

Public Opinion and the Middle East Conflict

By Fouad Moughrabi

Those of us who travel extensively to lecture on the Middle East have been struck by the willingness of most audiences to listen to informed, reasoned arguments, and by the pro-peace sympathies of a clear majority of the listeners. Two notable observations inevitably emerge. One is that the generally negative notion of an uninformed, uninterested, politically illiterate American public is rather exaggerated. The second is that a significant gap exists between what the public at large thinks of foreign policy issues and what the U.S. Government actually states as policy. This gap is as apparent in the case of the Middle East as it is in the cases of Nicaragua, El Salvador and the U.S.S.R.

In the struggle to define issues and to mobilize public support for certain policies, government and special interest groups engage in a tug of war over the interpretation of reality. Persistent efforts are made to control, rechannel, modify and interpret the flow of information. In some cases, this may lead to outright censorship. In others, such as in the great democracies, it leads to sometimes crude and sometimes sophisticated at-

tempts to manufacture interpretations that suit partisan efforts.

Fortunately, the increase in levels of methodological sophistication and in scientific rigor has led to the production of mountains of raw data which can be analyzed according to the basic rules of logic and academic integrity.

A careful look at the survey data on the Middle East, particularly on the Arab-Israeli conflict, reveals conclusions sharply at odds with the interpretation usually preferred by pro-Israel advocates and their supporters in the U.S. The latter interpretation appears to have gained such currency over the years that it now stands as the main myth about public perceptions of the Middle East and the conflict between the Palestinians and Israel. Eytan Gilboa's *American Public Opinion toward Israel and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*¹, a recent example, reaffirms all the standard cliches about the Arab-Israeli conflict and U.S. public attitudes toward the region. Gilboa ascribes the increase in public sympathy for the Palestinians to "President Carter's courting of the PLO"² and the fact that the media allegedly "portrayed Arafat and the PLO in a much more favorable light, described the Palestinians as helpless, passive victims, and accused Israel of being intransigent and bellicose toward the PLO and the Palestinians."³

Nonetheless, Gilboa reassures his readers that despite the slightly improved image of the Palestinians, the public: associates the PLO with "ex-

tremism, communism, and anti-Americanism"; endorses Israel's position that "the key for negotiation and resolution of the Palestinian problem is recognition of Israel and her security needs"; and because of high levels of sympathy, supports U.S. assistance to Israel despite a general reluctance to approve foreign aid.⁴



Fouad Moughrabi

Syndicated columnist Philip Geyelin takes a less partisan look than many public opinion specialists when he writes the following on December 2, 1982 about a poll which he commissioned:

It (the survey) shows an increasing awareness on the part of the American public that the old "pro-Israel, pro-Arab" formulations don't work. It reflects a growing public awareness of a legitimate Palestinian grievance. And it sug-

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About This Issue

How badly did the Israeli invasion of Lebanon and the Pollard espionage case hurt Israel's image in the United States?

Do U.S. Administration officials or do U.S. leaders in the private sector sympathize more with Israel than with the Arab nations? (This finding may come as a surprise to many.)

How many Americans favor, how many oppose, a Palestinian homeland on the West Bank?

How many Americans think the U.S. should negotiate with the PLO? This seems a particularly relevant question in view of Senate Bill 1203 (May 14, 1987), which would make it unlawful "to establish or maintain an office, headquarters, premises, or other facilities or establishments with-

in the jurisdiction of the United States at the behest or direction of, or with funds provided by the Palestine Liberation Organization, or any of its constituent groups, or any agents thereof."

How does U.S. public opinion compare with public opinion in Europe and in Israel?

And what does all this portend for U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East?

Professor Moughrabi, who addresses these questions, is coeditor of a public opinion studies series put out by the International Center for Research and Public Policy in Washington, D.C. and the Near East Cultural and Educational Foundation of Canada. Readers wishing to obtain a list of the Center's recent publications may write to: Box 1311, 1900 M Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

Our book review selection is *The Palestine Problem in International Law*

and *World Order* by W. Thomas and Sally V. Mallison. We are pleased to note, especially for the 1,400-plus librarians who receive *The Link*, that this work has been cited as one of the Outstanding Academic Books of 1986 by *Choice*, a publication guide for librarians. It is reviewed on page 17 by Prof. Cheryl Rubenberg of Florida International University.

This and other recent books on the Middle East may be ordered from A.M.E.U. at substantial discount prices; for details see pages 19-20.

John F. Mahoney,
Executive Director

gests a public sensitivity to the intricacies of the so-called Arab-Israeli struggle that may well be running (not for the first time) ahead of the familiar Washington reflexes. . . . If there is a lesson in all this, it lies less in the actual numbers than in the evidence that the American public is entirely capable of absorbing the complexities of the Arab-Israeli-Palestinian conflict when it is presented, as it rarely is from Washington, in all of its complexity.⁵

The American public generally sympathizes more with Israel than with the Arabs, but this sympathy does not translate into a *carte blanche*. By a two-to-one majority, the American public approves the establishment of an independent state for the Palestinians on the West Bank and Gaza; nearly 70 percent disapproved of

Israel's 1982 invasion of Lebanon; a majority of the public does not feel that Israel is trying hard enough to achieve a peaceful settlement; a clear majority does not favor foreign aid even to Israel; a majority does not think that the U.S. should send troops in case Israel is invaded by Arab countries; and a clear majority thinks the PLO should be involved in peace negotiations despite their generally negative perception of the organization and its tactics.⁶

In fact the American public seems to echo the international consensus on the manner of resolving the Palestinian-Israeli problem, which may be summed up in the following manner: a peaceful settlement of the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians in the forum of an international conference with the participation of the PLO; a recognition of Israel's right to exist in security as well as a recogni-

tion of the rights of the Palestinians to set up their own independent state on the West Bank and Gaza; and withdrawal of Israeli military forces from the territories occupied in June 1967.⁷

Western European public attitudes also reflect the international consensus. So do the official positions of the Western European governments.⁸

The Israeli public reflects the official positions of the Israeli Government. Here again, despite an increasing polarization of public opinion, as well as a trend toward extremism among certain groups, there are possibilities for significant change in the direction of acceptance of a settlement.⁹

Palestinian public opinion on the West Bank and Gaza remains strongly supportive of the PLO and its official positions. Most recently, public frustration with the prevailing paralysis has led to the development of hardened positions.¹⁰

American Public Opinion

The Chicago Council on Foreign Relations (CCFR) has conducted through the Gallup Organization several nationwide studies of American public attitudes on foreign policy. These influential studies appeared in 1975, 1979, 1983 and in 1987.

The latest survey polled a nationwide sample of 1,585 respondents representing Americans 18 years of age and older. Gallup conducted the field work which involved personal, in-home interviews, between October 30 and November 2, 1986. In addition, Gallup surveyed a leadership sample of 343 respondents that included senior Government officials, members of Congress, business and corporate leaders, editors, publishers, presidents of universities and known foreign policy experts.

This is probably the most ambitious, authoritative and responsible study of public attitudes on a whole range of foreign policy issues. As with such studies, there are two basic components: the data, which include the figures and percentages, and a narrative interpretation of these data. The data are obviously influenced by the questions asked (different questions will elicit a different data set). In this case, while the questions are neutral enough (as they should be), the kinds of questions reflect the concerns of the sponsors.

John Rielly, Council President, reports the findings in a monograph published by the CCFR and in an article in *Foreign Policy*.¹¹ Rielly says that the Middle East is "declining in perceived importance. Fewer Americans consider the region one of the country's most important foreign-policy problems, nor are as many willing to support use of American troops in the area. Yet Israel's place in the preference poll has risen in the last four years; Israel remains one of the top six countries where Americans believe the country has a vital interest. Saudi Arabia also ranks high from the standpoint of vital interest, but it does not rate a high place in the preference poll. Iran is at the bottom of the list

of countries."¹²

Although it is somewhat selective, this conclusion is not inaccurate given the data generated by the study. Nor does it come as a surprise to anyone who follows events closely. The Reagan Administration has relegated the issue of finding a peace settlement in the Middle East to the back burner, and emphasized instead side issues like terrorism. This also has produced benign neglect by the media who often take their cue from the Administration on foreign-policy matters.

What is not emphasized in the interpretive summary, yet runs through the latest study, is a somewhat more complex picture. It is true that pro-Israel sympathy tends to be higher among the general public and that Israel has recouped some of its losses since 1982 when it received high levels of disapproval for its invasion of Lebanon and its involvement in the massacres of Sabra and Shatila camp residents. However, the thermometer ratings for different countries place Israel in the same group as Brazil, Poland, Saudi Arabia, South Korea, Taiwan, France, Mexico and the Philippines, with the strongest feelings reserved for Canada, Great Britain, Germany, and Japan.

