

20 YEARS AFTER OSLO



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Zogby Research Services

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KEY OBSERVATIONS

- Both Israelis and Palestinians had high expectations at the time of the signing of the Oslo Accords.
- Among Israelis, support for negotiations and the idea of peace has always been more popular than the terms of a peace agreement that might be acceptable to the Palestinians. Palestinians, on the other hand, were more positively inclined toward the outcome of the peace effort than they were toward the process itself.
- Throughout the first decade of the Oslo Accords, Israeli and Palestinian attitudes toward the prospects for peace fluctuated in response to events, but remained high.
- With the failure of Camp David, the second Palestinian Intifada, and the Israeli reconquest of the West Bank, a seismic shift in attitudes occurred. During this period there was a significant decline in support for both negotiations and the Oslo process.
- If the Israeli blind spot has been a failure to understand the anger and lack of trust created by their oppressive policies and behaviors they displayed toward the Palestinians, the Palestinian acceptance of and tolerance for the use of violence has been their counterproductive blind spot.
- Left to themselves, both Israelis and Palestinians lacked the ability to complete what they had begun. They needed forceful help and firm intervention, and it was not forthcoming.

It is ironic that while the lasting contribution of Oslo is the near-universally recognized need for a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, it appears that today both societies are further away from the realization of that goal than they were 20 years ago when they first recognized each other as national communities.



INTRODUCTION

Twenty years have passed since Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat signed the Oslo Accords in Washington, DC, on September 13, 1993.

On the White House lawn, where the signing took place, there was a sense of euphoria. When Arafat and Rabin shook hands, Arabs and Jews, who had long been combatants in the public sphere, turned to each other to embrace and celebrate the moment.

In Israel and the Occupied Territories there were also celebrations, with leaders on both sides expressing optimism about the way forward. Appearing on a live call-in TV show shortly before the signing, Nabil Sha'ath, the chief Palestinian negotiator, was questioned about whether the fledgling Palestinian government would be able to restrain perpetrators of acts of violence against Israelis. He responded, "If the agreement works, and I believe that it will, two years from now our farmers will be cultivating the land that has been liberated, our young men will be working at jobs that have been created, and we will be building the infrastructure of our new state. If, in the midst of all of this, someone were to commit an act of violence, the people would turn to us and say, stop them, because they are threatening everything we've won."¹

There were also Israelis who looked confidently to the future. Israel's Deputy Foreign Minister Yossi Beilin said, "Israel is another Israel, we are ready to change many of our ideas from the past to adapt ourselves to a new reality. The PLO is no longer the same PLO. Things can be done in the Middle East."²

But not everyone was pleased. Israeli critics accused Rabin of surrendering and giving legitimacy to Palestinian terrorists, while Palestinian critics charged that the Oslo documents had too many loopholes and would only prolong the Israeli occupation.

By any measure, the Accords were incomplete. They were full of ambiguities, areas where the parties fudged over differences because they could not find agreement. And resolution of the most critical issues of Jerusalem, borders, settlements, refugees, and security arrangements were put off until after a five-year transitional period. One observer, at the time, described the Accords as more like "a cry for help" than a peace agreement. It was as if Israelis and Palestinians were saying, "This is a start, as far as we can go. We need help to get to the finish line."

1 Interview with Nabil Sha'ath by James Zogby. *A Capital View*. September 8, 1993.

2 Ford, Peter. (Sept. 13, 1993). An 'unthinkable' peace dawns in the Middle East. *Christian Science Monitor*.

But even with the flaws and the ambiguities, what was undeniable was that Israel and the PLO had taken unprecedented steps, breaking taboos and shattering myths.

In the first place, Israelis and Palestinians formally recognized each other as national communities. While Palestinians had committed themselves to a two-state solution in 1988, signing this agreement with the Israelis recognizing the legitimacy of an independent Israeli state represented a dramatic breakthrough. Israel also had an issue with recognition. Until Oslo they had refused to acknowledge the existence of a Palestinian people. And they had not only refused to talk to the PLO, but had also insisted that others shun the group as well. In 1985, speaking at a Washington event, Rabin was quoted as saying, “Whoever agrees to talk to the PLO means he accepts its principle of the creation of an independent Palestinian state,” and this was unacceptable.³ In acknowledging the PLO, Israel not only opened the door to a Palestinian state, but also shattered the anti-PLO taboo (that it had established). For years, the heavy-handed political clout of American supporters of Israel had tormented Arab Americans and others, punishing them for “contact” with the “forbidden” group.

The Oslo Accords also shattered the myth that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict was insoluble, the result of an “age-old” conflict that was “in the genes” of both communities. Oslo did not provide a solution, but it demonstrated that with political will it might be possible to find one.

There were other breakthroughs resulting from Oslo. While no Palestinian state came into being, the locus of Palestinian authority and decision-making moved for the first time to the Palestinian territories. And while the occupation remained an oppressive fact of life for most Palestinians, even the limited pullback of Israeli forces from some West Bank and Gaza cities and towns gave Palestinians welcome respite.

The Oslo Accords provided for an initial Israeli limited deployment that would lead to a five-year transitional phase, during which negotiations would continue. It was at the end of this five-year period that the parties would begin work in earnest to resolve the so-called “final status” issues. The operative assumption behind this approach was that with five years of peaceful relations sufficient trust would have developed giving the negotiators the space to tackle the thorniest issues. For the process to play out as it was envisioned, several things had to occur:

- The role of the United States had to shift from being an observer, with an inclination to support one side, to a fully engaged, balanced participant. As the Accords made clear, Israelis and Palestinians could go no further on their own. They needed an external partner to heed their cry for help and shepherd them through to the end.
- The parties had to move quickly. In drawing up their timetables, the architects of Oslo did not factor in the ability of a suicide bomber, settlers on a rampage, or excessive force by Israeli occupation forces to derail or unravel the process. Violence from Palestinians and Israeli

³ Jewish Telegraphic Agency (JTA). (June 4, 1985). Rabin rejects international conference which would include USSR in negotiations. <http://www.jta.org/1985/06/04/archive/rabin-rejects-international-conference-which-would-include-ussrnegotiations>

settlers who opposed Oslo eroded public confidence in the peace process, making it politically difficult for the negotiators to complete their work.

- Provisions had to be made to bring the benefits of peace to both sides in order to sustain their confidence in a five-year process. The problem was that while Israel's economy grew quite quickly after Oslo, the Palestinian economy contracted. Because of unrestrained Israeli behaviors, in the first two years after Oslo settlements grew at an unprecedented rate; and because of restrictive Israeli policies, Palestinian unemployment doubled, income fell, and businesses closed because they could not freely import or export.

In the end, the flaws of Oslo proved fatal. Today, the number of Israeli settlers has doubled; the Palestinian economy remains dependent on Israeli goodwill and international largess; and thousands of Palestinians and Israelis have died, victims of acts of terror, disproportionate military assaults, and settler violence. As a result, confidence and trust are at a low point.

