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## **Between the U.S. and Israeli Elections: Changes in Israeli Public Opinion on Critical Regional Issues on the Diplomatic Agenda**

### **Views of the Israeli Public on Israeli Security and Resolution of the Arab-Israeli Conflict**

(Survey No. 3 in a series)

**Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs/Dahaf Institute Survey  
December 2012**

#### **Main Points**

- 76% of Israelis (83% of Jews) believe that a withdrawal to the 1967 lines and a division of Jerusalem would not bring about an end of the conflict.
- 61% of the Jewish population believes that defensible borders are more important than peace for assuring Israel's security (up from 49% in 2005).
- 78% of Jews indicated they would change their vote if the party they intended to support indicated that it was prepared to relinquish sovereignty in east Jerusalem. 59% of Jews said the same about the Jordan Valley.

#### **Methodology**

This survey is the third in a series of surveys aimed at scrutinizing trends in the Israeli public's positions on foreign policy and defense and the effects of these positions on intentions about voting for the 19th Knesset. (The first survey was conducted in December 2005, the second at the beginning of June 2011. Those surveys were for the Jewish sector only.)

The findings of the present survey are based on representative-sample responses of the adult population of Israel (N=500). The interviews were conducted by telephone at the end of November 2012.

The main findings are presented below. Bear in mind the following points:

- For each question that was presented to the interviewees, a segmentation of the answers is presented, excluding the percentage of interviewees who did not respond to the question (these constitute the percentage that rounds out the data to 100%).
- The numbers outside the parentheses represent the entire sample; the numbers within the parentheses represent the Jewish sector.

The summary includes the following sections:

- I. Data for the entire sample
- II. An identification of issues on which supporters of the right express "dovish" positions and supporters of the center-left express "hawkish" positions
- III. Trends over time

## **I. Data for the entire sample**

### **1. Attitudes toward the issue of a peace agreement between Israel and the Palestinians**

#### **a. Preconditions and perceptions of the chances of their being accepted**

A clear demand is made for the Palestinians' recognition of the State of Israel as a Jewish state. A further condition—the demand that the Palestinian Authority renounce its demand for the right of return for the Palestinians—was not checked in this survey, but has been verified by a large number of surveys. It emerges from the present survey that only about one-third believe these preconditions would be accepted by the Palestinians. A breakdown of the data follows:

##### **1) Recognition of Israel as a Jewish state**

77% (79% of Jews): it is important that the Palestinians recognize Israel's right to exist as a Jewish state.

Only 33% (27% of Jews) believe that this will happen.

##### **2) Renouncing the Palestinian right of return**

30% believe that the Palestinians will renounce it; 64% do not believe so.

##### **3) Peace in stages or a comprehensive peace in one stage**

Peace in stages: 34% (32% of Jews)

A comprehensive peace, gradual implementation: 46% (47% of Jews)

Neither: 10% (10% of Jews)

#### **b. Assessments of the chances of reaching a peace agreement**

The data presented below show that a large majority (two-thirds to three-quarters) do not believe that a withdrawal to the 1967 lines would bring about an end of the conflict.

##### **1) Is the Palestinian leadership (Fatah and Hamas) capable of making binding decisions on this issue?**

Capable: 26% (17% of Jews)

Incapable: 68% (77% of Jews)

**2) Would a withdrawal to the 1967 borders and the division of Jerusalem bring about an end of the conflict?**

Believe that it would: 22% (15% of Jews)

Believe that it would not: 76% (83% of Jews)

**c. Can one rely on a peace agreement with the Palestinian Authority without Hamas?**

About two-thirds do not believe one could rely on a peace agreement with the Palestinian Authority without Hamas.

One can rely on it: 28% (21% of Jews)

One cannot rely on it: 67% (75% of Jews)

**d. Perceived implications of the developments in Arab countries for the chances for a permanent settlement with the Palestinians and for how long such a settlement would last**

On balance, the effects of the developments in the Arab countries on the readiness to rely on agreements with the Palestinians are negative. The conclusion reached by about half of the interviewees is that even in the framework of a peace agreement, territories should not be returned to the Palestinians.

**1) Implications for the possibility of relying on a peace agreement**

Strengthening of the belief that one could rely on it: 15% (7% of Jews)

No effect: 41% (44% of Jews)

Weakening of the belief: 37% (41% of Jews)

**2) Effect of the Egyptian experience with changes in the demilitarization of Sinai on belief in the demilitarization of the West Bank**

Undermines: 51% (49% of Jews)

Does not undermine: 34% (35% of Jews)

**3) Conclusions about a peace agreement in light of developments in Arab countries**

Intensify the effort to reach a peace agreement with the Palestinians: 21% (16% of Jews)

No connection with what occurs in the Arab world: 25% (26% of Jews)

Territories vital to security should not be returned: 51% ((55% of Jews)

**2. Returning territories to the Palestinians in the framework of a permanent settlement**

**a. What is preferable—defensible borders or a peace agreement?**

About three-quarters of the interviewees say strategic depth has security value, but only about one-half think defensible borders will ensure security more than peace will. About one-third think peace constitutes more of a guarantee of security than defensible borders.

