% (Israeli Jews, 77%); and that international forces cannot be relied on to protect Israeli interests in Jerusalem and along the Jordan River, convincing to 73% (Israeli Jews, 77%). A lesser but substantial 58% majority found convincing the argument that a two-state solution is no longer feasible.

A modest majority (53%, 58% among Israeli Jews) also found convincing the argument that Israel should never give up the West Bank because it is an indispensable part of “greater Israel” (Eretz Yisrael).

The least successful argument against the package declared that Israel has no need for a deal, because it is strong enough “to keep the Palestinians in their current status and withstand the pressure from the... international community.” Only a slight majority concurred (51%).

Arguments Against Package Deal Presented to Israelis only	% Found Convincing
Even if the Palestinian Authority were to make a deal, it is possible that eventually Hamas will once again gain control of the Palestinian government, and simply ignore the terms of the deal.	75
Palestinians cannot be trusted with a state next door to our cities. They reject us and we cannot assume that they would keep the deal not to acquire military forces. And once they do, it will only be a matter of time until they use them to attack us.	74
We cannot rely on international control of the Walled City and along the Jordan River. Once we relinquish control to international entities, there is no guarantee they won't abandon us and fail to defend our rights and interests.	73
It's not realistic to have two states, because it's just too late. It's impossible to get a large number of settlers out of the West Bank and the Palestinians will never agree to a Swiss cheese state.	58
As a matter of principle, Israel should never give up the West Bank. It is an indispensable part of Eretz Yisrael.	53
It is not necessary for us to accept this deal. Israel is strong enough to maintain itself as a Jewish state, continue to control the West Bank, keep the Palestinians in their current status, and withstand the pressure from the Palestinians and the international community.	51

Palestinians - Pro Arguments

In contrast to the Israelis, all of the arguments in support of the deal were found convincing by a majority, though the majorities were overall slightly smaller than those for the arguments against the deal.

The two strongest arguments—found convincing by six in ten— were that without a Palestinian state, eventually a new Intifada will bring a costly confrontation with Israel; and that lacking an agreement the current severe conditions will continue indefinitely, while a new state could offer a chance to the next generation. Both were found convincing by 59 % and 60% respectively.

Three other arguments fell into a second rank—54% found two convincing, as did 55% of a third. One maintained that “time is not on our side...we keep losing more land to Israeli settlements every year” and thus it is better to have even a limited form of statehood. A second argued that the turmoil resulting from the Arab Spring was to the detriment of the Palestinians, occupying the Arab states’ attention, and so it is better to make a deal now. And a third argument focused on “those who prefer a one-state solution with equal citizenship,” insisting that Israel would never let it happen, so a two-state solution is “the best we can get.” All these arguments were convincing to same-sized modest majorities.

Arguments in Favor of Package Deal Presented to Palestinians only	% Found Convincing
If a Palestinian state is not established now, it is unlikely that Israel will accept a one-state solution and Palestinians will remain under occupation and as refugees for an indefinite period. These conditions are intolerable. A Palestinian state would allow the next generation of Palestinians to live normal lives and to achieve their potential.	60
If we don't have our own state soon, it is only a matter of time before we have another Intifada, creating a costly confrontation with Israel, with uncertain consequences.	59
This proposed package is the best we can get for a two state solution. For those who prefer a one state solution with equal citizenship, it is unrealistic to hold out for it, because Israelis would never accept such an outcome and are in a position to prevent it from happening.	55
The uprisings in the Arab world are likely to endure for years to come, and Arabs are likely to be preoccupied so that they will not be in a position to help us. We cannot assume that time will be on our side, so it is better to make a deal now.	54
Time is not on our side; without an agreement on a two-state solution, we keep losing more land to Israeli settlements every year. It is better to have a state, even with limits, rather than the status quo and the uncertainty of the future.	54

Palestinians - Con Arguments

Arguments against the package deal were all found convincing by majorities, but, in every case, by about six in ten—all within a narrow range (57-63%). The strongest argument concerned the refugees; interestingly, the weakest argument concerned the claim to all of historic Palestine.

The argument found convincing by the greatest number held that “any solution that does not allow all Palestinian refugees to return to their original towns in Israel itself is unjust and simply unacceptable.” Sixty-three percent found it convincing (31% very).