In the immediate aftermath of the signing, despite the flaws and the attacks of the critics, the Accords received strong support in Israel and the Palestinian territories.

Public opinion polling showed just how widespread the optimism was. In the first poll done in Israel after the Oslo signing, public support of the agreement stood at 61%.⁴ A Gallup poll from the same period found 65% of Israeli respondents approved of the Oslo Accords, while only 13% said they were "very much against" it.⁵

The earliest survey of Palestinian opinion showed much the same, with two-thirds of Palestinian respondents saying they agreed with the "Gaza-Jericho First" agreement (i.e., Oslo Accords). The poll conducted by the Center for Palestine Research and Studies just days before the signing ceremony on the White House lawn also found that 45% of respondents believed that the agreement would ultimately lead to a Palestinian state and the realization of Palestinian rights.⁶ Then, following the signing, the Jerusalem Media and Communication Centre, in cooperation with CNN and France 2, conducted a poll that found 69% of Palestinian respondents approved of the agreement and 60% believed it was a realistic step leading toward a Palestinian state.⁷

But opponents were not to be silenced by the euphoria or the celebrations.

4 Poll was conducted by Mina Zemach of the Dahaf Research Institute and its results were published in *Yediot Achronot*. See Leon, Dan. (1995). Israeli public opinion polls on the peace process. *Palestine-Israel Journal*, 2(1). <http://www.pij.org/details.php?id=676>

5 Shlaim, Avi. (2005). Chapter 11: The Rise and Fall of the Oslo Peace Process, in Louise Fawcett (ed.), *International Relations of the Middle East*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 241-261. <http://users.ox.ac.uk/~ssf0005/The%20Rise%20and%20Fall%20of%20the%20Oslo%20Peace%20Process.html>

6 Center for Palestine Research and Studies. (September, 1993). Public Opinion Poll #1: The Palestinian-Israeli Agreement: "Gaza-Jericho First," September 10-11, 1993. <http://www.pcpsr.org/survey/cprspolls/94/poll1.html>

7 Jerusalem Media and Communications Center. (September, 1993). Public Opinion Poll No. 3: On Palestinian Attitudes on PLO-Israel Agreement, September 19-21, 1993. <http://www.jmcc.org/documentsandmaps.aspx?id=503>

In Israel, the LIKUD bloc in the Knesset and their allies in the settler movement made clear their opposition to Oslo and began to organize against the Accords. Since Prime Minister Rabin did not have a strong and committed majority supporting his government, he was somewhat constrained. A vigorous campaign was mounted, not only against the Accords, but also against Rabin. With the LIKUD spearheading the effort, the anti-Rabin, anti-Oslo rhetoric became so intense that after an assassin took her husband's life, Leah Rabin blamed Ariel Sharon and Benjamin Netanyahu for creating the environment that led to his death.

Israeli settlers also got into the act; with increasing ferocity they provoked or attacked Palestinians and seized or destroyed their land and orchards. With the weakness of the government, the settlers operated with impunity, as did the military whose harsh treatment of Palestinians both in the territories and at crossing points into Israel only served to humiliate and create feelings of anger.

Working with allied groups in Washington, the LIKUD also set up an information program to influence members of the U.S. Congress to oppose the "peace process." And when Republicans took control of Congress in the 1994 elections, LIKUD had a partner in their efforts to derail Oslo, Rabin, and Clinton.

Hamas and other Palestinian critics of Arafat also stepped up efforts to criticize and/or sabotage the agreement that had been signed by the PLO. Since they had only limited influence to shape the internal Palestinian debate and no interest at all in impacting American opinion, Hamas chose to operate using the classic terrorism formula. They committed high visibility acts of violence against Israeli civilians that were designed to create fear among the Israeli public and provoke an Israeli military response. The Israeli retaliation was almost always disproportionate and indiscriminate—more like collective punishment—serving Hamas' goals of undercutting the Palestinian public's confidence in the PLO and the Accords.

* * *

The history of the 20 years since the signing of the Accords can be broken into a number of discrete periods. During each of these periods both positive and negative events occurred that affected Israeli and Palestinian sentiment toward confidence in peace and in the idea of a negotiated solution to the conflict that was at the heart of the Oslo process itself.

Tracing the trajectory of public sentiment throughout this 20-year period demonstrates the ebb and flow of Israeli and Palestinian support for peace. Unfortunately, no single metric can be found that would enable us to make a comparison of how the two societies reacted to events that occurred during the past two decades.

There is, nevertheless, a wealth of data on Israeli and Palestinian opinion, compiled from a number of different sources:

- Among Israelis, the "Oslo Monthly Support Index" was compiled from June 1994 to February 2008, initially by the Tami Steinmetz Center for Peace Research at Tel Aviv University and then

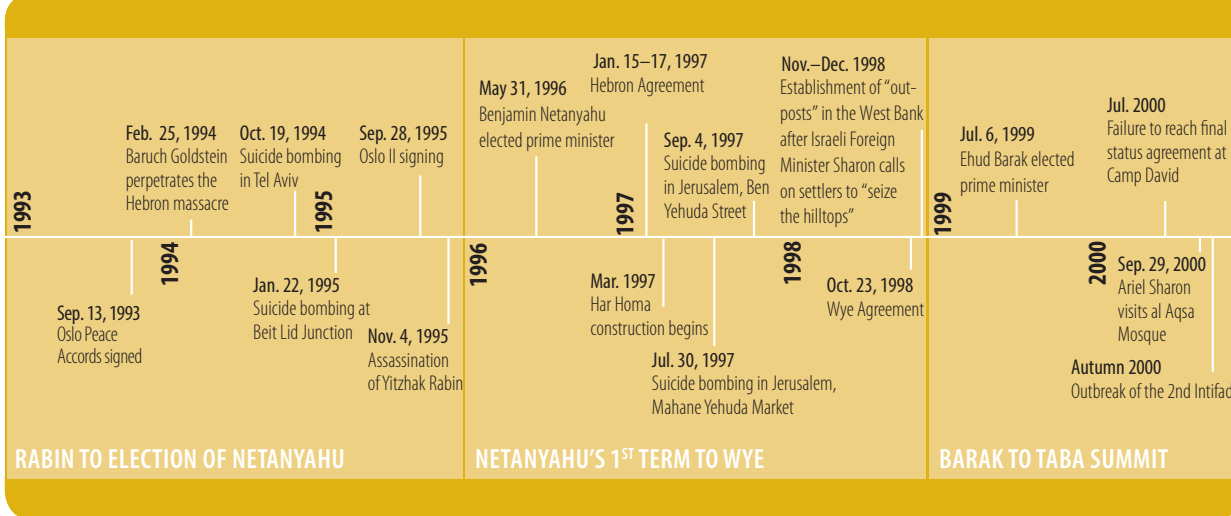
by the Israel Democracy Institute and the Evens Program in Mediation and Conflict Resolution at Tel Aviv University. The same source is also responsible for the “Negotiations Support Index”—begun in 1994 and continuing today. These indices do provide a useful measure of attitudes over time—and how Israeli opinion reacts to positive and negative events, as they occur. Their weakness for our purposes is two-fold: the responses used to calculate these indices are to very general questions; and no similar questions were asked of Palestinians.

