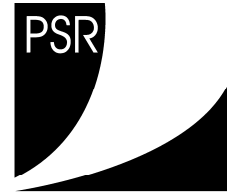




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PRESS RELEASE

Joint Israeli Palestinian Poll, August 2009

Israelis are more apprehensive and Palestinians somewhat more favorable about US involvement in the Peace Process compared to their expectations last December after Obama's election

These are the results of the most recent poll conducted jointly by the Harry S. Truman Research Institute for the Advancement of Peace at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and the Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research in Ramallah, between August 9-15, 2009. This joint survey was conducted with the support of the Ford Foundation Cairo office and the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung in Ramallah and Jerusalem.

Following the intensified American diplomatic activity in the region in recent months, a majority of Palestinians think that Obama's policy is more supportive of Israel (64%). Among Israelis 40% think Obama's policy is more supportive of the Palestinians; only 12% think it is more supportive of Israel. Compared to a poll conducted December 2008, in proximity to Obama's election, Israelis are less enthusiastic about American involvement in the region, more worried about the continuation of American support, and less willing to accept American pressure. Palestinians see now American involvement somewhat more favorably than in December.

Following Fateh's Sixth Congress held last week, 27% of the Palestinians think the new Fateh leadership will be more able than the previous one to end Israeli occupation, 28% think it will be less able, and a plurality of 38% think there will be no difference. In light of the resolutions taken by the Fateh Congress, a majority 59% of Israelis do not believe Israel has a partner for peace negotiations.

Given the recent emphasis the US attaches to the Arab League (Saudi) plan, our poll examined the two publics' attitudes toward it, as well as their attitudes toward the Clinton (Geneva) parameters for an Israeli-Palestinian final status agreement. A majority of 64% of the Palestinians support the Saudi plan, up from 57% in June. Among Israelis, 40% support the Saudi plan in the current poll, up from 36% in June. The support in both publics for the overall Clinton package and for most of its components has been steadily declining, with a minority of 38% supporting the package now among Palestinians, and 46% among Israelis.

The Palestinian sample size was 1270 adults interviewed face-to-face in the West Bank, East Jerusalem and Gaza Strip in 127 randomly selected locations between August 13 and 15, 2009. The margin of error is 3%. The Israeli sample includes 600 adult Israelis interviewed by phone in Hebrew Arabic or Russian between August 9 and 13, 2009. The margin of error is 4.5%. The poll was planned and supervised by Prof. Yaacov Shamir, the Harry S. Truman Research Institute for the Advancement of Peace and the Department of Communication and Journalism at the Hebrew University, and Prof. Khalil Shikaki, Director of the Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research (PSR).

For further details on the Palestinian survey contact PSR director, Prof. Khalil Shikaki or Walid Ladadweh, at tel. 02-2964933 or email pcpsr@pcpsr.org. On the Israeli survey, contact Prof Yaacov Shamir at tel. 03-6419429 or email jshamir@mscc.huji.ac.il.

MAIN FINDINGS

(A) US policy toward the conflict following the intensified involvement of the US in the region

In December 2008, immediately after the election of Barack Obama for president, we obtained Palestinians' and Israelis' expectations regarding the policy the new Obama administration will implement in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Eight months later things begin to clarify somewhat with numerous visits of US officials in the region, demands directed toward Israel to accept a two-state solution and cease all construction in the settlements and requests from Arab leaders to take confidence building steps toward Israel. We decided therefore to repeat some of the December questions to see how these steps have affected the two publics. Our findings indicate that Israelis are now more apprehensive and Palestinians somewhat more favorable about American involvement compared to their expectations in December.