Sixty- percent found convincing the argument that a Palestinian state must be able to have military forces, and an agreement without this is unacceptable; 60%, one that said “time is on our side” because eventually Israel will face international isolation if it does not accept Palestinians as full citizens; and 59%, one (also presented to Israelis) that the two-state solution has come too late.

The least favored argument (though it garnered a majority) demanded that Palestinians hold out for the totality of Palestine, and that the status quo was preferable to accepting 22 percent of their land. This was convincing to 57%.

Arguments Against Package Deal Presented to Palestinians only	% Found Convincing
Any solution that does not allow all Palestinian refugees to return to their original towns in Israel itself is unjust and simply unacceptable.	63
It is unacceptable for the Palestinian state not to have military forces. The ability to defend ourselves is essential to being a sovereign state. Moreover Israelis cannot be trusted. They would still have the upper hand and the superior military forces to continue to dominate us without the risk of any cost to them.	60
It is not necessary for us to accept this deal. Time is on our side, even if we have to endure more occupation in the meantime. Eventually, Israel will be forced to accept Palestinians as full citizens or face international isolation.	60
It’s just not realistic to have two states, because it’s just too late. It’s impossible to get all those settlers out of the West Bank and we will never agree to a Swiss cheese state.	59
The Palestinians should have all of historic Palestine. It is better to stay with the status quo than to accept living on only 22 percent of what the Palestinians rightfully deserve.	57

CONCLUSIONS ABOUT THE PACKAGE DEAL

Israelis

Although the arguments against the package deal were found substantially more convincing, a modest majority of Israelis (and half of Israeli Jews) initially recommended that Israel accept the deal as a framework for more detailed negotiations.

After being presented the eight-point package again, they were given two choices:

- I would recommend accepting this framework for a package deal. However, I would need to see the details, after they are negotiated, before making a final decision.
- I would recommend rejecting such a package deal, even though it would mean ending the negotiations and letting go of the prospect of an agreement for a two state solution.

Faced with this choice, 54% recommended acceptance; among Israeli Jews, responses were divided precisely down the middle (50% for accepting, 50% for rejecting).

Further, among those who initially said they would oppose the deal, only half of them (one in four overall) said they were fundamentally opposed to the terms of the package deal.

Those Israeli Jews who preferred rejection were then asked the reason for their choice—was it because:

- you think it would be better to terminate the negotiations than to accept this framework for a package deal, [or because]
- you think the Palestinian Authority will not really accept such a framework for a package deal, so there is no point in saying that we would accept it?

About a quarter of all Israeli Jews (27%) said they were so sure the Palestinians would not accept the deal that there would be no point in Israel expressing its readiness. Only 23% of Israeli Jews said it would simply be better to terminate the negotiations.

The Israeli Jews who opposed the deal were then asked how Israel should respond if the Palestinians were to accept the deal. Nine percent (of the whole sample) shifted their position to supporting the deal, raising the number expressing support for the deal to 63%.

Palestinians

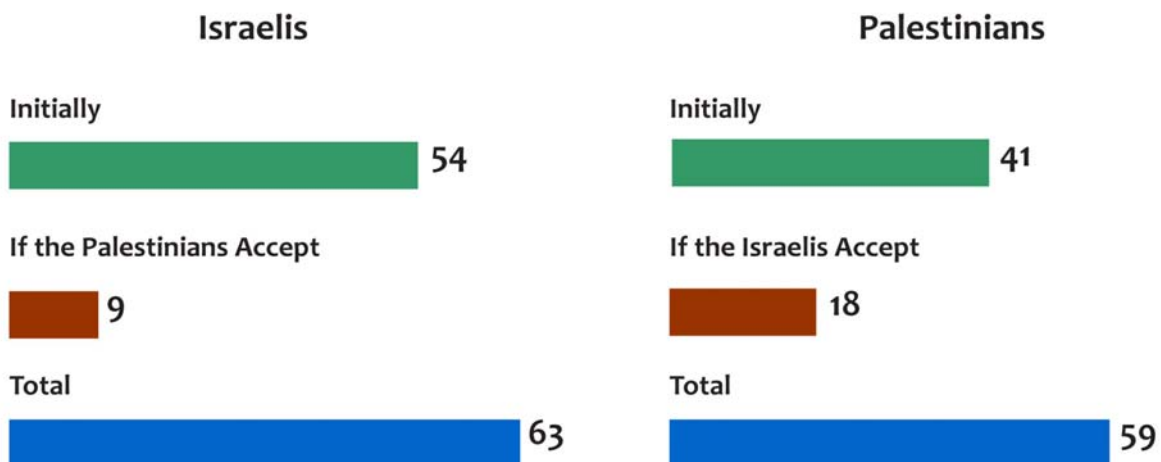
Although the Palestinians found arguments in favor of the package more convincing than did the Israelis, (but still weaker than the arguments against) their initial response to the question of what they would recommend elicited less support for the package. Ultimately, though, a similar number endorsed it.