- Beginning in 2003, both the Daniel Abraham Center and the Truman Research Institute have polled Israeli opinion on more specific questions including support for a two-state solution and support for the details of the framework proposed by President Clinton in 2001.
- In September 1993 the Jerusalem Media and Communications Centre conducted the earliest survey of Palestinian attitudes toward the Oslo Accords and its terms. More generally, from 1997 to 2009 they polled Palestinians on their support or opposition to negotiations with Israelis. The same group has also collected data from 1997 to the present on Palestinian attitudes toward “military operations against Israeli targets” and from 2001 to 2010 they have measured attitudes toward a two-state versus a one-state solution.
- Between 1993 and 2000, the Center for Palestinian Research and Studies conducted a series of polls including questions about Palestinian support for Oslo, support for negotiations, and general outlook of the respondents. Surveys after 2000 were done by the Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research, which partnered with the Truman Center in Israel, asking identical questions about the Clinton plan.
- In addition, there are other polls that have been conducted by Gallup or local polling firms in Israel or Palestine.

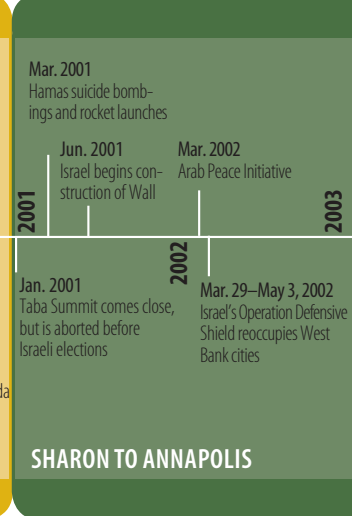
The following analysis makes use of much of this data in an effort to learn how both societies’ attitudes toward peace changed over time and how they reacted to events as they occurred.