Only 33 percent of the public favor sending U.S. troops to the Middle East in case the Arabs invade Israel, but 57 percent of the leaders favor doing so. The leadership sample itself is split along interesting lines. For example, only 32 percent of Administration officials (but 63 percent of other leaders) sympathize more with Israel than with the Arab nations. This wide gap between officials and non-official leaders is astonishing and merits further examination.

Asked specifically about President Reagan's September 1, 1982 peace plan, 45 percent of the public favored it, 21 percent opposed it, and a significant 34 percent indicated "don't know."

Perhaps most striking is the finding that 68 percent favor a "Palestinian homeland on the West Bank" and on-

ly 32 percent oppose it. These figures have not changed substantially from the 1982 study. John Rielly understates these findings in the following manner:

When a more specific question was asked in 1986 about President Reagan's plan for no further Israeli settlements on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, and for a homeland for the Palestinians in these territories, a less pro-Israel response was given—one relatively unchanged from 1982.¹³

What Rielly describes as a "less pro-Israel response" turns out to be 68 percent of the respondents. Given the relatively high level of sympathy for Israel, this cannot and should not be interpreted as an anti-Israel response. Rather, it appears to express a pro-peace settlement (not the same as a less pro-Israel response) which recognizes that there is a legitimate Palestinian grievance and a need for a Palestinian "homeland." This result is consistent with figures obtained in the 1982 CCFR study which shows "an almost two-to-one margin (41 percent to 21 percent) in support of a Palestinian state."¹⁴ Similarly, the public in 1982 supported President Reagan's peace plan by a two-to-one margin (48 percent to 22 percent).

Gallup did a follow-up study in mid-January 1987 to see if significant changes occurred as a result of the Iran-Contragate scandal. The number of respondents favoring stopping military aid and arms sales to Israel more than doubled from 11 percent in October 1986 to 25 percent in January 1987. The 10 percent favoring decreasing military aid in 1986 rose to 16 percent. The 57 percent who favored keeping aid at current levels declined to 42 percent in the same period.¹⁵

What this adds up to is the following proposition, namely, that a pro-peace agenda, cognizant of the homelessness of the Palestinians and their need for a state of their own in a manner that does not threaten Israel's security may find, among the American public, overwhelming support. Results of previous surveys of American attitudes prove this.

An Independent Palestinian State

In 1977, Gallup began asking respondents whether they support the creation of an independent Palestinian state. As Table 1 shows, the number of people favoring such an option has increased over the years.¹⁶

In July 1980, Louis Harris conducted a private poll for Edgar Bronfman, Acting President of the World Jewish Congress. In a series of questions presented in Table 2, the results show overwhelming support for the independent state option, a firm rejection of other scenarios and a clear split between Jewish and non-Jewish opinion on the issues.¹⁷

Question order here accounts for the 46 percent who favor the first option. When respondents are presented other scenarios, responses begin to differ sharply. Non-Jewish

TABLE 1
Independent Palestinian Nation (1977, 1982)

	(percent)	
	1977 ^a	1982 ^b
Separate Nation	36	46
Continue as they do now	29	23
Other responses	3	--
No Opinion	32	31
Total	100	100

Question: "As you may know, one of the major questions in the Middle East situation concerns the Palestinian people. Do you think a separate, independent Palestinian nation should be established or do you think the Palestinians should continue to live as they do now in Israel and the neighboring Arab nations?"

^aOctober 14-17; n=1,520

^bJuly 23-26, 1982; n=1,389

TABLE 2
Scenarios for a Peace Settlement (1980)

	(percent)			
	Favor	Jews Oppose	Non-Jews Favor	Non-Jews Oppose
Israeli Annexation of West Bank	69	20	46	31
Independent State ^a	--	--	45	33
Demilitarized State	--	--	35	38
West Bank part of Jordan	--	--	27	39
Sympathy for Palestinian homeless	49	36	71	12

Questions: "Having Israel take over permanent control of the West Bank, increasing Jewish settlements there, but giving Palestinians full rights as citizens under Israeli control."

"Allow the Palestinians who live there to have an independent state on the West Bank, with full voting and citizenship rights including having their own police and military force, but with Israeli security guaranteed by the U.S. and NATO."

"Making the West Bank a Palestinian state for those who live there, with the full freedom for its own people and complete self-government, in which they would have their own police force, but not allowing them to have their own army."

"Making the West Bank part of Jordan."

"The Palestinian people are now homeless and deserve their own independent state, just as much as the Jews deserved a homeland after World War II."

^aExact percentages unavailable, but Jews are opposed by 2 to 1.

respondents reject restrictions on Palestinian sovereignty, while Jewish respondents consistently hold to the view that the West Bank should be part of Israel. General sympathy for Palestinian homelessness is strong among non-Jewish and Jewish respondents alike, according to the same survey. The 1982 study of both the mass public and opinion leaders by the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations confirms these earlier findings:

The proportion of the American public favoring the creation of a separate, independent Palestinian nation grew from 29 percent in October 1977 to 41 percent in July 1982. Indeed, the 1982 figures show an almost two-to-one margin (41 percent to 21 percent) in support of a Palestinian state.¹⁸

A nationwide study conducted in October 1982 by Decision/Making/Information of Washington, D.C., on behalf of the Institute of Arab Studies, reveals similar results.¹⁹ Respondents were asked three different questions designed to check the extent of support for an independent Palestinian state. The results shown in Table 3 support the findings by Gallup, Harris and the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations.

Respondents were asked whether they are willing to support the creation of an independent Palestinian state on the basis of the 1947 U.N. Partition Resolution. Fifty-five percent of the sample feel that the Palestinians have the right to establish such a state, as opposed to 37 percent who don't.

President Reagan's initiative of September 1, 1982 was then broken down into its various components. Using words from the text itself, respondents were asked if they agreed or disagreed with the President's position on these Middle East issues. The respondents endorsed nearly all of Reagan's proposals by a two-to-one margin. They disagreed with the President on only one item, namely, where he rules out an independent Palestinian state on the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

A 1985 study by the Survey Research Center at the University of

TABLE 3
Support for an Independent Palestinian Nation (1982)^a

	Agree	(percent)		Total
		Disagree	No Opinion	
Palestinian state prerequisite for peace	65	29	6	100
Palestinians to have a state based on 1947 U.N. Resolution	55	37	8	100
President Reagan rules out independent Palestinian state	33	50	17	100

Questions: "Mr. Smith feels there will be no peace in the Middle East until the Palestinian people have self-determination and their own state on the West Bank and in Gaza; Mr. Jones feels that a Palestinian state would be a threat to the security of Israel." Those who agree with Smith are listed under "Agree" and those who agree with Jones are listed under "Disagree."

"In 1947, the U.S. supported a U.N. proposal for both a Palestinian state and an Israeli state. Do you feel that Palestinians have the right to establish this state?"

"There should be no independent Palestinian state on the West Bank and in the Gaza Strip."

^aOctober 6-11, 1982; n=1,020.

TABLE 4
Independent Palestinian State (1985)

	Agree	(percent)			Total
		Disagree	Neither	Don't Know	
Palestinian state needed for peace	54.2	1.2	6.1	11.9	73.4
Palestinian state threat to Israel	26.2				26.2

Question: "Next I will read two statements, and then I would like to know which of the two you agree with the most. The first statement is:

"Peace in the Middle East will come only when the Palestinian people have a state of their own on the West Bank."

The second is:

"A Palestinian state on the West Bank would be a threat to the security of Israel."

Michigan (Ann Arbor) on behalf of the International Center for Research and Public Policy reveals a slight decline in support for the idea of an independent Palestinian state.²⁰ Nevertheless, the results set out in Table 4 still show a two-to-one majority favoring such an option.

A clear majority of the respondents link the achievement of peace in the Middle East with the establishment of a separate, independent Palestinian state. Asked if they agreed strongly or

not strongly with these statements, respondents showed the following tendencies: Of those who agreed with the first statement, 43.4 percent said they agreed strongly and 56.1 percent not so strongly. Of those who agreed with the second statement, namely that a Palestinian state would be a threat to the security of Israel, a significant 53.4 percent said they agreed with it not strongly while only 45.4 percent agreed strongly. In other words, more than half of the 26.6 per-

cent who agreed with the second statement are not too convinced. Thus, out of the total sample, a very small percentage feel strongly that a Palestinian state constitutes a threat to the security of Israel.

The PLO and Its Role

The manner in which the PLO has been presented in the media has its parallel in some public opinion surveys conducted in the United States over the past decade. Louis Harris and Associates posed the following question to a national sample of 1,199 American adults in March 1978:

As you know, nearly two weeks ago PLO terrorists killed 37 people on a bus near Tel Aviv in Israel and wounded 82 more. As far as you are concerned, do you feel that the PLO terrorist attack was wrong, or was it justified?²¹

Predictably, Harris obtained the following results: 93 percent said the PLO terrorist attack was wrong, only 2 percent said it was justified, and 5 percent were not sure. It is difficult to see how such a question could be used to detect a range of attitudes, given the tremendous caution in the professional literature about such questioning techniques.