After being presented the eight-point package again, and given two choices: recommending the framework be accepted and continuing negotiations on that basis, or recommending rejection and terminating the negotiations, just 41% recommended acceptance while 59% recommended rejection.

However it appears that a large number of Palestinians were withholding support out as a strategic move, rather than being fundamentally opposed to the terms, based on the assumption that Israelis would be opposed. Those who preferred rejection were asked whether the reason for their choice was it because “you think it would be better to terminate the negotiations than to accept this framework for a package deal” or because “you think the Israelis will not really accept such a framework for a package deal, so there is no point in saying that we would accept it.” Just over half (31% of the full sample) said they were fundamentally opposed, while just under half (28% of the full sample) said they were so sure the Israelis would not accept the deal that there would be no point in the Palestinians expressing their readiness.

Those who initially said they were opposed to the deal were then asked, how the Palestinians should respond if Israel were to accept the deal. Eighteen percent (of the full sample) said that they would then favor accepting the deal. Combined with the 41% who initially favored accepting the deal, a total of 59% said they would favor the deal under one of these conditions— a level strikingly similar to the Israelis.

SUPPORT FOR PACKAGE DEAL



IDENTIFYING WHICH ELEMENTS WERE MOST OBJECTIONABLE

Israelis

The four in ten Israelis who consistently opposed the package deal were asked what two elements of it were most unacceptable. The element that was most widely cited—by 59%—was the division of Jerusalem with the Walled City being under international control. The second most widely cited was establishing a sovereign Palestinian state based on 1967 with land swaps—cited by 55%.

None of the other provisions were cited by more than two in five. These included, in descending order: the stipulations on refugees, the link between the West Bank and Gaza, security in the Jordan River valley, the form that Palestinians' recognition of Israel would take, the formal end to the conflict, and relations and trade with Arab states.

Palestinians

When the four in ten Palestinians who consistently opposed the deal were asked what two elements of it were most unacceptable, none of the elements were cited by a majority of this group. As with the Israelis, the most commonly cited (by 38%) was the division of Jerusalem with international control of the Walled City. The second most frequently cited (by 35%) was Palestinian recognition of Israel as a state of the Jewish people and of all of its citizens.

None of the other provisions were cited by more than three in ten of this group. These were, in descending order: the nature of the West Bank-Gaza link; the boundaries of the Palestinian state (i.e., the 1967 borders with land swaps); that the new state would have a security force but no military and would have international forces in some locations; the stipulations on refugees; the formal end to the conflict; and that Arab states would recognize and trade with Israel.

FINAL STATUS ISSUES CONSIDERED SEPARATELY

In a separate series of questions respondents were asked to consider some of the final status issues separately. For four important areas—the status of Jerusalem, the settlements, security forces in the Jordan River valley, and refugees—respondents were told: “Suppose the parties can agree on all the other issues, and the terms are to your satisfaction, but the last sticking point is the issue of [each of the above in turn].” For each area they were offered several proposals and asked to rate how acceptable each one was on a 0-10 scale, with 0 being completely unacceptable, 5 being just tolerable and 10 being completely acceptable.

In each case they evaluated a series of options in isolation, including ones that were quite desirable and required much less accommodation than the terms of the package deal. In each area, one proposal offered a desirable maximum; another proposal was close to the terms in the package deal; and others offered more alternatives. In this context, some Israelis and Palestinians still supported the terms of the package deal, while others reverted to a more hardline position.

Jerusalem

Israelis

As would be expected, for the option of complete Israeli sovereignty over all of Jerusalem 77% gave a score from 5 to 10 (just tolerable to very acceptable).