**1) Which is preferable for ensuring security—defensible borders or peace?**

Peace: 36% (26% of Jews)

Defensible borders: 52% (61% of Jews)

Both: 6% (7% of Jews)

Impossible to ensure security: 3% (3% of Jews)

## 2) Importance of strategic depth

It has security value: 74% (72% of Jews)

It has no security value: 21% (23% of Jews)

## 3) Returning territories that have security value

	Territories that overlook Ben-Gurion Airport	Road 443 between Tel Aviv and Jerusalem
Can be returned	18% (11% of Jews)	22% (16% of Jews)
Should not be returned	73% (83% of Jews)	67% (75% of Jews)

## 4) The withdrawal from the Philadelphi Route between Egypt and Gaza (in retrospect)

A wise step: 36% (29% of Jews)

An unwise step: 40% (44% of Jews)

### b. Willingness to return territories

About two-thirds of the interviewees oppose a withdrawal to the 1967 borders even in return for a peace agreement and even if the agreement includes an end-of-conflict declaration by all the Arab states.

### 1) Withdrawal to the 1967 borders in return for a peace agreement

	No mention of an end of the conflict	All Arab states declare an end of the conflict
The territories should be returned	26% (18% of Jews)	29% (19% of Jews)
The territories should not be returned	68% (76% of Jews)	66% (76% of Jews)

## 2) Attitudes toward different territorial segments

	Agree	Disagree
The Jordan Valley	31 (32)	65 (73)
Gush Etzion	30 (19)	62 (72)
Ariel and western Samaria	28 (17)	68 (79)
50% of the West Bank	42 (34)	52 (59)
95% of the West Bank	33 (22)	52 (62)
Withdrawal to the '67 borders with minor adjustments	34 (24)	63 (72)
Rachel's Tomb, the Machpela Cave, and the Western Wall in Israel's hands	36 (28)	61 (68)
The Temple Mount under international rule, the Western Wall in Israel's hands	51 (47)	46 (49)
The Temple Mount under Palestinian rule, the Western Wall in Israel's hands	33 (25)	64 (71)
All the East Jerusalem neighborhoods except the Old City	33 (27)	65 (71)

### 3. The status of the settlements

About three-quarters think the settlement blocs should remain in Israel's hands and about one-half oppose dismantling settlements that are outside the large settlement blocs.

	<b>Leave the settlement blocs in Israel's hands</b>	<b>Dismantle the settlements outside the large settlement blocs</b>
Should	72% (75% of Jews)	48% (43% of Jews)
Should not	22% (18% of Jews)	45% (50% of Jews)

### 4. Attitudes toward safe passage for Palestinians between Gaza and the West Bank; preserving security and the rights of Jews if territories are returned in a peace agreement

#### a. Can one rely on foreign forces in matters connected to security?

A large majority fears entrusting foreign forces with preventing arms smuggling if a safe passage is opened between the West Bank and Gaza. About three-quarters say that if the Jordan Valley is returned to the Palestinians, security in this area should be entrusted to the IDF.

#### 1) Preserving security after withdrawal from the Jordan Valley

One can rely on foreign forces: 26% (16% of Jews)

Security only in the hands of the IDF: 68% (78% of Jews)

#### 2) Can one rely on foreign forces to prevent arms smuggling?

	From Egypt to Gaza (relying on the Egyptian army)	From Jordan to the West Bank (relying on the Jordanian army)
One can rely on them	15% (9% of Jews)	30% (23% of Jews)
One cannot rely on them	83% (90% of Jews)	67% (74% of Jews)

#### b. The implications of a safe passage between Gaza and the West Bank

A large majority fears that allowing a safe passage for goods and people between Gaza and the West Bank would lead to arms smuggling in both directions and that one cannot rely on the Palestinian Authority.