In August 1979, Louis Harris asked a battery of questions on behalf of *ABC News*, as shown in Table 5.²² The first statement sets the general tone and defines the PLO as a terrorist organization that murders athletes at Olympic Games, and hijacks airplanes. This statement is presented nearly five years after the PLO officially denounced the use of terror as an instrument of struggle. Notwithstanding this extremely negative definition, 48 percent agree with the second statement, which says the U.S. should work out a way to get along with the PLO. The fourth statement prejudices the question even further

TABLE 5
Attitudes toward Palestinians and PLO (1979)^a

	(percent)			Total
	Agree	Disagree	Not Sure	
PLO terrorist organization	49	37	14	100
PLO has power in the oil countries, need to accommodate	48	45	7	100
Palestinians, not PLO, to be involved in peace negotiations	61	28	11	100
PLO should be involved in peace negotiations	34	57	9	100
U.S. right not to recognize PLO	65	27	8	100
PLO to participate in negotiations only after it recognizes Israel	69	19	12	100

Statements: "The PLO is a terrorist organization that murders athletes at Olympic Games, skyjacks planes, and should not be recognized by the U.S."

"The PLO has some real political power with important Arab oil producing states, and we should work out a way to get along with the PLO if we want to insure our supply of oil from these Arab states."

"The U.S., Egypt, and Israel should work out an arrangement in which Palestinian Arabs, but not the PLO, are brought into Middle East peace negotiations."

"As the most powerful force among Palestinian Arabs, the PLO should be in on any negotiations about Gaza or the West Bank, even if the PLO are terrorists."

"Even though they have official status in the U.N., the U.S. is right not to recognize the PLO or talk with them until they recognize the right of Israel to exist."

"Once the PLO has recognized Israel's right to exist, then the U.S. should move to include the PLO in the negotiations or the Palestinian rights to self-determination in Gaza and on the West Bank."

^aAugust 21-22, 1979; n=1,201.

TABLE 6
Should the U.S. Negotiate with the PLO (1979)^a

	(percent)			Total
	Yes	No	No Opinion	
U.S. should negotiate with the PLO?	59	29	12	100
U.S. should negotiate with the PLO, even if Israel objects. ^b	42	45	13	100

Question: (*L.A. Times*) "Some people say that the United States ought not to negotiate with the Palestinian Liberation Organization—the PLO—because they are terrorists and they refuse to recognize the right of Israel to exist. Other people say that in order to bring peace to the Middle East, we should be willing to talk to all parties involved in the conflict, including the PLO. What do you think? Should the United States negotiate with the PLO or not?"

^aSeptember 9-14, 1979; n=1,453.

^b**Question:** (*New York Times*) "Some people say we should negotiate with the PLO even if Israel objects. Do you think the U.S. should or should not negotiate with the Palestinian Liberation Organization?"

by describing the PLO as the most powerful force among Palestinian Arabs. The fifth statement seems to hint to the respondents that the U.S. should flout U.N. recognition of the PLO and suggests PLO recognition of Israel as a more crucial incentive. A different phrasing of the question along the following lines might have elicited totally different responses: The U.N. officially recognizes the PLO as the representative of the Palestinian people. Do you think the U.S. should do the same?

Despite this attempt at placing the PLO within a negative frame, an analysis of public opinion data reveals a complex range of attitudes among the U.S. public on whether the U.S. should recognize the organization, whether the PLO is representative of the Palestinians and whether it should be involved in Middle East peace negotiations.

A *Los Angeles Times* (October 1, 1979) survey captures the prevailing opinion of the American public on the role of the PLO. The *L.A. Times* question and a similar *New York Times* question are shown in Table 6. Both questions phrase the issues in a responsible manner without loading them with key words that provoke an immediate negative response. Furthermore, they present the various opinions in a forthright manner.

The results are remarkable in one sense and understandable in another. On the other hand, the American public has been saturated with extremely negative information about the PLO and the Palestinians in general, linking them rather indiscriminately with terrorism. The first part of the question repeats this already established linkage in the public mind, namely, that the U.S. should not negotiate with the PLO because they are terrorists and they refuse to recognize the right of Israel to exist. This extremely negative image, however, did not deter people from accepting the need for the U.S. to negotiate with the PLO in order to bring peace to the Middle East. What is remarkable is the fact that the majority of respondents were willing to hold in abeyance their entrenched negative feelings about the PLO; what

is understandable is the fact that they chose a policy option that favors peace through negotiations.

Other surveys confirm this general finding. In 1982 Gallup asked the following question: Should the U.S. talk directly with the PLO as the representative of the Palestinian people? Forty-eight percent agreed, 42 percent disagreed and 10 percent expressed no opinion.²³

Even when negotiating with the PLO is coupled with Israel's rejection, a fairly sizeable number of respondents agree that the U.S. should negotiate with the PLO. The question (also shown in Table 6) was posed by a CBS News/New York Times telephone survey of a national sample of 1,385 adults, October 29–November 3, 1979.²⁴ The survey asked those who had heard or read anything about the Palestine Liberation Organization if the U.S. should or should not negotiate with the PLO even if Israel objects. Interestingly, a significant 42 percent said the U.S. should negotiate with the PLO.

Black Americans in the CBS News/New York Times sample agreed that the U.S. should negotiate with the PLO by a margin of 51 percent for and 27 percent against. The independents agreed by a margin of 45 percent for versus 42 percent against. An October 1982 survey by Decision/Making/Information asked a nationwide sample of Americans: Should the PLO have a place at the negotiating table for Middle East Peace? Sixty-four percent agreed, 29 percent disagreed, and 7 percent expressed no opinion.

Questions on the PLO include two other items: the issue of representation and the issue of official U.S. recognition. The first deals with the level of information about whether the PLO represents the majority of Palestinians; the second asks respondents to commit themselves to some extent by endorsing or refusing to endorse U.S. recognition of the organization. On both of these issues, the general sentiment among the U.S. public is negative, albeit not as negative as one would expect, given the unfriendly publicity associated with the PLO in the U.S. media.

TABLE 7
U.S. Recognition of the PLO (1979, 1981)

	1979 ^a	1981 ^b
	(percent)	
Should recognize/have formal relations with the PLO	25.5	25.0
Should not	44.8	60.0
Not sure	29.8	15.0
Total	100.1	100.0

Questions: ^a"Do you think the U.S. Government should formally recognize and have direct diplomatic relations with the Palestinian Liberation Organization, or don't you think so?"

^b"Do you feel that the Government should, or should not deal with the PLO as the official representative of the Palestinian people?"

In the 1982 Decision/Making/Information survey, respondents were asked: Do you believe the PLO is the Palestinian people's political representative? Only 31 percent agreed, 46 percent disagreed and 23 percent didn't know. The number of those who think the PLO actually represents the views of the Palestinian people is up considerably from 1978 when Gallup posed a similar question: Do you think the PLO does or does not represent the point of view of a majority of Palestinians? "Yes, it does," 14 percent; "no," 63 percent; "no opinion," 23 percent. (Asked of the 77 percent of n=1,333 who were aware of the PLO.)²⁵

In 1981 an NBC/Associated Press telephone survey of 1,598 Americans

asked respondents whether the U.S. should formally recognize the Palestine Liberation Organization. The question and the results are shown in Table 7.²⁶ Roughly the same figures obtained in an August 1979 Yankelovich, Skelley, and White survey for *Time* magazine are as shown in Table 8.²⁷

In both instances, only a quarter of the sample thought the U.S. should recognize or have formal relations with the PLO. In the Yankelovich 1979 survey for *Time*, the question differed slightly and asked respondents if the U.S. should deal with the PLO as the official representative of the Palestinian people. The difference between the two surveys indicates that the higher percentage of "not sure" in 1979 was narrowed down to nearly a half in 1981, probably in response to the Iranian hostage issue, while those who thought the Government "should not" increased by roughly the same percentage: from 44.8 percent to 60 percent.

At the same time, however, Yankelovich asked respondents whether they think Israel is justified in refusing to deal with the PLO. As Table 8 shows, a majority of respondents think Israel is wrong in refusing to negotiate with the PLO.²⁸ Despite their general feeling that the PLO does not represent the majority of Palestinians, and that the U.S. Government should not formally recognize the organization, the majority of respondents think the PLO should be involved in peace negotiations, and that Israel is wrong in refusing to deal with them.

TABLE 8
Israeli Dealing with the PLO (1979)

	(percent)
Israel right not to deal with PLO	29.8
Israel wrong not to deal with PLO	40.9
Not sure	15.9
No Opinion	13.3
Total	99.9

Question: "Do you think Israel is doing the right or the wrong thing in refusing to negotiate with the PLO?"