- 12% of Israelis and 64% of Palestinians think that Obama's policy is more supportive of Israel; 40% and 7% respectively think it is more supportive of the Palestinians, and 38% and 23% respectively think it is supportive of both sides equally.
- 49% of Israelis and 61% of Palestinians want now the US to play a more active role in the conflict, 34% of Israelis and 29% among Palestinians do not want the US to intervene, and 14% and 6% respectively want the US to continue to play its current role in the peace process. In December 2008, 49% of Israelis and 57% of Palestinians wanted the US to play a more active role in the conflict, 31% of Israelis and 35% among Palestinians did not want the US to intervene, and 18% and 4% respectively wanted the US to continue to play its current role in the peace process.
- If indeed the US plays a more active role, 42% of the Israelis and 56% of the Palestinians expect this involvement to be successful, while 30% and 26% respectively think it will be a failure. 18% of the Israelis and 15% of Palestinians think it will have no impact. In December 2008, 49% of the Israelis and 49% of the Palestinians expected in December 2008 this involvement to be successful, while 22% and 30% respectively thought it will be a failure. 23% of the Israelis and 16% of Palestinians thought it will have no impact.
- 61% of Palestinians think that Israel would benefit more if the US intervened strongly in the peace process. In December 66% of Palestinians thought so. Among Israelis, 35% say that both sides would benefit, 33% - that the Palestinians would benefit and only 12% - that Israel would benefit from such intervention. In December 2008, 39% said that both sides would benefit, 25% - that the Palestinians would benefit and 14% - that Israel would benefit from such intervention.
- 36% of Israelis think that the US will decrease its military economic and political support of Israel if Israel continues to be reluctant about US policy in the region; 7% think US support will increase and 51% think it will not change. This compares to 19% of Israelis who thought in December that the US will decrease its support of Israel; 15% who thought US support will increase, and 59% who thought it will not change

B) 2009 Fateh Congress

- Following Fateh's Sixth Congress held last week, Palestinians' views of Fateh's prospects are quite mixed. 39% of the Palestinians expect Fateh to emerge stronger and unified, 22% expect it will emerge weaker and fragmented, and 34% think it will remain as it is today.
- 40% of the Palestinians think the new leadership of Fateh will be more able than the previous leadership to achieve reconciliation with Hamas, 22% think it will be less able, and 32% think it will be the same as the previous one.

- 43% of the Palestinians think the new leadership of Fateh will be more able than the previous leadership to fight corruption within Fateh, 21% think it will be less able, and 30% think it will be the same as the previous one.
- 27% of the Palestinians think the new leadership of Fateh will be more able than the previous leadership to end Israeli occupation; 28% think it will be less able, and 38% think it will be the same as the previous one. In light of the resolutions taken by the Fateh Congress, 59% of Israelis do not believe Israel has a partner for peace negotiations; 27% think it has a partner.

(C) Negotiation Tracks on the Agenda

The Saudi Plan

- 54% of the Israelis oppose and 40% support the Saudi initiative which calls for Arab recognition of and normalization of relations with Israel after it ends its occupation of Arab territories occupied in 1967 and after the establishment of a Palestinian state. The plan calls for Israeli retreat from all territories occupied in 1967 including Gaza the West Bank, Jerusalem and the Golan Heights, and the establishment of a Palestinian state. The refugees problem will be resolved through negotiation in a just and agreed upon manner and in accordance with UN resolution 194. In return, all Arab states will recognize Israel and its right to secure borders, will sign peace treaties with her and establish normal diplomatic relation. In our June 2009 poll 56% of the Israelis opposed the plan while 36% supported it. Among Palestinians, 64% support the plan and 34% oppose it; 57% supported it in June and 40% opposed it.
- 40% of the Israelis support yielding to American pressure to accept and implement the Arab (Saudi) Peace Initiative, while 52% oppose it. Among Palestinians 58% accept such pressure while 39% will reject it. In December 2008, 44% of Israelis thought Israel should accept such American pressure and 50% thought it should reject such pressure. Among Palestinians 56% believed they should accept American pressure to adopt and implement the Saudi Plan, 39% said they should reject such pressure.
- As to their assessments of the other side's response to such pressure: 29% of the Israelis believe Palestinians will reject and 58% think they will accept it, while 49% of the Palestinians think Israel will reject and 46% think it will accept it. In the December 2008 poll, 39% of Israeli believed that the Palestinians would reject American pressure, and 48% believed that the Palestinians would accept American pressure. 43% of Palestinians thought that most Israelis would reject such pressure, 49% believed that most Israelis would accept it. These changes in perceptions reflect both sides' beliefs that the recent American activity in the region has turned against Israel.