#### 1) Weapons smuggling into Gaza

A concern: 85% (86% of Jews)

Not a concern: 14% (13% of Jews)

#### 2) Can one rely on the Palestinian Authority to prevent the smuggling of arms and terrorists into the West Bank?

Yes: 21% (14% of Jews)

No: 76% (73% of Jews)

#### 3) Should the passage of goods be allowed between Gaza and the West Bank?

Yes: 46% (39% of Jews)

No: 46% (52% of Jews)

### c. Ensuring freedom of worship for Jews

	Can one rely on the Palestinians?	Can one rely on an international force?
Yes	27% (19% of Jews)	53% (50% of Jews)
No	68% (77% of Jews)	43% (46% of Jews)

## 5. Overall assessments of Operation Pillar of Defense

Israel won: 44% (36% of Jews)  
 Hamas won: 24% (28% of Jews)  
 Neither side won: 24% (28% of Jews)

## 6. How should Israel react to the Palestinians' upgrade to a non-member state at the UN?

Not react: 30%  
 Take measures, but not annexation of territories: 24%  
 Take unspecified steps: 6%  
 Annex territories: 22%  
 Don't know: 18%

## 7. Israeli responses to the nuclear issue

A majority of the public thinks the sanctions the West is imposing on Iran will not put a stop to its nuclear-weapons development. Even though most of the interviewees think an attack on Iran would not succeed to stop it from reaching nuclear capability (about half think it would only cause a delay), a small majority supports an Israeli attack on Iran's nuclear sites.

### a. The effect of sanctions on Iran

They will stop Iran's nuclear-weapons development: 27% (21% of Jews)  
 They will not stop Iran's nuclear-weapons development: 68% (75% of Jews)

### b. Can one rely on the United States?

#### 1) In general

One can rely on it: 39% (42% of Jews)  
 Israel has to defend itself: 57% (54% of Jews)

#### 2) To prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear capability

One can rely on the U.S.: 39% (31% of Jews)  
 One cannot rely on the U.S.: 53% (60% of Jews)

### c. An Israeli attack on Iran's nuclear sites

**1) Will such an attack succeed in preventing Iran from developing nuclear weapons?**

It will succeed: 21% (16% of Jews)

It will only succeed to delay the program: 49% (53% of Jews)

It will not have an effect: 23% (24% of Jews)

**2) Are you for or against an Israeli attack?**

For: 53% (53% of Jews)

Against: 37% (36% of Jews)

**d. Fears of Iran attacking Israel with nuclear weapons**

**1) Does the West have the necessary means to deter Iran?**

Yes: 55% (53% of Jews)

No: 39% (41% of Jews)

**8. The weight of security issues on voting intentions**

a. The survey gauged the level of influence of different issues on voting intentions. Below is a list of the issues in order of the percentage of interviewees who chose the issue as having the most influence on their decision about which party to vote for.

The data presented are for the entire sample, and separately for the supporters of different parties.\*\* In the columns for supporters of the different parties, the most influential issue is ranked 1 and the least influential issue is ranked 9; the rest are intermediate rankings.

The most important issue/factor	Entire sample	All Jews	Intending to vote for				
			Likud Beiteinu	Labor	Yesh Atid	Jewish Home/National Union	Shas
Security policy	29%	1 (30%)	1 (60%)	2 (16%)	5 (7%)	1 (42%)	6 (--)
The territorial issue (withdrawal to '67 borders)	9%	5 (8%)	4 (5%)	3 (7%)	4 (13%)	4 (12%)	5 (6%)
Economic and social issues	26%	2 (26%)	3 (13%)	1 (60%)	1 (37%)	5 (8%)	2 (19%)
The person who heads the party	11%	4 (11%)	2 (14%)	3 (7%)	2 (23%)	3 (17%)	3 (16%)
The status of religion and state	10%	3 (12%)	5 (1%)	3 (7%)	3 (17%)	2 (21%)	1 (32%)
The party's chances of joining the government	2%	6 (2%)	5 (1%)	6 (2%)	7 (--)	6 (--)	4 (10%)
The party's chances of forming the government	2%	7 (1%)	5 (1%)	6 (2%)	6 (3%)	6 (--)	6 (--)
The makeup of the list of	1%	7 (1%)	5 (1%)	6 (2%)	6 (3%)	6 (--)	6 (--)

candidates							
The number of women on the list	1%	9 (--)	9 (--)	9 (--)	7 (--)	6 (--)	6 (--)

\*\* At the time the survey was conducted, Tzipi Livni had not yet announced her intention to run in the elections. Hence, the data does not include her Hatnuah party.

b. A considerable percentage of the interviewees declare that they will change their vote if the party they intend to vote for expresses willingness to return territories in the Jordan Valley (53%) or relinquish sovereignty in east Jerusalem (69%). For Jews, the corresponding percentages are 59% and 78%.

## II. Is There Consensus among the Supporters of the Different Parties?

An examination of the issues that influence the decisions about which party to vote for in the upcoming elections shows that supporters of Likud Beiteinu and Jewish Home/National Union put security issues first and socioeconomic issues farther down the list (third place for Likud Beiteinu and fifth place for Jewish Home/National Union). For supporters of Labor and Yesh Atid, socioeconomic issues are in first place, while security issues are second for Labor and fifth for Yesh Atid. The following table presents the relevant data.