The second most acceptable approach, however, was similar to the package—Palestinian sovereignty over Arab neighborhoods, Israel's over Jewish neighborhoods, and a special international status for the walled Old City. Fifty percent gave this option a score from 5 to 10 (Israeli Jews, 43%). Just 29% said it was completely unacceptable (rated it zero), with 33% of Israeli Jews taking this position.

A third proposal divided sovereignty in the same way as the second proposal, but set up joint Israeli-Palestinian sovereignty over the Old City. This got a 5-to-10 score from 47% (Israeli Jews, 41%), with 32% finding it completely unacceptable. Finally, simply giving Israelis sovereignty over West Jerusalem and Israelis sovereignty over East Jerusalem was found tolerable by just 40% (Israel: Jews, 32%), with 37% finding it completely unacceptable.

Palestinians

None of the plans for Jerusalem was found tolerable by a majority of Palestinians. The most acceptable plan—though still found unacceptable by a modest majority--was to have Palestinians have sovereignty over Arab neighborhoods, Israel have sovereignty over Jewish neighborhoods, and shared Palestinian-Israeli sovereignty over the walled Old City. Nearly half—48%—found it at least tolerable. But just 20% found it completely unacceptable (rated it zero).

The plan closest to the one accepted in the package—divided sovereignty and international status for the walled Old City—was found tolerable by just 37% in this context, with 25% finding it completely unacceptable.

Simply dividing the city (with no other elaboration) was tolerable to 32%. Israeli sovereignty over the whole of Jerusalem was tolerable to only 9%.

Settlements

Israelis

Naturally, the desirable maximum offered—that all Israeli settlers would remain and be under Israeli sovereignty—got the highest score, with 68% giving it from 5 to 10.

The second highest, though, went to the proposal closest to the package—that those settlers deep inside the West Bank would be removed, Israel would annex major settlement blocks near the 1967 lines, and land swaps would be agreed to compensate for this. This elicited a rather robust 61% finding it tolerable.

There was almost no difference in views about the third and fourth options: that the package proposal would go forward, but settlers deep in the West Bank could remain under Palestinian sovereignty (45%, at least tolerable), or that all settlers would simply be evacuated (43% at least tolerable). But just 31% and 35%, respectively, found them completely unacceptable.

Palestinians

Offered the desirable maximum of complete evacuation for settlers, 71% gave this a 5-to-10 score.

The proposal closest to the package deal— for Israel to annex major settlement blocks closest to the 1967 boundaries with agreed upon land swaps, with deep settlements evacuated—was found tolerable by just 46% in this context. But just 17% found it completely unacceptable.

Interestingly a similar proposal that differs from the previous one only in that the settlements deep in the territories would not be evacuated, but put under Palestinians' sovereignty, did slightly better, with 49% finding it tolerable. Sixteen percent found it completely unacceptable.

Finally, for all Israeli settlers to remain and stay under Israeli sovereignty was tolerable to just 36%.

Forces Along the Jordan River

Israelis

Naturally, the desirable maximum offered—that some Israeli forces would have a presence along the Jordan River indefinitely—received the highest score, with 84% giving it a score from 5 to 10.

However a substantial majority rated as at least tolerable four different options that were more likely to elicit Palestinians' agreement:

- a limited transitional period for Israeli forces (59%)
- a western force, possibly NATO, under US command (57%),
- a joint Israeli-Palestinian force (56%).
- a UN force (54%)

Interestingly, even the position that no foreign forces would be stationed inside the Palestinian state did not do as badly as might be expected with 47% saying it would be at least tolerable. Twenty-eight percent found it completely unacceptable.

Palestinians

Offered the desirable maximum of no foreign forces stationed in the new state, 70% gave this a rating from 5 to 10. All proposals that involved foreign forces along the Jordan River were found unacceptable by majorities.

Though an international force was accepted in the package, in this context only 40% found tolerable a UN force and 35% found tolerable a Western force under US command, but just 24% found a UN force completely unacceptable, and 31% found a Western force completely unacceptable.

Forty percent found tolerable a joint Israeli-Palestinian force along the Jordan. The least favored options were a temporary Israeli force (30%) and a permanent Israeli force (17%).

Refugees

Israelis

Seventy percent gave a 5-to-10 rating to the desirable maximum—that refugees could settle in the new Palestinian state, but not in Israel.