Sympathies in the Middle East

The American public has historically sympathized more with Israel than with the Arab countries. Gallup has consistently asked the same sympathy question since June 1967 and obtained the results shown in Table 9.²⁹ Israel suffered a serious decline in sympathy among the American public following its invasion of Lebanon and the massacres at the Sabra and Shatila camps. Only 32 percent sympathized more with Israel, as opposed to 28 percent sympathizing with the Arabs. This represents the single most dramatic drop in pro-Israel sympathy, as well as the single most impressive gain of pro-Arab sympathy since 1967.

Table 10 shows the relative decline in the Israeli position as well as the increase in sympathy for the Palestinian position.

By November 1982, however, sympathy for Israel was back up to its pre-1982 invasion levels. The Chicago Council on Foreign Relations study concludes that the net result of the Lebanon episode in terms of American public opinion was to generate a modest increase in sympathy for the Palestinian and Arab causes—but without doing any substantial damage to public support for Israel.³⁰ The same study reveals another interesting finding:

While the public sympathized with Israel over “the Arabs” by 48 percent to 17 percent, they supported Israel over “the Palestinians” by a lesser margin, 40 percent to 17 percent. Opinion leaders were even more sensitive to the difference in terminology. Their support for Israel over “the Arabs” (51 percent–19 percent) dropped to 42 percent for Israel over “the Palestinians.”³¹

The emergence of a sympathy factor for the Palestinians is an important

phenomenon. The facts of Palestinian homelessness, the persistence of their struggle and the events in Lebanon may account for the emergence of this factor. Regardless of the reasons for it, the point that the American public is more willing to sympathize with the Palestinians than with the Arabs in the conflict with Israel is certainly worth further examination.

Except for hard core of roughly 20–25 percent of the public, sympathy for Israel is what Seymour Martin

Lipset calls “soft support.”³² Thus, many of the same people who sympathize with Israel oppose arm sales to it, think the present level of U.S. aid is too much and oppose sending U.S. troops even if Israel were invaded by neighboring Arab countries. Close scrutiny of the figures reveals the hardly unexpected fact that the majority of Americans strongly prefer neutrality in the Arab-Israeli conflict. Indeed, the erosion of support that Israel suffered in the last decade has not resulted in significant, lasting gain for the Arab side. Instead, the neutral category gained substantially. As Table 11 shows, 20 percent think the U.S. should favor Israel while an impressive 70 percent think the U.S. should favor neither side in the Arab-Israeli conflict. This finding is further buttressed by the clear public support

TABLE 9
American Sympathies in the Middle East ^a

	(percent)				Total
	Israel	Arab Nations	Neither	No Opinion	
1982: September	32	28	n/a	n/a	60
August	41	12	31	16	100
June	52	10	29	9	100
April-May	51	10	26	11	100
January	49	14	23	14	100
1981: July-August	44	11	34	11	100
1979: January	40	14	31	15	100
1978: November	39	13	30	18	100
September (late)	42	12	29	17	100
September (early)	41	12	29	18	100
August	44	10	33	13	100
April-May	44	10	33	13	100
March	38	11	33	18	100
February	33	14	28	25	100
1977: December	44	10	27	19	100
October	46	11	21	22	100
June	44	8	28	20	100
1975: January	44	8	22	26	100
1973: December	50	7	25	18	100
October	47	6	22	25	100
1970: March	44	3	32	21	100
1969: January	50	5	28	17	100
1967: June	56	4	25	15	100

Question: “In the Middle East situation, are you sympathetic more with Israel or more with the Arab nations?”

^aResults based on those who have heard or read about events in the Middle East (Aware Group). All of the above are telephone surveys.

of the idea that the U.S. Government should have friendly relations with Israel (87 percent) as well as with the Arab governments in conflict with Israel (86 percent).³³

Sympathy for Israel seems to be a constant value in American political

culture, but it is not unconditional and does not extend to pro-Israeli positions on all issues. A majority of respondents thinks the present levels of aid are excessive; a majority also sees Israel as intransigent (not working hard enough) in the peace pro-

cess; and a clear majority thinks that the Palestinians have a legitimate grievance, deserve their own state alongside Israel, and want to see the PLO involved in peace negotiations.

TABLE 10
Shift in American Sympathy (1978, 1981, 1982)

	Israeli Position					Palestinian Position				
					Total					Total
	More	Less	Same	Don't Know		More	Less	Same	Don't Know	
Feb. 1978	27	34	19	20	100	—	—	—	—	0
July 1981	29	37	18	16	100	22	36	21	21	100
Aug. 1982 ^a	32	41	15	12	100	28	40	18	14	100
Sept. 1982 ^b	24	51	10	15	100	39	27	15	19	100

Question: "Compared to a year ago, would you say you are more sympathetic or less sympathetic to the Israeli/Palestinian position?"

^aAugust 4-5, 1982; n=752.

^bSeptember 22-23, 1982; n=605.

TABLE 11
U.S. Neutrality in the Middle East (1985)^a

	(percent)
U.S. should favor Israel	19.7
U.S. should favor Arabs	0.2
U.S. should favor neither side	69.6
Don't know	10.5
Total	100.0

Question: "In the Middle East conflict, do you think the U.S. should favor Israel, favor the Arab countries, or should the U.S. not favor one side over the other?"

^aSurvey Research Center (1985) on behalf of the International Center for Research and Public Policy; n=655.

U.S. Aid to the Region

The U.S., deeply involved in the affairs of the Middle East, emerged in the 1970's and 1980's as the principal global power in the region. Significant levels of U.S. military and economic aid go to the Middle East, principally to Israel and to Egypt. The U.S. has military bases and personnel stationed in the region and has intervened militarily in Lebanon.

Public sentiment on military aid and military involvement is considerably more cautious than the attitude of foreign policy leaders or of the U.S. Government. "By large majorities (63 percent and 65 percent), the American public opposed giving military aid to other nations and favored cutting back money spent for that purpose, at a time when the Administration was increasing arms aid."³⁴ Table 12 shows the gap between leaders and the public on

TABLE 12
Military Aid and Arms Sales (1974, 1978, 1982)

	(percent)				
	1974	1978		1982	
	Public	Public	Leaders	Public	Leaders
In favor of military aid	22	29	60	28	59
In favor of military sales	35	—	67	39	68
Military aid helps security of other nations	69	72	87	71	76
Military aid helps economy of other nations	60	59	40	55	31
Military aid a good substitute for using U.S. troops	44	49	70	51	68
Military aid helps our economy	31	43	75	39	69
Military aid helps prevent communism	36	35	66	37	65
Military aid gets us too involved in other countries' affairs	78	79	55	78	53
Military aid lets dictators use power against their own people	59	61	73	65	68

Question: "On the whole, do you favor or oppose our giving military aid to other nations? By 'military aid' I mean arms and equipment, but not troops."

"On the whole, do you favor or oppose our government selling military equipment to other nations?"

Source: Adapted from *American Public Opinion and U.S. Foreign Policy* (Chicago Council on Foreign Relations, 1983), p. 27.

issues related to military aid.³⁵

On most of the issues, the public do not favor aid; they think it gets the U.S. involved in other peoples' affairs and do not think it helps prevent the spread of communism.

In the 1982 Gallup survey for the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations, "more members of the public (33 percent) wanted to decrease or stop military aid and arms sales to Israel than wanted to increase them (9 percent)."³⁶ Furthermore, most people oppose sending troops in case the Arabs cut off oil to the U.S. or in case the Arabs invade Israel, as Table 13 shows.

Most respondents, leaders and public alike, oppose sending troops in both situations. A good percentage of the leaders who objected to sending troops opted in 1978 for sending military supplies to Saudi Arabia.

Gallup's findings confirm the American public's reluctance to give military assistance to the countries of the Near East, and demonstrate a majority sentiment that whenever military aid is given, it should be used for defensive purposes only. Table 14 shows that nearly 64 percent think so, while only 26 percent think that U.S. weapons should be used in any way necessary.³⁷

TABLE 13
U.S. Response to Crisis Situations (1978, 1982)

Crisis situation	Response	(percent)			
		Arabs Cut Off Oil		Arabs Invade Israel	
		1978	1982	1978	1982
Oppose sending troops	Public	64	61	78	70
	Leaders	71	64	69	53
Do Nothing	Public	5	4	14	—
	Leaders	1	—	2	—
Try to negotiate	Public	34	33	38	—
	Leaders	37	47	27	—
Refuse to trade	Public	12	15	3	—
	Leaders	27	26	1	—
Send military supplies	Public	1	2	8	—
	Leaders	1	4	35	—
Send troops	Public	36	39	22	30
	Leaders	29	36	31	47
Don't Know	Public	12	10	15	—
	Leaders	5	1	4	—

Question: "There has been some discussion about the circumstances that might justify using U.S. troops in other parts of the world. I'd like to ask your opinion about several situations. Would you favor or oppose the use of U.S. troops if . . ."

Asked of opponents of sending U.S. troops in selected circumstances: "I am going to read the circumstances under which you said you would oppose sending U.S. troops. On this card are levels of U.S. involvement that might be appropriate under these circumstances. For each situation, tell me how far you feel the U.S. should be willing to go."