Issues that influence voting:	<b>Issues on which at least 20% of supporters of right-wing/ religious parties express "dovish" positions</b>	<b>Issues on which at least 20% of supporters of the center/left parties express "hawkish" positions</b>
Willingness to relinquish the Jordan Valley	29% of supporters of the haredi parties would not change their vote	50% would not remain loyal to a party that was prepared to relinquish the Jordan Valley; 67% would not vote for a party that would relinquish a united Jerusalem
The Palestinians recognize Israel's right to exist as a Jewish state	26% of Jewish Home supporters, 18% of Shas supporters do not attribute importance to this	80% of Labor supporters, 62% of Yesh Atid supporters attribute importance to this
Would a withdrawal to the '67 lines and the division of Jerusalem bring about an end of the conflict?		60% of Labor supporters, 71% of Yesh Atid supporters do not believe this is so
Willingness to withdraw to the '67 lines on condition that the Palestinians declare an end of the conflict		45% of Labor supporters, 60% of Yesh Atid supporters think Israel should not agree to a full withdrawal
Is the Palestinian leadership capable of making binding decisions on an end of the conflict?		57% of Labor supporters, 65% of Yesh Atid supporters do not believe so
Can one rely on a peace agreement with the		36% of Labor supporters, 76% of Yesh Atid supporters think



Palestinian Authority (without Hamas)?		one cannot rely on this
Conclusions drawn from the events of the Arab Spring		About one-third of Labor (31%) and Yesh Atid (33%) supporters think that in light of the events there should be no relinquishment of territories that are vital to Israel's security. 36% of Labor supporters and 32% of Yesh Atid supporters say that the events weaken their confidence that one can rely on a peace agreement with the Palestinians.

### III. Trends and positions over time

Below is the pattern of trends over time on questions that were identical in the three surveys in this series (Dec. 2005, June 2011, Dec. 2012). Note: The data relate to the Jewish sector only. The analysis does not relate to questions in the first two surveys that were not in the present survey.

#### **The importance of the Palestinians declaring that they recognize Israel as a Jewish state**

From the first to the second survey there was a slight increase in the percentage of those attributing importance to the issue; in the current survey there was a slight decline (81%, 84%, 79%).

#### **Do you believe the Palestinians will give up the right of return?**

Yes (32%, 24%, 34%).

#### **Would an Israeli withdrawal to the 1967 borders bring about an end of the conflict?**

Yes (16%-2011, 15%-2012).

No (83%-2011, 83%-2012).

#### **Can one rely on the Palestinian Authority, without Hamas, to uphold its obligations for a peace agreement if one is signed?**

One can rely on the PA (34%-2011, 21%-2012).

One cannot rely on the PA (64%-2011, 75%-2012).

#### **Implications of the Arab "Spring" on the possibility of relying on a peace agreement with the Palestinians**

These events weaken their confidence (32%-2011, 41%-2012).

These events have no influence (49%-2011, 44%-2012).

The events have strengthened their confidence (10%-2011, 7%-2012).

#### **What is preferable for ensuring peace-defensible borders or peace?**

Defensible borders (49%, 60%, 61%).

Peace (37%, 29%, 26%).

**Willingness for a full withdrawal to the 1967 borders if the Palestinians and the United States declare an end of the conflict**

Agree (17%-2011, 17%-2012).

Do not agree (77%-2011, 76%-2012).

**Concern over arms smuggling from Gaza if free passage to the West Bank is permitted**

Concern (88%, 85%, 86%).

No concern (11%, 13%, 13%).

**Should the transfer of goods and people from Gaza to the West Bank be permitted?**

Yes (59%, 44%, 39%).

No (40%, 49%, 52%).

**Can one rely on foreign forces to preserve Israeli security if there is a withdrawal from the Jordan Valley?**

Yes (16%-2011, 18%-2012).

Security must remain with the IDF (79%-2011, 78%-2012).

**Can one rely on Egyptian forces to prevent arms smuggling from Egypt to Gaza?**

Yes (6%, 8%, 9%).

No (94%, 91%, 90%).

**Can one rely on the Palestinians to ensure freedom of worship for Jews if there is a withdrawal from Jewish holy places?**

The data for the 2011 and 2012 surveys are identical. Yes: 19%; No: 77%.

**Can one rely on an international force to ensure freedom of worship for Jews if there is a withdrawal from Jewish holy places?**

Yes (48%-2011, 50%-2012).

No (48%-2011, 46%-2012).