The second most acceptable proposal was the one similar to the package: that in addition to refugees settling in the new Palestinian state, a small number of refugees would be permitted to settle within Israel. In this context, just 40% found it tolerable. But just 30% found it completely unacceptable.

For refugees to be allowed to settle in either country as they wish, however, was tolerable to only 29%, with a robust 49% finding it completely unacceptable.

Though compensation to refugees for lost property was accepted in the context of the package deal, in this context just 42% found it tolerable, but just 32% found it completely unacceptable.

Another issue related to the refugee issue is that many Palestinians have insisted that their right of return be recognized, independent of the question of where refugees return to or compensation for lost property. This issue was addressed in a separate question that offered a choice of two statements. The argument for recognizing the right of return in this way was presented in the statement “I have no problem with acknowledging a right of return as long as all refugee claims are resolved without a significant number of refugees returning to Israel, and there are no further claims in the future.” However only 45%—37% of Israeli Jews—endorsed it. Instead, 55%—63% of Israeli Jews—chose the statement “I would never accept an agreement that acknowledges a Palestinian right of return, even if all other issues are resolved to my satisfaction.”

Palestinians

Understandably 73% gave a 5-to-10 rating to the proposal that refugees be able to settle in either Israel or the Palestinian state.

However, 66% also found tolerable the proposal most like the package, with most refugees settling in the new state and a small number permitted to settle in Israel.

Interestingly, a majority (55%) even found tolerable the proposal for refugees to only be allowed to settle in a new Palestinian state.

On the question of providing refugees compensation for lost property, 65% found it tolerable, though some may have seen this as a capitulation on the right of return.

On the question of acknowledging the right of return an overwhelming majority insisted that it be recognized and, in this context a majority insisted that it be implemented in maximal terms. Asked to choose among three statements a 59% majority chose “I would never accept any agreement that does not acknowledge the Palestinian right of return and allow Palestinians to return to their original towns.” A third (33%) also insisted that it be recognized but showed more flexibility in its implementation, choosing the position, “I would never accept any agreement that does not acknowledge the right of return, but I support settlement of the claims to those rights through a package that includes compensation for lost property and return to a Palestinian state.” Only 8% chose the position that “If all other issues are settled to my satisfaction, I am prepared to compromise on the Palestinian right of return.”

Transportation Link between West Bank and Gaza

Israelis

Views were evenly divided on what should be the form of the transportation link between the West Bank and Gaza. A tunnel was chosen by 34%, a raised bridge by 33%, and a highway by 33%.

Palestinians

A clear majority of Palestinians (58%) preferred a highway as the transportation link between the West Bank and Gaza. Support for a bridge was 25%, and for a tunnel 17%.

Israel as a State of the Jewish People

A recurring point of contention has been over whether the Palestinians will accept Israel as a Jewish state. Israelis have at times insisted that the Palestinians explicitly accept Israel as a Jewish state. More recently, an alternative formulation has been put forward, and was included in the package, of recognizing Israel as “‘a state of the Jewish people and all its citizens’--thus assuring equality of non-Jewish citizens.”

Another point of contention is whether the Palestinians should be required to provide this recognition before the conclusion of negotiations or as part of a deal on all final status issues.

Israelis and Palestinians were asked to evaluate four different options on these issues on a 0-to-10 scale, in which 0 was not at all acceptable, 10 was very acceptable, and 5 was just tolerable.

- For Palestinians to accept Israel as “a Jewish state” before conclusion of negotiations
- For Palestinians to accept Israel as “a Jewish state” as part of a deal on all final status issues
- For Palestinians to accept Israel as “a state of the Jewish people and of all its citizens,” thus assuring equality of non-Jewish citizens, before conclusion of negotiations.
- For Palestinians to accept Israel as “a state of the Jewish people and of all its citizens,” thus assuring equality of non-Jewish citizens, as part of a deal on all final status issues

Israelis

Israelis were fairly flexible on this issue. For the most accommodating option—for the Palestinians to accept Israel as “ ‘a state of the Jewish people and all its citizens’—thus assuring equality of non-Jewish citizens,” and for them to clarify this acceptance as part of a deal on all final status issues, rather than necessarily before the conclusion of negotiations—a clear majority of 70% found it at least tolerable with 55% finding it acceptable (i.e. scored it above 5). Just 14% found it completely unacceptable.