Source: Adapted from Chicago Council on Foreign Relations (1983), p. 31.

Israeli Public Opinion

In the 1950's and early 1960's, the Palestinians were "invisible." When Golda Meir said in 1970 that "there is no such thing as Palestinians," she was reflecting a national consensus in Israel and in the U.S. The Middle East conflict remained an Arab-Israeli conflict, and not a Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

The Palestinians became visible after 1967. During the following decade, the dispute focused on whether or not there were Palestinians, who they are and what they want. Now the debate is over alternative solutions for a settlement. While there is a consensus in Israel on rul-

ing out an independent Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza, the Israeli public is divided on the issue of what should be done with the occupied territories.

Table 15 shows only 5 percent of the Israeli public favor "an independent Palestinian state, with arrangements for Israel's security." Only 5 percent favor complete annexation of the territories. However, a total of 49 percent prefer retaining the territories. A Smith Institute survey in September 1986 asked a nationwide sample: "Should Israel offer the Arabs a territorial compromise in Judea-Samaria-Gaza in return for guarantees, in

peace negotiations?" Fifty-four percent said no; and 37 percent said yes. The same question, asked in February 1986, elicited a 50 percent no and a 41 percent yes.³⁸

In July 1978, *New Outlook* commissioned the Public Opinion Research Institute (PORI) to survey public attitudes on the following questions:

1. Under what conditions, if any, would you be ready to return the occupied territories to Arab sovereignty?
2. Do you believe that it is possible to achieve peace without including the Palestinians as partners to the peace agreement?
3. What should the Palestinians do so that Israel will accept them as partners to the peace negotiations?
4. Would you support holding on to most of the territories, even at the risk of a rift with the United States?³⁹

Table 16 shows the results for each

TABLE 14
Use of U.S. Weapons (1982)

	(percent)			Total
	Defensive Use Only	Anyway Necessary	No Opinion	
July 1982	64	26	10	100

Question: "Some people say the U.S. should require that all weapons sent by the U.S. to Israel should be used for defensive purposes. Other people say that Israel should be able to use these weapons in any way they feel necessary. Which point of view comes closer to your own?"

TABLE 15
Israeli Preferences for Final Status of West Bank and Gaza (1984)

	(percent)
HOLD ON	
A. Annexation of the West Bank and Gaza, giving Palestinians the same rights as Arabs in Israel	5
B. Keep things as they are now	21
C. Limited Palestinian Autonomy with Israel retaining full control over security	23
LET GO	
D. Partition of West Bank between Israel and Jordan, with Israel controlling security from the areas it retains	23
E. Palestinian Autonomy in close association with Jordan, with arrangements for Israel's security	11
F. An independent Palestinian state, with arrangements for Israel's security	5
NO OPINION	12

"Here is a list of proposals for the final status of West Bank and Gaza Palestinians. Of these, which one in your opinion would be the best for Israel?"

Public Opinion Research of Israel (PORI), September 1984.

Gloria Falk, "Israeli Public Opinion: Looking Toward a Palestinian Solution," *Middle East Journal* 39 (3), Summer 1985, p. 256.

question: 48.9 percent indicate willingness to return the occupied territories to Arab sovereignty under certain conditions which include the following:

- that there would be arrangements guaranteeing that the territories would not be used as a base against Israel;
- that the Arabs would recognize Israel's rights to live in peace and security;
- that a free flow of people and goods across the borders be maintained.

In 1978, the number of those ready to return the territories under certain

conditions was slightly higher than the number of those who refuse to do so under any conditions. By 1984, the numbers were reversed as is shown in Table 15, and by 1986, nearly 54 percent said they object to returning the territories in return for guarantees.

A hardening of the positions occurred in the last decade, perhaps in correlation with the increasing polarization of Israeli society. As Table 17 indicates, the majority of Israelis do not think Israel should negotiate with the PLO even if it officially recognizes Israel and refrains from terrorist acts.

In addition to splits along ethnic lines, the most important division within Israeli thinking falls along the

TABLE 16
New Outlook Poll (1978)

	(percent)
Question 1:	
Under no conditions at all	46.8
Under certain conditions	48.9
No answer	4.3
Question 2:	
Impossible without the Palestinians	43.7
Possible	35.2
Maybe, depends	7.2
Don't know	13.9
Question 3:	
Nothing, under no conditions	39.5
Recognize Israel, and/or abolish Covenant, and/or stop the terror	56.4
Other conditions	0.7
No answer	3.4
Question 4:	
For holding on	39.0
Depends, maybe	11.0
Against	32.8
No opinion	17.2

Source: *New Outlook*, September 1978, p. 18.

lines of modernization versus underdevelopment. Roughly 40 percent of the society is modernized along Western European lines; the remaining 60 percent are much less developed in terms of education, secularism and levels of income. The question here is, whether this split reflects a similar division among the public on issues of peace and settlement.

Gloria Falk argues that there is "little, if any polarization, as to the complexity of peace issues . . . a majority (57 percent) of Israelis . . . hold mixed and sometimes incompatible views on the peace issues, suggesting that positions are not firmly held." The large center, according to Falk is "soft" and could be "malleable" if a real settlement presents itself.⁴⁰

Figures fluctuate according to events. However, this does not explain the rather serious differences in interpretation that characterize various narratives. The *New Outlook* poll of July 1978 was conducted in order to strengthen the argument that there is in the Israeli public a readiness for peace and settlement. Akiva Orr's in-

TABLE 17
Israel to negotiate with PLO if it recognizes Israel and refrains from terrorism

	(percent)		
	Yes	No	Don't know
February 1986	44	51	5
May 1986	42	53	5
August 1986	45	52	3
September 1986	43	52	5

"If the PLO will officially recognize Israel and refrain from terrorist acts, should we negotiate with it?"

Source: *Davar*, October 2, 1986.

terpretation in *Middle East International* defines a solution as one involving the return of the occupied territories to Palestinian sovereignty. Gloria Falk's underlying assumption is that a settlement means a trade of territory for peace with Jordan, not the Palestinians. She suggests that an independent Palestine state on the West Bank and Gaza would be an extreme option.

Once these underlying assumptions are spelled out, the figures and the narrative interpretations begin to make sense. Let us, however, look at the data without any preconditions.

Table 18 shows results of a nationwide survey which asked the public the following question: "Do you support those who act to make the Arabs leave Judea and Samaria?" Sympathy for Rabbi Meir Kahane's suggestion that the Palestinians should be expelled from their homes on the West Bank and Gaza has increased by 10 percent from February 1985 to September 1986. In other words, roughly 40 percent of the Israeli public now approves the extremist positions advocated by Kahane and others.

The increase in public support for right-wing extremist positions is confirmed in other surveys. The Van Leer Institute commissioned a series of polls in 1985 which revealed that 59.3 percent of religious youth and about 50 percent of Oriental Jewish youth expressed agreement with the opinions of Meir Kahane. The September 1985 Van Leer poll discovered that 57 percent of the youth said that every

Arab in the occupied territories who refuses Israeli citizenship should be expelled; 38 percent favored private Jewish revenge associations; 42 percent favored a reduction of rights of all non-Jewish citizens; and 47 percent said Christians and Muslims should be prohibited from reaching senior positions in the civil service.⁴¹

A PORI survey in October 1985⁴² asked a nationwide sample whether they are "for or against establishing an independent Palestinian state on the West Bank and Gaza Strip if they recognize Israel and stop all hostile acts." Thirty percent opted for, 4 percent said it depends, 61 percent were against, and 5 percent had no answer. However, when respondents were asked "in principal, are the Palestinians entitled or not entitled to a state of their own?," 41 percent said yes, 10 percent said it depends, 43 percent said no, and 6 percent did not know. The first question is specific and deals with the issue of a separate, independent Palestinian state on the West Bank and Gaza. The second question is less specific, leaving a margin of interpretation to the respondents, some of whom no doubt subscribe to the thesis, often put forth in Israel, that the Palestinians are entitled to a state of their own "in Jordan." Nonetheless, one may conclude that on the highly specific issue of self-determination and statehood in the West Bank there is a body of support in Israel that hovers around 30 percent of the public. Opposition to this option appears firm; however, when other scenarios are presented, such as some form of arrangement with Jordan, the opposition is reduced. Here again there is a bottom line of approximately 40 percent who would frown on arrangements with Jordan that might lead to total Israeli abandonment of the occupied territories.

A core of some 30 percent is willing to accept an independent Palestinian state on the West Bank and Gaza under certain conditions. Another core of 40 percent are opposed to this as well as other scenarios (e.g. Jordan) that might lead to Israeli withdrawal from the territories. The remaining 30 percent are distributed in the following way: some are undecided,

some may support a settlement if it receives a government consensus, but most are likely to support a hawkish position.

TABLE 18
Expulsion of Arabs

	(percent)		
	Yes	No	Don't know
February 1985	29	68	3
May 1986	34	59	6
September 1986	38	58	4

Source: *Davar*, October 2, 1986.