TIMELINE OF THE 20

CLINTON YEARS 1993–2000

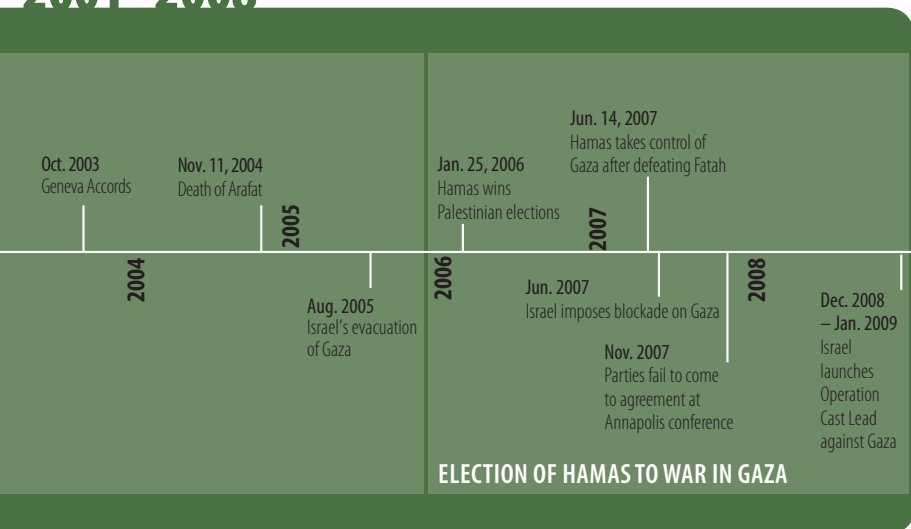


BUSH YEARS

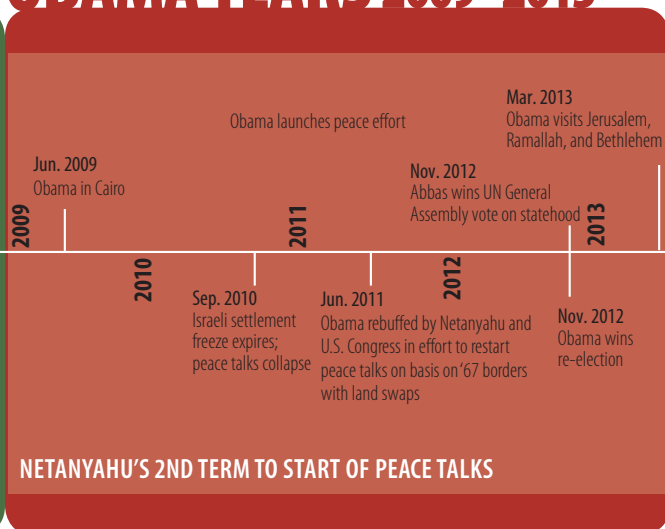


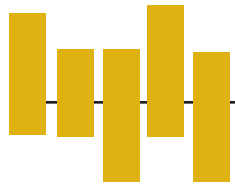
YEARS SINCE OSLO

2001–2008



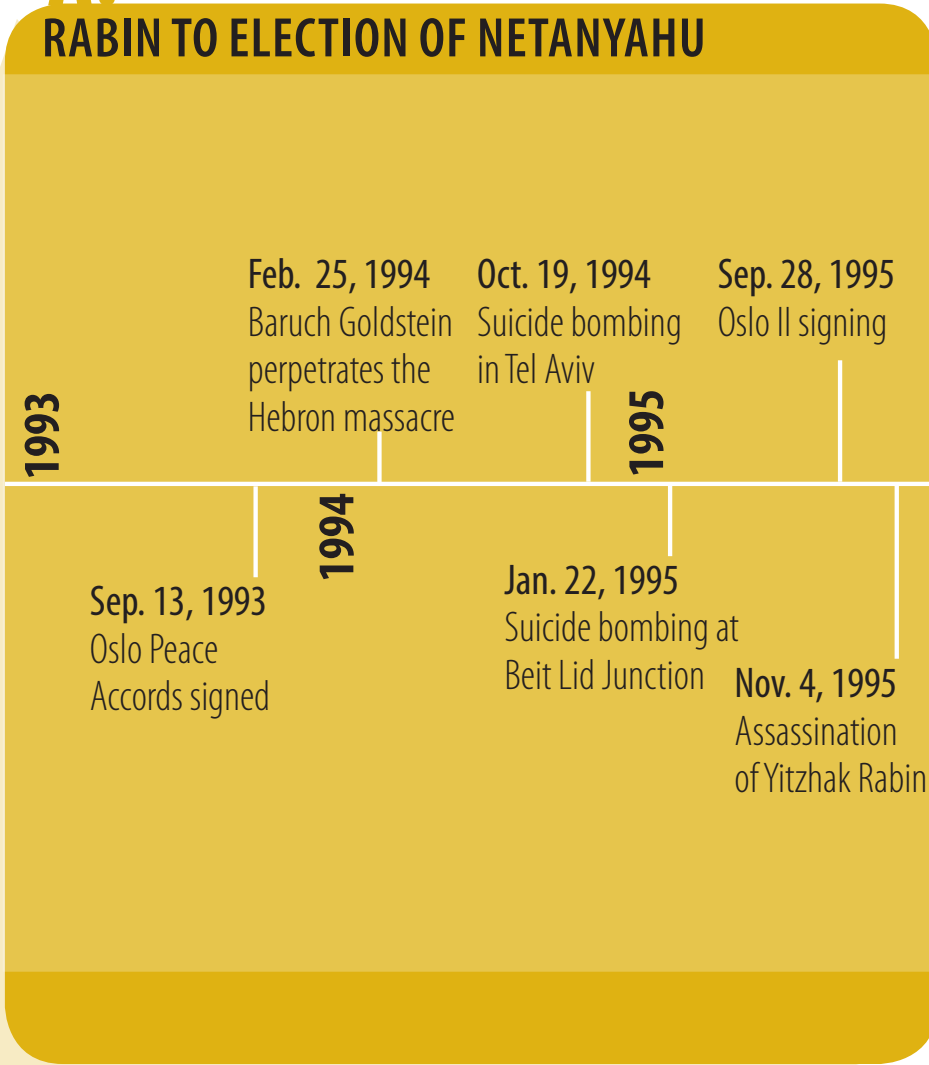
OBAMA YEARS 2009–2013



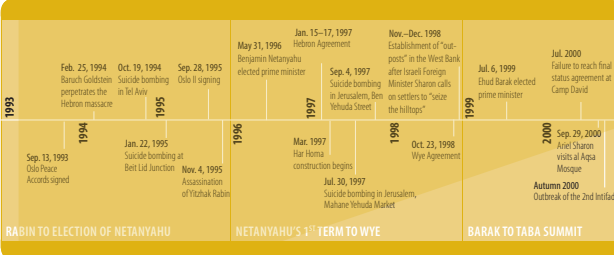


CLINTON YEARS 1993–2000

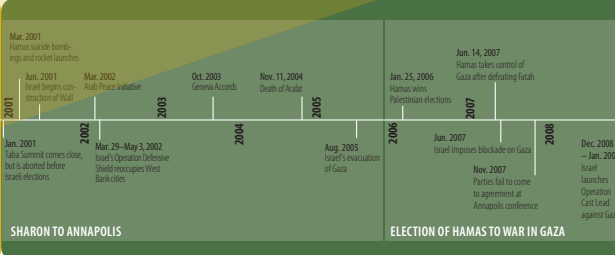
A. RABIN TO ELECTION OF NETANYAHU



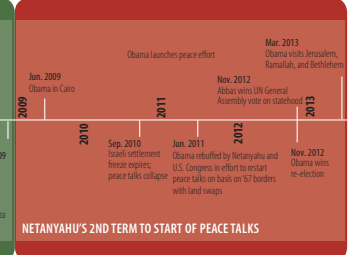
CLINTON YEARS 1993–2000



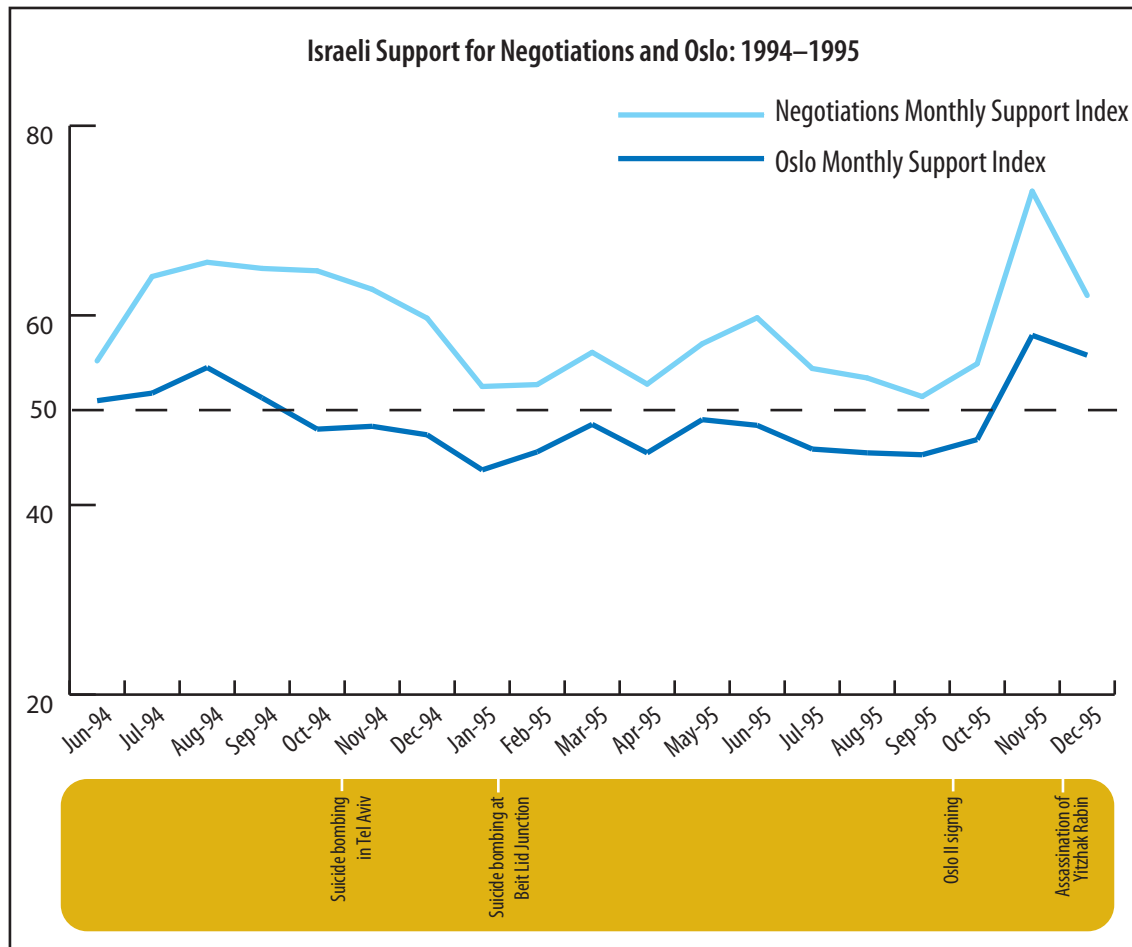
BUSH YEARS 2001–2008



OBAMA YEARS 2009–2013



ISRAELI ATTITUDES



As noted above, since June 1994 a monthly survey has been conducted to monitor Israeli public opinion regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the peace process, and specifically the Oslo Accords. From 1994-2010, this project was directed by the Tami Steinmetz Center for Peace Research at Tel Aviv University, and since 2010 it has been a collaboration between the Israel Democracy Institute’s Guttman Center for Surveys and Tel Aviv University’s Evens Program for Mediation and Conflict Resolution. Two monthly indexes are produced: the Oslo Monthly Support Index and the Negotiations Monthly Support Index. The latter of these was created by aggregating replies to the following two questions, representing Israeli support for the peace process:

1. *In general, do you consider yourself a supporter or opponent of the peace process between Israel and the Arabs?*
2. *Do you believe or not believe that in the coming years there will be peace between Israel and the Arabs?*

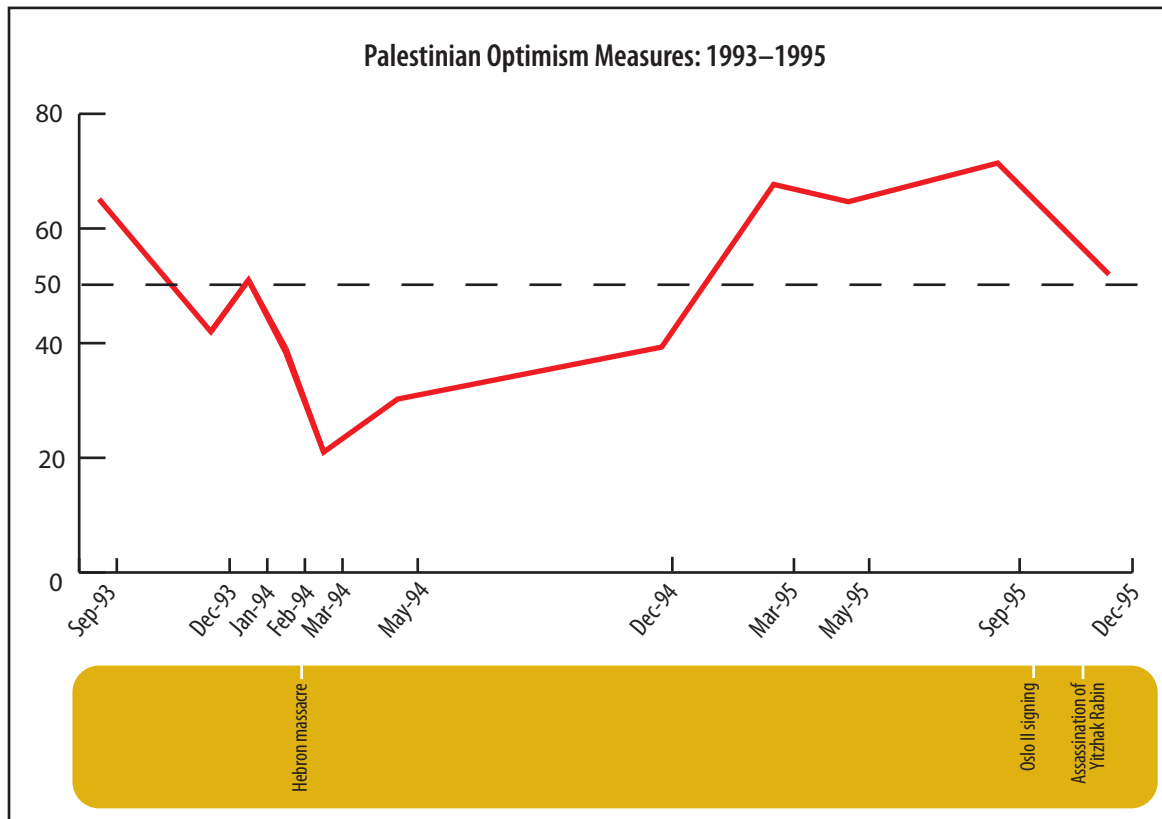
Between June 1994 and February 2008, responses to the next two questions were used to calculate a monthly index representing Israeli support specifically for the Oslo Accords:

1. What is your opinion on the agreement that was signed in Oslo between Israel and the PLO (Agreement of Principles)?

2. Do you believe or not believe that the Oslo Agreement between Israel and the PLO will bring about peace between Israel and the Palestinians in the coming years?

Support for the peace process, which had been around 60-65% at the time of the Oslo signing in September 1993, remained at this level for the second half of 1994. During 1995, the index fell slightly and wavered between 50-60%, until a brief but dramatic spike to 73% in November 1995, immediately following the assassination of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, resulting most likely from the international support that was forthcoming. The Oslo Monthly Support Index parallels the Negotiations Index, but at a level about 8-10 points lower, indicating that the specifics of Oslo held less appeal even in this early period than the notion of negotiating a settlement in general.⁸

PALESTINIAN ATTITUDES



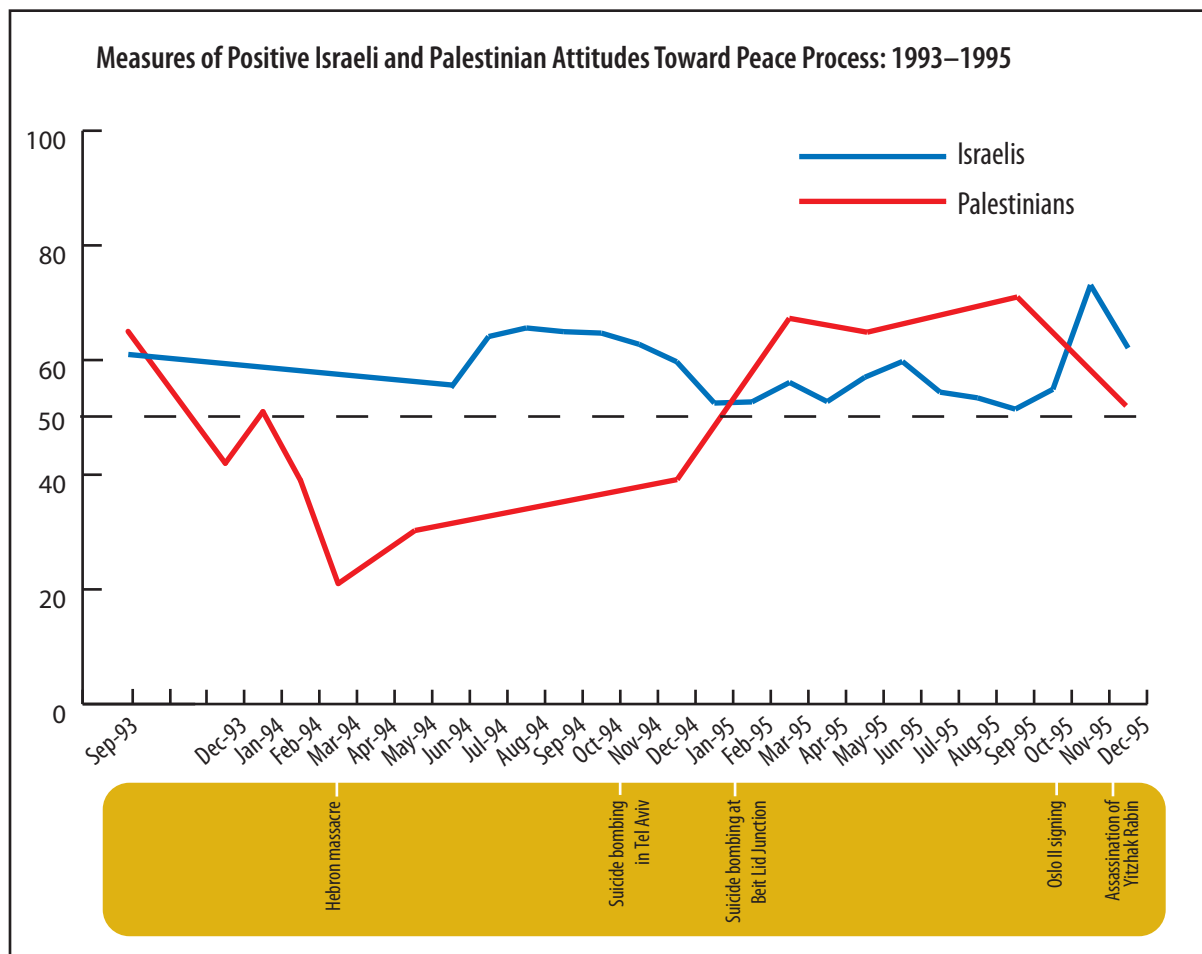
While there are no existing tracking polls for Palestinians during this period, a series of polls conducted by the Center for Palestinian Research and Studies asks three questions intermittently that serve as a gauge of