Palestinians

Palestinians were far more resistant. Even the option that was accepted as part of the package deal—the Palestinians recognizing Israel as “‘a state of the Jewish people and all its citizens,’ thus assuring equality of non-Jewish citizens,” as part of a deal on all final status issues—in this context, was found tolerable by just 29%. However, just 32% found it completely unacceptable.

SCENARIOS FOR THE FUTURE OTHER THAN A TWO-STATE SOLUTION

Support for the package deal, despite the apparent discomfort with many of the elements, may be related to a lack of an attractive alternative to the two-state solution. Asked to consider the likelihood of eight different scenarios if the two-state solution is deemed no longer possible, none of the alternatives were found both likely and attractive by a majority of Israelis or Palestinians.

Both Israelis and Palestinians were first asked to assess the likelihood of eight possible scenarios and then to evaluate how they felt about each one on a scale of -5 to +5.

Israelis

By far, the scenario seen as the most likely was that there would be more intense conflict and instability for years to come, seen as likely by three quarters (77%). Seven in ten (71%) saw it likely that the status quo would continue indefinitely with little change. All other six scenarios were seen as quite unlikely.

Asked how they would feel about each scenario, none of the eight scenarios elicited positive feelings in a majority and most elicited negative feelings.

There were several one-state scenarios. The idea that Israel and the Palestinian Territories would become one state with Palestinians as equal citizens was both undesirable, with 61% giving it a score between -1 and -5, and unlikely (84% unlikely). That a single state would come about, but Palestinians would have an unequal status, was also undesirable for 54% and quite unlikely (70%). That Israel would annex the West Bank, but not Gaza, and then offer West Bank Palestinians full citizenship got a similar rating (undesirable for 57%, 77% unlikely).

Even a scenario of complete dominance (“Israel would be so strong that Palestinians would gradually conclude that resistance is futile” and emigrate) was not attractive (undesirable for 40% and neutral for another 17%) and also implausible (71% unlikely).

These findings indicate that despite the reluctance evoked by the two-state solution, it is difficult to find an alternative vision that has any magnetism for Israelis.

Scenarios for the Future Other Than a Two-State Solution – Israelis	See as likely	See as Positive
There would be more intense conflict and instability for years to come.	77%	30%
The status quo would continue indefinitely with little change.	61	40
Israel would annex part of the West Bank, and cede territories most heavily populated by Palestinians to Jordan.	30	34
Israel and the Palestinian Territories would become one state, but Palestinians would not be fully equal citizens in order to maintain Israel as a Jewish state.	30	30
Israel would be so strong that Palestinians would gradually conclude that resistance is futile, with some deciding to permanently leave for another country, thus preserving a Jewish majority.	29	43
Israel would eventually annex the West Bank, but not Gaza, and expel some Palestinians from the West Bank to assure a robust Jewish majority.	27	30
Israel would eventually annex the West Bank, but not Gaza, and then offer Palestinians in the West Bank full citizenship.	23	24
Israel and the Palestinian Territories would become one state with Israelis and Palestinians as equal citizens.	16	21

Palestinians

Among Palestinians eight in ten (81%) thought it likely that the status quo would continue indefinitely with little change. That there would be more intense conflict and instability for years to come, was seen as likely by three quarters (76%).

In contrast to the Israelis, a significant majority (53%) saw some likelihood that Israel could become one state, though more (60%) thought this would mean that Palestinians would not be treated as equal citizens. Modest to significant majorities also saw some likelihood that Israel would eventually annex the West Bank (52-57%)—or even that Israel would be so strong that Palestinians would conclude resistance was futile and emigrate in great numbers, thus preserving the Jewish majority (54%).

But asked how they would feel about each scenario none of the eight scenarios elicited positive feelings in a majority, and most elicited negative feelings. Interestingly, even the scenario that Israel and the Palestinian territories would become one state with Palestinians, as equal citizens did not elicit positive feelings: only 30% gave it a score above 0 (neutral 21%, negative 49%).

(One could speculate that the lack of any reference to the refugees in this scenario may have contributed to this score.)