Clinton/Geneva Parameters

The Clinton parameters for a Palestinian-Israeli permanent settlement were presented by President Clinton at a meeting with Israeli and Palestinian officials almost nine years ago, on December 23, 2000, following the collapse of the July 2000 Camp David summit. The Geneva Initiative, along similar lines, was made public around the end of 2003. These parameters address the most fundamental issues which underlie the Palestinian-Israeli conflict: (1) Final borders and territorial exchange; (2) Refugees; (3) Jerusalem; (4) A demilitarized Palestinian state; (5) Security arrangements; and (6) End of conflict. We addressed these issues several times in the past since December 2003, and in the current poll we revisited these crucial issues following the intensified diplomatic activity of the US with regard to the conflict and the efforts to resume the peace talks between the parties.

- The findings indicate a decline in support over time for the overall package and most of its components on both sides.
- Israelis are now split half between support and opposition to the overall package. This minority level of support (46%) represents a significant decline compared to the consistent majority support for the package among Israelis since December 2004 .
- Among Palestinians 38% support the overall package in the current poll, a decline from 41% support in December 2008.
- Since we have been tracking these issues in 2003, there was only once majority support for this package on both sides, in December 2004, shortly after the death of Arafat which was followed by a surge of optimism and considerable moderation in both publics. Among Israelis there was consistent majority support for the Clinton package since 2004 through 2008, but this majority has been shrinking over time.

Below we detail support and opposition to the individual items in the Clinton permanent status package.

(1) Final Borders and Territorial Exchange

Among Palestinians 49% support or strongly support and 50% oppose or strongly oppose an Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank and the Gaza Strip with the exception of some settlement areas in less than 3% of the West Bank that would be swapped with an equal amount of territory from Israel in accordance with a map that was presented to the Palestinian respondents. The map was identical to that presented to respondents in December 2008, when support for this compromise, with its map, stood at 54% and opposition at 44%.

Among Israelis 47% support and 48% oppose a Palestinian state in the entirety of Judea, Samaria and the Gaza Strip except for several large blocks of settlements in 3% of the West Bank which will be annexed to Israel. Israel will evacuate all other settlements, and the Palestinians will receive in return territory of similar size along the Gaza Strip. In December 2008, similarly 46% of the Israelis supported this component while 48% opposed it.

(2) Refugees

Among Palestinians, 37% support and 61% oppose a refugee settlement in which both sides agree that the solution will be based on UN resolutions 194 and 242. The refugees would be given five choices for permanent residency. These are: the Palestinian state and the Israeli areas transferred to the Palestinian state in the territorial exchange mentioned above; no restrictions would be imposed on refugee return to these two areas. Residency in the other three areas (in host countries, third countries, and Israel) would be subject to the decision of these states. As a base for its decision Israel will consider the average number of refugees admitted to third countries like Australia, Canada, Europe, and others. All refugees would be entitled to compensation for their “refugeehood” and loss of property. In December 2008, 40% agreed with an identical compromise while 58% opposed it.

Among Israelis 36% support such an arrangement and 58% oppose it. In December 2008, 40% supported it and 54% opposed.

(3) Jerusalem

In the Palestinian public 31% support and 68% oppose a Jerusalem compromise in which East Jerusalem would become the capital of the Palestinian state with Arab neighborhoods coming under Palestinian sovereignty and Jewish neighborhoods coming under Israeli sovereignty. The Old City (including al Haram al Sharif) would come under Palestinian sovereignty with the exception of the Jewish Quarter and the Wailing Wall that would come under Israeli sovereignty. In December 2008, an identical compromise obtained 36% support and 63% opposition.