⁸ For a description of the indices, see IDI's Guttman Center for Surveys page on The Peace Index: <http://en.idi.org.il/tools-and-data/guttman-center-for-surveys/the-peace-index/>. For access to all the available data and reports related to the Negotiations Monthly Support Index and the Oslo Monthly Support Index, see The Peace Index website: <http://www.peaceindex.org/defaultEng.aspx>.

the general outlook of Palestinians toward the peace process.⁹ The questions sometimes vary in wording from poll to poll but revolve around the following ideas: (1) support for or opposition to Oslo, (2) optimism or pessimism given the current circumstances, and (3) whether negotiations between Palestinians and Israelis should continue or not. Positive responses to these three questions (i.e., support for Oslo, optimism, and support for continuing negotiations) are aggregated here to develop a trend-line of positive Palestinian outlook during this period.

The elation of the Oslo Accords signing in September 1993 begins to decline almost immediately, as Palestinians' expectations of change and relief from the occupation are let down. Positive attitudes bottom out after the massacre in Hebron in February 1994 with just 21% of respondents feeling optimistic in March of that year. A steady growth in optimism follows and by early 1995 almost two-thirds of Palestinian respondents are positive about the continuation of negotiations. The assassination of Rabin halts this momentum, however, ending the period with a slim majority of Palestinians (52%) feeling positive about the peace process, a reaction opposite to that of the Israeli public.

COMPARING ISRAELI AND PALESTINIAN ATTITUDES



⁹ Center for Palestinian Research and Studies. Index of Polls conducted between 1993 and 2000. <http://www.pcpr.org/survey/cprspolls/index.html>

A comparison of Israeli and Palestinian attitudes during this period reveals the very different reactions to the same events. As noted above, both groups emerge from the Oslo Accords signing with considerable optimism and confidence in this new path. But while Israeli opinion is markedly stable throughout this early period, the positive outlook of Palestinians begins to decline in the months following the signing and takes a nosedive following the Hebron massacre in February 1994. It then grows in 1995 surpassing the initial afterglow of Oslo. Interestingly, while the Israeli commitment to the peace process spikes upward after Rabin's assassination, Palestinian confidence in the negotiations falls following this event.

B.

NETANYAHU'S 1ST TERM TO WYE

1996	May 31, 1996 Benjamin Netanyahu elected prime minister	Jan. 15–17, 1997 Hebron Agreement	Nov.–Dec. 1998 Establishment of “out-posts” in the West Bank after Israeli Foreign Minister Sharon calls on settlers to “seize the hilltops”
	Mar. 1997 Har Homa construction begins	1997	1998
	Jul. 30, 1997 Suicide bombing in Jerusalem, Mahane Yehuda Market	Sep. 4, 1997 Suicide bombing in Jerusalem, Ben Yehuda Street	Oct. 23, 1998 Wye Agreement

CLINTON YEARS 1993–2000

1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
Sep. 13, 1993 Oslo Peace Accords signed	Feb. 25, 1994 Bausch-Goldstein perpetrates the Hebron massacre	Oct. 19, 1994 Suicide bombing in Tel Aviv	Sep. 28, 1995 Oslo II signing	May 31, 1996 Benjamin Netanyahu elected prime minister	Jan. 15–17, 1997 Hebron Agreement	Sep. 4, 1997 Suicide bombing in Jerusalem, Ben Yehuda Street	Jul. 6, 1999 Ehud Barak elected prime minister
RABIN TO ELECTION OF NETANYAHU	Jan. 22, 1995 Suicide bombing at Beit Lid Junction	Nov. 4, 1995 Assassination of Yitzhak Rabin	Mar. 1997 Har Homa construction begins	Jul. 30, 1997 Suicide bombing in Jerusalem, Mahane Yehuda Market	Oct. 23, 1998 Wye Agreement	Jul. 2000 Failure to reach final status agreement at Camp David	Sep. 29, 2000 Ariel Sharon visits al Aqsa Mosque
			NETANYAHU'S 1 ST TERM TO WYE			BARAK TO TABA SUMMIT	