The continued status quo and ongoing conflict elicited negative feelings (-1 to -5) from 58% and 61% respectively. The West Bank annexation scenarios were both rated negatively, though one involved full citizenship for Palestinians (55%), while the other involved expulsion of some of them to Jordan (63%). The scenario in which Israel would cede some land to Jordan elicited negative feelings in 56%, but interestingly, this was seen as the least likely compared to all the other scenarios (52% saw some likelihood).

Scenarios for the future other than a two-state solution – Palestinians	See as likely	See as Positive
The status quo would continue indefinitely with little change.	81%	28%
There would be more intense conflict and instability for years to come.	76	25
Israel and the Palestinian Territories would become one state, but Palestinians would not be fully equal citizens in order to maintain Israel as a Jewish state.	60	22
Israel would eventually annex the West Bank, but not Gaza, and expel some Palestinians from the West Bank to assure a robust Jewish majority.	57	23
Israel would be so strong that Palestinians would gradually conclude that resistance is futile, with some deciding to permanently leave for another country, thus preserving a Jewish majority.	54	22
Israel and the Palestinian Territories would become one state with Israelis and Palestinians as equal citizens.	53	30
Israel would eventually annex the West Bank, but not Gaza, and then offer Palestinians in the West Bank full citizenship.	53	26
Israel would annex part of the West Bank, and cede territories most heavily populated by Palestinians to Jordan.	52	29

MULTILATERAL ENDORSEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE DEAL

Respondents were presented a description of a possible UN Security Council resolution that would follow a settlement agreement and asked whether they would see it as positive, negative, or neither:

Suppose the Israelis and Palestinians agree to a comprehensive deal. What if the UN Security Council were to then endorse the deal with a new resolution that would supersede all past UN resolutions on the conflict. And suppose this resolution would bind both sides, regardless of changes in their leadership?

Israelis

Israelis express only moderate interest in having the UN Security Council endorse a possible comprehensive deal with a resolution that would supersede all past resolutions. Almost half of Israelis (48%) felt they would see this as positive (17% very positive). Only 19% saw it as negative (8% very), and a third (33%) felt it was neither positive nor negative.

Palestinians

Palestinians also expressed only moderate interest in having the UN Security Council endorse a possible comprehensive deal. Four in ten (39%) felt they would see this as positive (9% very positive). A quarter (24%) saw it as negative (7% very), while over a third (37%) found it neither negative nor positive. Thus if the Israeli's reaction was lukewarm, Palestinians' reaction was a little cooler.

Palestinians were also asked to suppose a comprehensive deal was struck and that the Arab League then supported it. About a third (35%) said such a move by the Arab League would give them more confidence in the deal, but 65% said it would make no difference to them.

POST-DEAL ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN RELATIONS

Respondents on both sides were asked:

Suppose Israel and the Palestinian Authority do come to an agreement on a deal that leads to two states. Once these two states exist, which of the following would be your preference:

- a. Keep interactions with the other side to a minimum, limited to necessary economic, trade, security and other functional tasks.
- b. Have more societal interactions, including those aimed at building greater understanding and better relations

They were also asked:

Once a two state system were fully established, would you support or oppose “a truth and reconciliation commission” like ones that have occurred in a number of countries after a period of strife? It would establish and air the facts of the painful past, for both Israelis and Palestinians, not for purposes of blame or punishment, but with the goal of fostering greater mutual understanding and reconciliation.

Israelis

If Israel and the Palestinian Authority were to come to agreement on a deal that leads to two states, views are divided on whether the two states should keep interactions to a minimum or have more societal interactions. Fifty-one percent wanted to “keep interactions with the other side to a minimum, limited to necessary economic, trade, security and other functional tasks,” while a statistically equivalent 49% wanted to “have more societal interactions including those aimed at building greater understanding and better relations.” There were noteworthy differences between Israeli Jews and Israeli Arabs. Among Jews, 55% wanted a limited, functional relationship while 45% wanted more interactions. Among Arabs, however, 72% wanted more interactions.

A large majority (67%) would favor a truth and reconciliation commission.

Palestinians

Among Palestinians six in ten (62%) wanted to “keep interactions with the other side to a minimum, limited to necessary economic, trade, security and other functional tasks,” while 38% wanted to “have more societal interactions, including those aimed at building greater understanding and better relations.”

On the truth and reconciliation commission, views were divided, with 51% supporting and 49% opposing the idea.