The government in Israel enjoys widespread support in its aggressive policy toward the Palestinians: 67 percent favor the "demolition of terrorists' families' houses"; 87 percent favor the "expulsion of terrorists" who committed "terrorist acts"; and 47 percent favor the expulsion of their families.⁴³ Eighty-four percent of respondents approved the air attack on the PLO headquarters in Tunis and 64 percent did not think the attack would have any effect on the chances for peace with the Arab states.

What can one conclude from all of these figures? In Israel, the public seems to reflect the position of its government on the issue of the Palestinians. It is willing to accept a fairly aggressive policy toward the Palestinians—the demolition of houses, deportation of activists and long prison terms. What also emerges, however, is the image of a divided society. Over time, the Palestinians have become an internal Israeli problem and the issue will increasingly impinge on the political discourse.

At the center of the debate are questions of democracy, Jewishness and the nature of the state of Israel. How can the state remain democratic if it rules over two million Palestinians? To keep Israel Jewish, should one expel all the Arabs from the country? Ze'ev Schiff, a respected defense correspondent for *Ha'aretz*, envisions the possibility of civil war between Jews and Arabs.⁴⁴ Other commentators talk openly about the rise of "fascism" in Israel.⁴⁵

It is unlikely that the issue of a peace settlement will be framed in Israel in a manner that deals specifically with the Palestinians, the PLO or the question of self-determination and Palestinian statehood. What is more likely to emerge is a frame that is sellable to the public, namely, some form of negotiation and accommodation with Jordan. Such a frame is also consistent with Israel's long-standing definition of its strategic approach to a resolution of the conflict—an approach that emerged in partnership with Jordan in 1949, and remained practically unchanged since then.

Canadian Public Opinion

What is most striking about Canadian public opinion surveys on foreign policy issues is the extremely high proportion of respondents who express no opinion. The majority of the public view Canada's role as peripheral. Among those who express an opinion, however, there is a far greater relative sympathy for the Israeli position as compared to sympathy for the generic "Arab" category. Nevertheless, in 1973 a steady, albeit slow, increase in sympathy for the Arab side began, showing a growing public awareness of the complexity of various claims and the urgent need for a peaceful settlement.

In 1982, by a majority of 54 percent versus 17 percent (with 29 percent giving no opinion), Canadian respondents agreed that there would be no peace without a Palestinian state. By 1984, there was a decline from 54 percent to 38 percent as memories of Israel's involvement in the Lebanon invasion began to fade. Nevertheless, the number of respondents who think that a Palestinian state would be a threat to the security of Israel increased from only 17 percent in 1982 to 22.4 percent in 1984.⁴⁷

As Table 19 shows, however, a surprisingly large number of respondents whose sympathies lie with the Israelis see a Palestinian state as necessary for peace: in 1982, this figure

This position will find a responsive partner in the United States and Egypt and will probably gain a majority of the Israeli public.

At the moment, the majority of the Israeli public as well as the majority of its establishment politicians think that they can find a solution (preferably with Jordan) which will circumvent the PLO and the uncomfortable issue of Palestinian nationalism. A minority of well-informed intellectuals such as Yehoshafat Harkabi, Meir Merhav and others do not think so.⁴⁶

was 48 percent and, in 1984, the figure was 38.7 percent.

By and large, most Canadian respondents do not think the PLO is the political representative of the Palestin-

ian people. The only exception is in Quebec where 28 percent of respondents think the PLO is the representative of the Palestinians and 19 percent disagree. At the same time, however, a majority of Canadians do think that the PLO deserves a seat at the negotiating table although they do not think the Canadian Government should recognize the organization. As Table 20 shows, 42 percent of respondents agree that "the PLO should have a place at the negotiating table for Middle East peace." Only 18 percent disagree, and 40 percent express no opinion.

Jack Zubrzycki concludes his excellent study of Canadian public opinion by showing increasing "recognition of the crucial issue of a Palestinian homeland," reluctance to "demand dramatic changes with respect either to "solution or to the composition of the players," and caution about getting too involved, preferring a "peripheral" role—"that of a moderating, diplomatic, behind-the-scenes player."⁴⁸

TABLE 19
Canadian Opinion of Palestinian State (1982 and 1984)

Sympathy of Respondents	(percent)				1984	
	Israel	Palest.	Neither	11/1982 No Opinion	Israel	Palestine
No peace without Palestinian state	48.0	87.0	61.0	40.0	38.7	70.3
Palestinian state threatens Israel	41.0	7.0	13.0	11.0	47.1	12.5
Don't know	11.0	6.0	26.0	49.0	13.9	17.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	99.7	100.1

TABLE 20
Canadian Opinion on PLO Participation in Peace Negotiations

	All	Maritimes	Quebec	Ontario	Prairie
Yes	42.0	33.0	51.0	38.0	43.0
No	18.0	18.0	12.0	21.0	21.0
Don't know	40.0	49.0	37.0	41.0	36.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Question: "Should the PLO have a place at the negotiating table for Middle East peace?"

Western European Public Opinion

Questions about the Palestinians first appeared in European opinion surveys in 1973, corresponding to the time when the conflict began to be redefined from Arab-Israeli to Palestinian-Israeli. In 1974, France, Italy and Ireland voted in favor of the motion urging participation of the PLO in U.N. deliberations, while the other six members of the European Community abstained. In 1976, the total Community announced that the pursuit of the right of the Palestinian people to give expression to its national identity could entail a territorial basis. And, by 1977, the nine members issued another declaration which said that a solution to the Middle East conflict would be possible if the legitimate right of the Palestinian people to its national identity is concretized. The statement added that representatives of the Palestinian people should take part in the negotiations. In 1980, specific mention of the PLO was made in the Venice Declaration, which said that the organization "will have to be associated with the negotiations."⁴⁹

Asked whether the Palestinians are entitled to a state of their own, a great majority of respondents in the Netherlands responded in the affirmative, as is shown in Table 21. And while Greece is known in Western Europe as a strongly pro-Arab country, both at the official and the public levels, there is a remarkable similar-

ity between British and Greek public attitudes on the Palestinian issue. Table 22 shows response to the same question on scenarios for a possible settlement of the Palestinian problem.

Despite the fact that 12 percent in Britain think of the PLO as freedom fighters, they are nonetheless willing to see the PLO involved in peace negotiations. As Table 23 shows, 39

TABLE 22
British and Greek Attitudes

When the state of Israel was created in 1948, large numbers of Palestinians who lived there became refugees and are still living in camps in other Arab countries. I want to ask you about some suggestions for dealing with this problem, and whether or not they would be acceptable in your opinion. Now, would it be acceptable or not to . . .

	Britain not acceptable	Britain not acceptable	don't know	Greece acceptable	Greece not acceptable	don't know
Leave the Palestinian refugees where they are.	26	54	20	17	64	19
Allow the Palestinian refugees to return; Israel, the West Bank and Gaza to be divided into two separate Jewish and Arab states.	55	21	23	55	22	23
Allow the Palestinian refugees to return, and create a new state, incorporating Israel, the West Bank, and Gaza of which Jews and Arabs would be citizens with equal political and religious rights.	60	22	18	57	20	23

^aMORI Poll, August 14-17, 1982; n=1061.

^bEurodim Poll carried out in the Greater Athens area, March-April 1985.

TABLE 21
Public Opinion in the Netherlands

	Are the Palestinians entitled to a state of their own?		
	Entitled	Not entitled	No answer
August 1979	91	4	5
June 1982	88	7	5
18-24 years	88	8	4
25-34 years	87	10	3
35-49 years	87	9	4
50-64 years	88	4	8
65 and over	92	4	3

TABLE 23
Public Opinion in Great Britain^a

Do you think the PLO should be included in any future Middle East peace talks, or not? Do you think Britain should recognize the PLO as the representative of the Palestinian people, or not?

	Yes	No	Don't Know
Include PLO in peace talks	61	24	15
Recognize PLO	39	35	25

^aAugust 14-17, 1983.

percent agree that Britain should recognize the PLO and 36 percent disagree. However, the British public clearly favors the PLO's participation in peace discussions.

In her analysis of European attitudes toward the conflict, Connie de Boer concludes that "the trend in

European public opinion is toward neutrality."⁵⁰ Ms. de Boer finds that the decline in sympathy for Israel has not been accompanied by an increase in pro-Arab sympathy. Most Europeans prefer not to be involved in the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Palestinian Public Opinion

In the absence of free and open elections, public opinion surveys become, among other indicators, an instrument to gauge the trends and shifts in Palestinian public opinion. Student elections at the main Palestinian universities and at funerals of important figures become occasions for the expression of political preferences.

Several public opinion surveys have been conducted on the West Bank and Gaza. The results give us a measure of key indicators in the political universe of the Palestinians and their preference.