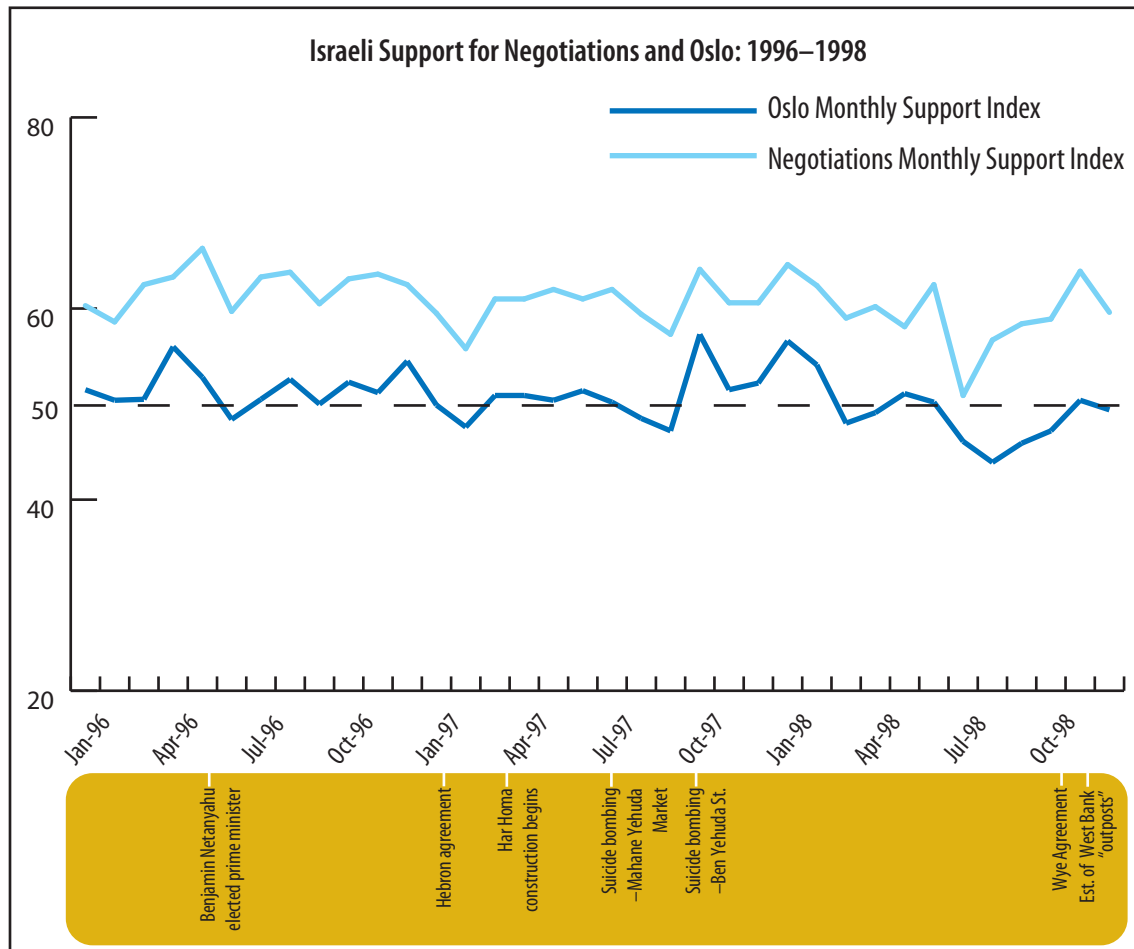
BUSH YEARS 2001–2008

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Mar. 2001 Hamassuicide bombings and rocket launches	Jun. 2001 Israel begins construction of Wall	Mar. 2002 Arab Peace Initiative	Oct. 2003 Geneva Accords	Nov. 11, 2004 Deaths of Khaled	Jan. 25, 2006 Hamass wins Palestinian elections	Jun. 14, 2007 Hamass takes control of Gaza after defeating Fatah	Dec. 2008 – Jan. 2009 Israel launches Operation Cast Lead against Gaza
Jan. 2001 Talab Summit centers close, but is aborted before Israeli elections	Mar. 29–May 3, 2002 Israel's Operation Defensive Shield encloses West Bank cities	Aug. 2005 Israel's evacuation of Gaza	Jun. 2007 Israel imposes blockade on Gaza	Nov. 2007 Parties fail to come to agreement at Annapolis conference			
SHARON TO ANNAPOLIS					ELECTION OF HAMAS TO WAR IN GAZA		

OBAMA YEARS 2009–2013

2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Jun. 2009 Obama in Cairo	Sep. 2010 Israel settlement freeze expires, peace talks collapse	Jun. 2011 Obama rebuffed by Netanyahu and U.S. Congress in effort to restart peace talks on basis of '67 borders with land swaps	Nov. 2012 Abbas wins UN General Assembly vote on statehood	Mar. 2013 Obama visits Jerusalem, Ramallah, and Bethlehem
				Nov. 2012 Obama wins re-election
				NETANYAHU'S 2 ND TERM TO START OF PEACE TALKS