Among Israelis, 34% agree and 62% disagree to this arrangement in which the Arab neighborhoods in Jerusalem including the old city and the Temple Mount will come under Palestinian sovereignty, the Jewish neighborhoods including the Jewish quarter and the Wailing Wall will come under Israeli sovereignty, East Jerusalem will become the capital of the Palestinian state and West Jerusalem the capital of Israel. In December 2008, 40% supported this arrangement and 60% opposed it.

(4) Demilitarized Palestinian State

Among Palestinians 24% support and 76% oppose the establishment of an independent Palestinian state that would have no army, but would have a strong security force and would have a multinational force deployed in it to ensure its security and safety. Israel and Palestine would be committed to end all forms of violence directed against each other. A similar compromise received in December 2008 27% support, and opposition reached 73%.

This item receives the lowest level of support by Palestinians. Unlike the refugees and Jerusalem components, this issue has not received due attention in public discourse, as it should, since it may become a major stumbling block in the efforts to reach a settlement.

Among Israelis 56% support and 40% oppose this arrangement compared to 64% support and 33% opposition obtained in December 2008.

(5) Security Arrangements

In the Palestinian public 34% support and 64% oppose a compromise whereby the Palestinian state would have sovereignty over its land, water, and airspace, but Israel would have the right to use the Palestinian airspace for training purposes, and would maintain two early warning stations in the West Bank for 15 years. A multinational force would remain in the Palestinian state and in its border crossings

for an indefinite period of time. The task of the multinational force would be to monitor the implementation of the agreement, and to monitor territorial borders and coast of the Palestinian state including the presence at its international crossings. In December 2008, 35% of the Palestinians supported this parameter while 64% opposed it.

In the Israeli public 49% support and 44% oppose this arrangement compared to 56% who supported it and 40% who opposed it in December 2008.

(6) End of Conflict

In the Palestinian public 55% support and 44% oppose a compromise on ending the conflict that would state that when the permanent status agreement is fully implemented, it will mean the end of the conflict and no further claims will be made by either side. The parties will recognize Palestine and Israel as the homelands of their respective peoples. These figures are identical figures to those received in December 2008.

In the Israeli public 68% support and 28% oppose this component in the final status framework. In December 2008, similarly, 67% of the Israelis supported it while 29% opposed it.

The Whole Package

Among Palestinians 38% support and 61% oppose the whole package combining the elements as one permanent status settlement. In December 2008, 41% supported and 57% opposed such a package.

Among Israelis 46% support and 46% oppose all the above features together taken as one combined package. In December 2008, 52% supported and 43% opposed such a package.

It is important to see that the pattern of support for the overall package is more than the sum of its parts, suggesting that people’s calculus is compensatory and trade-offs are considered. Despite strong reservations regarding some of the components, the overall package always receives greater support in both publics, where the desirable components and the chance of reaching a permanent status agreement seem to compensate for the undesirable parts.

Summary Table: Support for Clinton’s Permanent Settlement Framework 2003-2009								
		Dec 03	Dec 04	Dec 05	Dec 06	Dec 07	Dec 08	Aug 09
1) Borders and Territorial Exchange	ISR	47%	55%	53%	44%	46%	46%	47%
	PAL	57%	63%	55%	61%	56%	54%	49%
2) Refugees	ISR	35%	44%	43%	38%	44%	40%	36%
	PAL	25%	46%	40%	41%	39%	40%	37%
3) Jerusalem	ISR	41%	39%	38%	38%	36%	40%	34%
	PAL	46%	44%	33%	39%	36%	36%	31%
4) Demilitarized State	ISR	61%	68%	69%	62%	61%	64%	56%
	PAL	36%	27%	20%	28%	23%	27%	24%
5) Security Arrangements	ISR	50%	61%	62%	51%	53%	56%	49%
	PAL	23%	53%	43%	42%	51%	35%	34%
6) End of Conflict	ISR	66%	76%	80%	68%	66%	67%	68%
	PAL	42%	69%	64%	62%	66%	55%	55%
Overall Package	ISR	47%	64%	64%	52%	53%	52%	46%
	PAL	39%	54%	46%	48%	47%	41%	38%

- 33% of the Israelis estimate that a majority in their society supports the Clinton parameters as a combined final status package; 47% believe that the majority opposes it. These perceptions tap the normative facet of public opinion and indicate that the package has not acquired widespread normative legitimacy in the Israeli public. Among Palestinians 43% believe now that a majority in their society supports the Clinton parameters as a combined final status package and 50% believe that the majority opposes it. In addition a majority among Palestinians correctly assumes that the majority of Israelis oppose the package, while the assessment of Israelis of the Palestinian majority is incorrect: 45% of Israelis think that a majority of Palestinians supports the parameters, and 36% think that a majority opposes them.