An academic survey conducted in January 1982 among 2,700 Palestinians revealed that 76 percent endorsed the idea of an independent state on the West Bank/Gaza headed by the PLO.⁵¹ Slightly more than 1 percent accepted the idea of autonomy as it is advocated by Israel and the U.S. Only 4 percent believed that the Arab states really support the Palestinian cause, and 42 percent said the Arab states in general are indifferent to the Palestinians or would be willing to plot against them. Two percent thought the majority (89 percent) believed the U.S. is too biased in favor of Israel. One percent viewed King Hussein as the "sole representative" of the Palestinians; 17 percent saw him as a possible co-representative, while 74 percent emphatically rejected him as representing them. Only 10 percent perceived Saudi Arabia as interested in seeking a solution that is beneficial to the Palestinians. A larger proportion, close to one-third, des-

cribed Saudi Arabia as willing to support a solution in line with U.S. interests.

A May 1983 survey of 513 Palestinians focused on relations with Jordan in the context of the then-proposed Jordanian-Palestinian coordination committee. Faced with three options regarding the future of the occupied territories, 55 percent chose an independent Palestinian state; 27 percent said they preferred a confederation with Jordan while keeping an independent status; and 11 percent agreed to a confederation with Jordan based on one central government. Only 12 percent thought King Hussein was sincere about wanting a solution of the Palestinian problem; 66 percent said that Hussein plots against the Palestinians.

Asked if the Palestinians should coordinate with Jordan or Syria in the future, 32 percent said Jordan, 18 percent favored coordinating with Syria, while 40 percent said neither.

An April 1982 survey by *Time* magazine revealed the following:

1. 86 percent wanted a Palestinian state led by the PLO; 50 percent said that Arafat should lead such a state.
2. 98 percent endorsed the idea of an independent Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza.
3. Only 0.5 percent thought the U.S. was helpful to the Palestinians.

Al-Bayader Assiyassi, a West Bank political weekly magazine, conducted four surveys between 1983 and 1985.

The results confirm those obtained in earlier surveys.

How reliable are these surveys given the difficulty of conducting such studies in Third World contexts and given the special circumstances that govern people under a military occupation? The first surveys, conducted by 'Abd al-Sattar Qasim, a political scientist on the West Bank, and by *Time* magazine seem reliable enough. Every effort was made to be candid about the problems encountered, and the methodology was clearly spelled out.

The Israeli military authorities confiscated 110 interviews, arrested the person in charge of the survey, and held him for four days. An additional set of 60 interviews was confiscated. Furthermore, some interviewees thought the interviewers were agents of the occupation authorities. Four hundred refused to be interviewed; some insisted on burning the questionnaire so there would be no evidence against them; some tore up the questionnaire, claiming that it was anti-Islamic.

The sample was large enough and representative enough so that the high refusal rate as well as the confiscation of questionnaires did not significantly alter the results. Question wording appears to be relatively neutral and question order is such that it does not build in a bias.

A more recent public opinion poll of the West Bank and Gaza was conducted by Dr. Mohammed Shadid, a political science professor at Al-Najah University, and Dr. Richard Seltzer of Howard University.⁵² Despite minor problems in sampling, question wording and question order, the survey reveals attitudes and perceptions which other analysts tend to confirm: 93.5 percent of the 1,024 respondents polled believe the PLO is the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people; 71.1 percent prefer Yasser Arafat while only 3.4 percent prefer King Hussein. The United States and King Hussein are blamed for the breakdown in political coordination between Jordan and the PLO.

The majority of respondents (77.9 percent) prefer the establishment of a democratic state for all inside all of

historic Palestine. However, in the interim, most (49.7 percent) would opt for a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza. Only 6.3 percent prefer Jordanian sovereignty. Nearly 85 percent say that conditions of life in the West Bank and Gaza have become worse in

the last five years. Most respondents have experienced some trauma under occupation. Table 24 shows the numbers of individuals who have had direct experiences with the occupation authorities.

TABLE 24
Life Under Occupation (1986)

Circle the items that you or any member of your immediate family have experienced:

	(percent)
(a) Political arrest	47.5
(b) Beatings, physical abuse, or threats	50.7
(c) Harassment or direct insults at Israeli Military check points	55.7
(d) Property or land confiscation	22.8
(e) Ban on travel abroad	34.1
(f) Curfew	74.2
(g) Demolition or sealing of homes	17.6
(h) Deportation or town arrest	15.7
(i) Fines by Military Courts	37.6
(j) I have not experienced any of the above	6.3

Source: *Al-Fajr Newspaper*, September 8, 1986.

Conclusion

By the late 1970's an international consensus appears to have emerged on the question of how to resolve the Palestine problem. The conflict is now viewed as one that pits the Palestinians against the state of Israel, with the Palestinian side as the aggrieved party, homeless and in need of a state of its own. There is substantial support for a settlement based on an international conference where all the parties, including the PLO, meet to discuss the conflict. Most publics do not perceive an independent Palestinian state as a threat to the security of Israel.

American public opinion appears to reflect this international consensus. Israel does enjoy a good measure of sympathy; however, the U.S. public is unwilling to offer Israel uncritical support. At times when U.S. interests in the region are in conflict with Israel's objectives, the public is willing to distance itself from Israel.

Recently conducted studies indicate

that a majority of Americans favor negotiations with the PLO, and think Israel should make concessions by returning most of the territory occupied in June 1967. The results of a June 3, 1987 *Los Angeles Times* nationwide survey of 2,317 adults reveal that Americans hold a mixed view of the government of Israel—37 percent favorable, 30 percent unfavorable and 33 percent not sure. Fifty percent of respondents agree that "in order to bring peace to the Middle East, we (the U.S.) should be willing to talk to all parties involved in the conflict, including the PLO." The vast majority of respondents (61 percent) say that Israel should return at least some of the territory occupied in June 1967 as a condition for peace. Only 21 percent of those interviewed think Israel should keep all of the occupied territories.

A *CBS News/New York Times* poll released April 11, 1987 reveals that for many Americans, the Pollard spy case

is a non-issue. The majority do not think that the case will result in lasting damage to the relationship between the United States and Israel. The majority of respondents were more angry than embarrassed by the case. However, only 33 percent felt the U.S. should take some action against Israel because of its involvement in the spy case.

The vast majority of respondents (69 percent) feel that Israel suggested the sale of arms to Iran in order to "help themselves" rather than to "help the U.S." By a two-to-one margin, Americans also feel that Israel has not cooperated enough with American investigations in Iranian arms sales.

Needless to say, the attitude of the public seems to be sharply at odds with the stated positions of the U.S. Government. The latter reflects a narrow, very determined pro-Israel constituency which finds ready support in Congress and within the Administration.

The public in Western Europe is more in tune with the international consensus. This is also reflected more accurately in the official positions of the various European governments. In Canada, both government and public are in agreement, preferring a neutral, behind-the-scenes diplomatic stance that is consistent with Canada's history.

The Israeli public reflects the intransigent positions of its government. Significant portions appear to be moving toward a more hawkish position, agreeing with Rabbi Meir Kahane's open calls for the expulsion of the Palestinian population. However, a significant portion of the public is willing to endorse the terms of the international consensus and others may swing in this direction if a government consensus on the issue materializes.

The Palestinian public in the West Bank and Gaza supports the PLO and Arafat's leadership and continues to insist on the right of self-determination and the establishment of a separate, independent state. The Palestinians offer negligible support to King Hussein and reject tutelage by any other Arab government.

Notes

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13. Chicago Council on Foreign Relations (CCFR) (1987), p. 23.
14. CCFR (1983), p. 21.
15. CCFR (1987), p. 28.
16. Connie de Boer in *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 47(1), 1983, p. 125.
17. From State Department memo of Dec. 17, 1980 (William Dyess to Ambassador Linowitz and Mr. Saunders).
18. CCFR (1983), p. 21.
19. For a complete text, see *Arab Studies Quarterly*, 4(4) 1982, pp. 358-374.
20. Copies available from the author. The data tape is stored at the Survey Research Center (Ann Arbor, Michigan) and is available for public use.
21. Data available from Roper Center.
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23. *Newsweek*, Aug. 16, 1982.
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25. Gallup Survey, 1/20-23/1978.
26. NBC/AP, Nov. 10, 1981.
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44. Ze'ev Schiff, "The Spectre of Civil War in Israel," *Middle East Journal* 39(2), Spring 1985, pp. 231-245.
45. Dan Horowitz in *Davar*, Dec. 7, 1984; Yossi Melman in *Davar*, May 30, 1985.
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47. Jack Zubrzycki, *Canadian Public Opinion and Government Policy Toward the Middle East* (Washington, D.C.: International Center for Research and Public Policy, 1986).
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49. Connie de Boer, *West European Public Opinion and the Palestine Question* (Washington, D.C.: International Center for Research and Public Policy, 1986).
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51. Murad Asi (1986), pp. 21-22.
52. *Al-Fajr Newspaper*, Sept. 8, 1986; for an account of the controversy surrounding the poll which was co-sponsored by *Newsday* and by the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, see *Columbia Journalism Review*, March/April 1987, pp. 4-6.