- 45% of Israelis think Israel should accept such American pressure and 44% think it should reject such pressure. Among Palestinians 45% believe they should accept American pressure to adopt and implement the Plan, 52% say they should reject such pressure. In December 2008 51% of the Israelis supported yielding to such pressure while 43% opposed it. Among Palestinians 47% accepted such pressure while 49% rejected it.
- Among Israelis, 54% believe that the Palestinians would accept American pressure on this issue, and 32% believe that the Palestinians would reject it. In December 2008 the comparable figures were 48% and 39% respectively. Palestinians are split half in their assessment of Israeli response to American pressure: 48% think Israel would accept and 47% think Israel would reject it. The comparable figures in December 2008 were 56% and 36%.
- Consistent with these results, Palestinians and Israelis do not consider it likely that an independent Palestinian State will be established next to the State of Israel in the next five years. 69% of the Palestinians and 69% among Israelis think that chances for the establishment of an independent Palestinian State next to the State of Israel are non-existent or low; 30% and 28% respectively believe the chances are medium or high. In June 2009, 70% of the Palestinians and 61% among Israelis thought that chances for the establishment of an independent Palestinian State next to the State of Israel are non-existent or low.
- In addition to our systematic assessment of the two sides' support of the Clinton parameters we also examine periodically Israelis' and Palestinians' readiness for a mutual recognition of identity as part of a permanent status agreement and after all issues in the conflict are resolved and a Palestinian State is established. Our current poll shows that 64% of the Israelis support and 31% oppose mutual recognition of Israel as the state for the Jewish people and Palestine as the state for the Palestinian people. Among Palestinians, 49% support and 49% oppose this step.

(D) Conflict management and threat perceptions

- Following the American increased involvement in the conflict in recent months, 61% of the Israelis and 47% of the Palestinians expect that negotiations will resume but some armed attacks will continue. 25% of the Israelis and 29% of the Palestinians think that armed confrontations will not stop and the two sides will not return to negotiations. 9% of the Israelis and 21% of the Palestinians think that negotiations will resume soon enough and armed confrontations will stop.
- 54% of Israelis support concessions on Israel's part (such as stopping the expansion of settlements) in response to Arab countries' confidence building steps toward Israel, such as commercial relations; 39% oppose such steps. Among Palestinians, 41% support and 56% oppose Arab states taking confidence building measures, if it was shown that such measures were necessary to push Israel to make concessions to the Palestinians. 61% among them also do not believe that if Arab countries were to take such measures, this will encourage Israel to make concessions to the Palestinians.
- 38% of Israelis support and 58% oppose the American demand to fully cease all construction in the settlements including that intended to solve needs of natural growth. 63% of Israelis support and 31% oppose the removal of the illegal posts in the West Bank.
- 52% of the Israelis support and 44% oppose talks with Hamas if needed to reach a compromise agreement with the Palestinians. In our June 2009 poll, 50% supported and 48% opposed such talks.
- A sizeable Israeli majority (66%) support and only 30% oppose talks with a national unity government composed jointly of Hamas and Fatah if such a government is reestablished. In June these figures were 62% and 31% respectively.
- 63% of the Israelis support and 27% oppose the release of Israeli Arabs who carried out violent attacks within Israel in return for the release of Gilad Shalit.
- Among Israelis, 50% are worried that they or their family may be harmed by Arabs in their daily life, compared to 61% in June. Among Palestinians 40% fear that their security and safety and that of their family are not assured compared to 45% in June.