Book Views

The Palestine Problem in International Law and World Order

By Thomas Mallison and Sally V. Mallison

London: Longman Group Limited, 1986, pp. 564 including appendices, maps, index, and tables of U.N. resolutions, Israeli laws, and international agreements

Reviewed by Cheryl A. Rubenberg

W. Thomas and Sally V. Mallison's *The Palestine Problem in International Law and World Order* proceeds from the assumption that to protect the fundamental human rights of all the world's peoples it is necessary to move from an international system based on militarism, aggression, power politics, and the maxim that "might makes right" to a global community predi-

cated on universal norms and laws of state behavior, and characterized by justice, peace and security, the rule of law, and human rights values equally available to all people. The Palestine question is presented in this very compelling framework.

In the second half of the twentieth century no people has been more systematically victimized by prevailing international practices, propaganda and politics than the Palestinians. Yet with remarkable lucidity the Mallisons illustrate the real nature, objectives and consequences of Zionism as a "political and secular movement which has used the religion of Judaism for its purposes." (p. 407) The Mallisons set forth in detail and thoroughly refute the Zionist legal arguments from Herzl and Weizmann

through Begin, Blum, and Rostow.

In their first chapter the Mallisons carefully dissect the Balfour Declaration, providing an original historical and juridical analysis that nullifies the document's commonly accepted interpretation as laying the foundation for a Zionist state in Palestine. Rather they demonstrate that the safeguard clauses protecting Palestinian rights in the Declaration transcend the "view" that "favors" a national home for Jews. Equally important, the Mallisons illustrate the juridical and humanistic fallacies in the "Jewish people" nationality claims. They correctly point out that the "Jewish people" concept is for the purpose of separating Jews from all other human persons in the family of man as well as in public law; and that "Zionism is based upon an acceptance of anti-Semitism now and has been so based since its inception in 1897." (p. 79) The treatment of this sensitive issue is particularly useful.

The analysis of Zionism's "Jewish people" postulate leads to an equally significant analysis of the relationship between international Zionist organizations and the Israeli state. The Mallisons clearly show that the constitutional framework of the World Zionist Organization (WZO) and its various subsidiary bodies such as the Jewish Agency and the Jewish National Fund are linked to the Israeli Government so as to constitute a single Zionist/Israeli sovereign entity.

In another chapter the Mallisons examine Palestine rights in international law and demonstrate conclusively that "the Palestinians, without distinction as to religion, were a people *de facto* as the inhabitants of the country named Palestine long before the twentieth century. . . ." (p. 189), and as such possess the right of return, the right not to be deported, national rights as a people and the right to self-determination. The book meticulously documents that these rights are firmly established in customary law and have been reaffirmed in consistent resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly.

In later chapters the Mallisons analyze the juridical status of Jerusalem, Israeli settlements in the occupied territories, and the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon. These analyses confirm with striking irony that Israel, which owes its international legitimacy to U.N. Resolution 181, treats all other United Nations resolutions (including aspects of 181 which have not accorded with its objectives) with cavalier disregard. Similarly, Israel ignores the basic principles of customary and treaty international law, and the U.N. Charter. The Mallisons show conclusively that there is no basis in religious claims, history or law for Israeli sovereignty over Jerusalem; that the Geneva Civilians Convention of 1949 is applicable in all of the territories occupied by Israel since 1967 and Israeli settlements in these territories are in violation of the Convention as well as of the customary law of belligerent occupation as it was developed in the nineteenth century and codified in the Hague Regulations of 1907; and that Israel's war in Lebanon constituted massive viola-

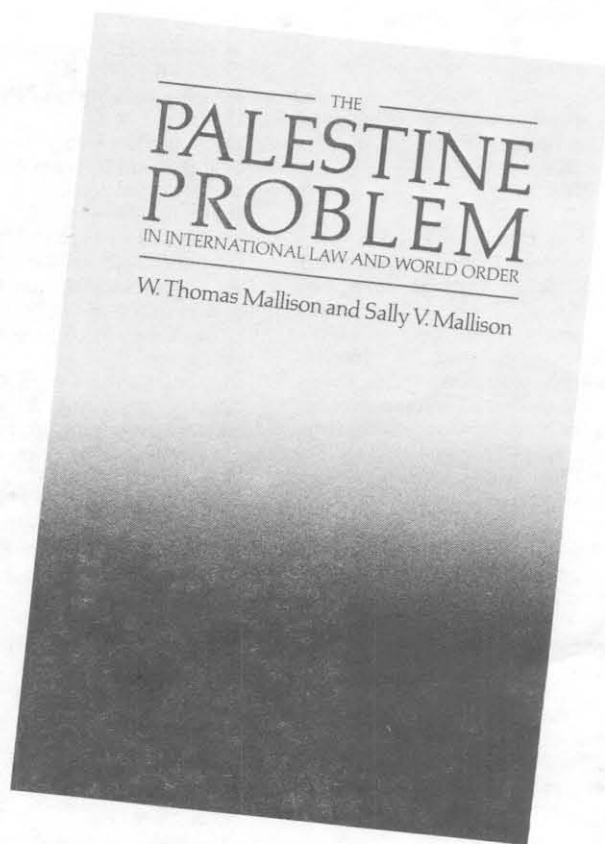
tions of the law of armed conflict.

In a powerful and convincing concluding chapter the Mallisons argue that the solution to the Palestine question resides in the basic elements of United Nations Resolution 181 that provided for the partition of Palestine into two states, one Jewish and one Arab. "The central feature of the two-state solution for Palestine is that it is based on fundamental legal principles which have not been varied since the adoption of the Palestine Partition Resolution of 1947." (p. 417) The Mallisons recognize that this represents a significant "compromise in the sense that the Palestinian people's undoubted right to self-determination as the overwhelming majority of the population of the country in 1947 has now been limited by the introduction of Israeli self-determination within Palestine." (p. 417) Nevertheless they see the two-state compromise—a compromise that has been accepted by the PLO, the Arab states, the European Economic Community, indeed the entire international community excepting Israel and the U.S.—as the most viable solution to the ongoing Palestine/Israel conflict with its inherent potential for global disorder and nuclear catastrophe. They further

argue that to enforce the legal principles involved in the international consensus it will be necessary to impose sanctions on Israel. The Mallisons refute arguments against an "imposed settlement," pointing out that those who oppose it are the same people who sustain the military settlement presently imposed by Israel on the Palestinians. The solution through the application of law will bring peace and the maximum attainable justice to Israelis and Palestinians alike. "The alternative to enforcement of the law is to accept an international system based upon the use of military power outside the law." (p. 424)

The Palestine Problem in International Law and World Order is a superb work of enlightenment compounded of thoroughgoing research, assiduous logic, astute insights, and a compelling sense of justice and humanism. It should be read by all who are interested in the question of Palestine.

Cheryl A. Rubenberg, associate professor of political science, Florida International University, is the author of Israel and the American National Interest: A Critical Examination, University of Illinois Press, 1986.



Books To Order

- W. Thomas Mallison and Sally V. Mallison, *The Palestine Problem in International Law and World Order*, Harlow, Eng: Longman Ltd., 1986, 564 pp., \$39.94. This monumental study of international law analyzes Zionist political-legal objectives, the partition of Palestine, the legal status of Jerusalem, Israeli settlements and Palestinian rights. Our price, \$24.50. See review, page 17.
- Benjamin Beit-Hallahmi, *The Israeli Connection: Who Israel Arms and Why*, New York: Pantheon Books, 1987, 263 pp., \$18.95. This carefully researched book exposes Israel as arms dealer and military trainer of the world's most brutal and reactionary regimes. The author, an Israeli scholar, argues that Israel's war against third world independence movements reflects not only a need for exports markets and a desire to serve as a U.S. proxy but also reflects its own history as a Western imposition upon the hostile third world. Our price, \$11.25.
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- Edward Tivnan, *The Lobby: Jewish Political Power and American Foreign Policy*, New York: Simon & Schuster, 1987, 304 pp., \$19.95. A former reporter for *Time* magazine, Tivnan has thoroughly researched the history of the Zionist lobby in preparing this lively and cogent attack on AIPAC, the American Israel Public Affairs Committee. He argues that by dominating U.S. Jewish opinion, as well as general American debate on the Middle East issues, AIPAC has damaged prospects for an Arab-Israeli peace. Our price, \$12.95.
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- Noam Chomsky, *Pirates and Emperors: International Terrorism in the Real World*, New York: Claremont Research, 1986, 174 pp., \$8.95. Prof. Noam Chomsky's new book is an incisive study of the deceptions and double standards to which U.S. and Israeli officials and the media routinely resort in discussing the issue of terrorism. Includes a sharp critique of U.S. policy in the Mideast. Our price, \$5.50.
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