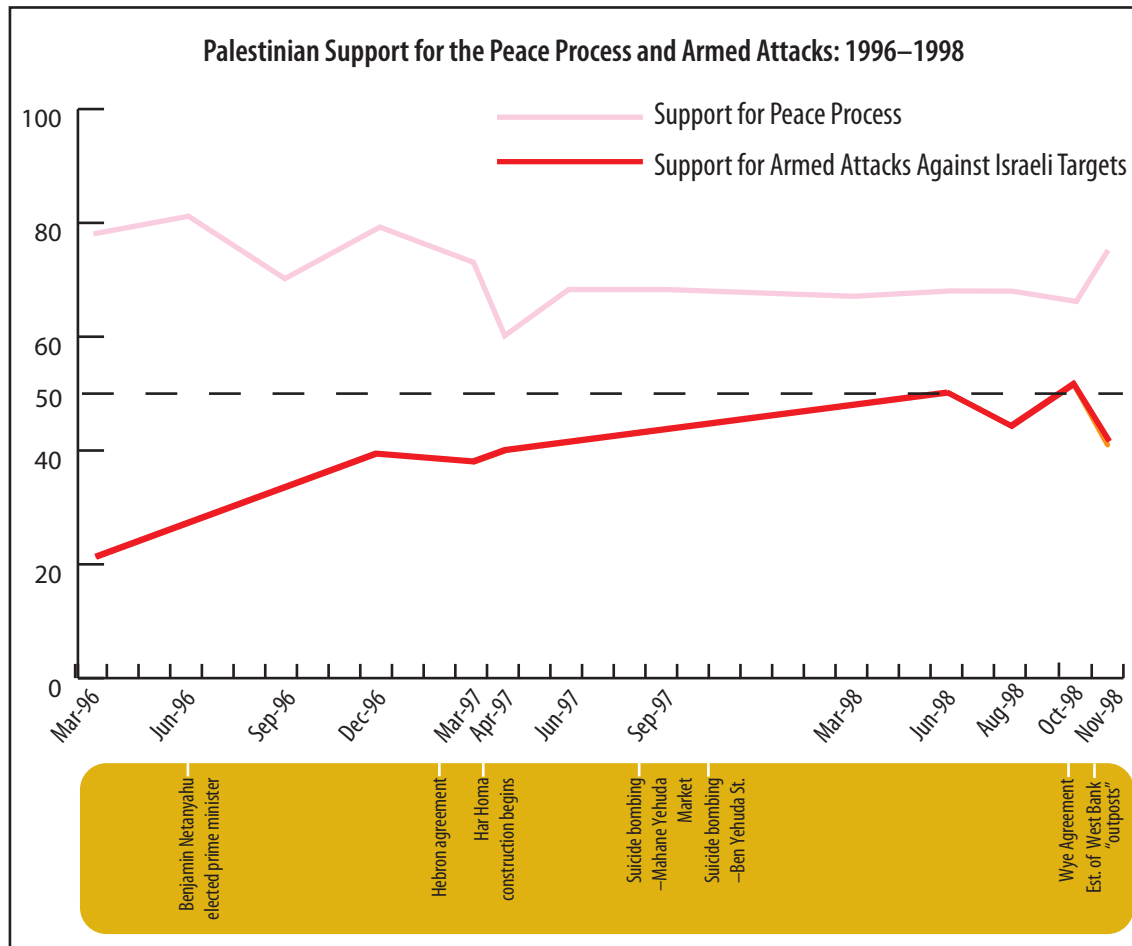
ISRAELI ATTITUDES



Despite being elected on a platform committed to ending the Oslo process, in the period between the election of Benjamin Netanyahu as Israeli prime minister in May 1996 and the Wye Agreements he signed in October 1998, Israeli public support for negotiations and for Oslo remained relatively stable. The more general support for the peace process hovered around the 60% mark and support for Oslo specifically hovered around 50%. However, when we examine the timeline more closely, we do see reaction to particular events of note. For example, the election of Netanyahu coincides with a dip from 56% support for Oslo in April 1996 to 48% in June (and 66% support for negotiations in May to 60% in June). Other dips occur in February 1997, following the completion of the Hebron Agreement in January, and in August and September of 1997, following suicide bombings in Jerusalem on July 30 and September 4. An uptick is evident, however, at the end of this period when the Wye Agreements are reached in October 1998.¹⁰

¹⁰ The Peace Index, <http://www.peaceindex.org/defaultEng.aspx>

PALESTINIAN ATTITUDES



Polls by the Center for Palestinian Research and Studies pose several questions with slightly different wordings about support for the peace process and Oslo. Responses to these questions are aggregated in the graph above. In addition, a number of surveys during this time period ask respondents about their support for armed attacks against Israeli targets; the growth in support for such acts reflects increased Palestinian frustration. These results are also plotted above.¹¹

This period begins and ends with strong support from Palestinians for continuing the peace process, with more than three-quarters of respondents saying they support the peace process during the first half of 1996. This reaches a high of 81% in June, despite the recent election of Benjamin Netanyahu as Israeli prime minister at the end of May. Support falls considerably in April 1997 to 60% of respondents, perhaps a reaction to the disappointing Hebron Agreement and the beginning of construction at Har Homa, an Israeli settlement between Bethlehem and East Jerusalem, in March.

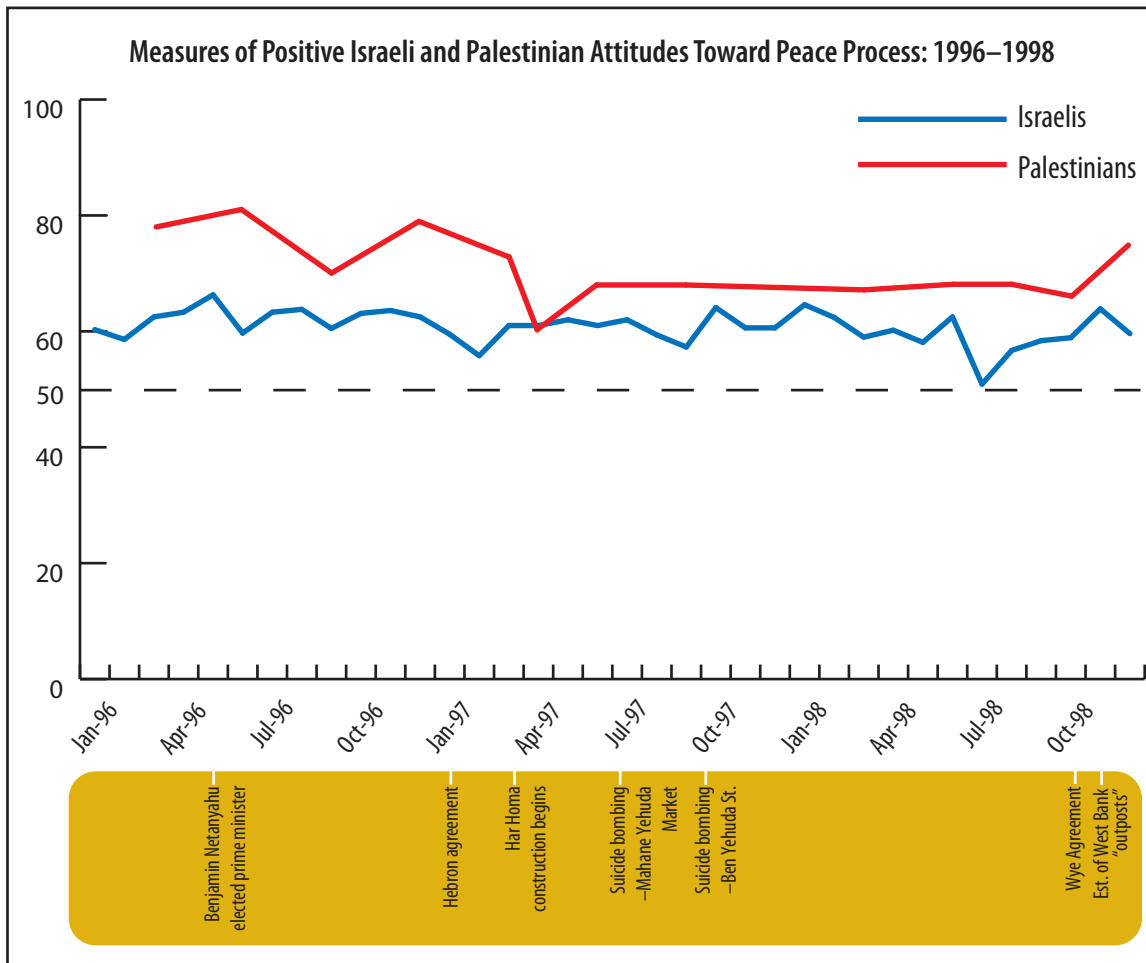
We see a marked increase during the first half of this time period in the level of Palestinian support for armed attacks against Israeli targets, with just 21% of respondents saying they support such acts in March

¹¹ Center for Palestinian Research and Studies. Index of Polls conducted between 1993 and 2000. <http://www.pcpsr.org/survey/cprspolls/index.html>

1996 and a doubling of this sentiment by April 1997 to 40%. By June 1998 half of all Palestinian respondents say they agree with such attacks, a result duplicated in October, 1998 (51%).

Support for the peace process rebounds to about two-thirds of Palestinian respondents for the remainder of this period, and then increases in November 1998 after the Wye Agreements to 75%. This last poll of the period also shows a decline in the support for armed attacks to 41%.

COMPARING ISRAELI AND PALESTINIAN ATTITUDES



Looking at the measures of Israeli and Palestinian support for the peace process together, there appear to be moments of in-tandem rise and fall of support as well as moments of divergence. For example, relative low points in September 1996 are clear in both communities, while high points are reached in December 1996. A divergence of opinion, however, is evident at the end of 1998 when Palestinian support rises and Israeli support declines in the wake of the Wye Agreements.

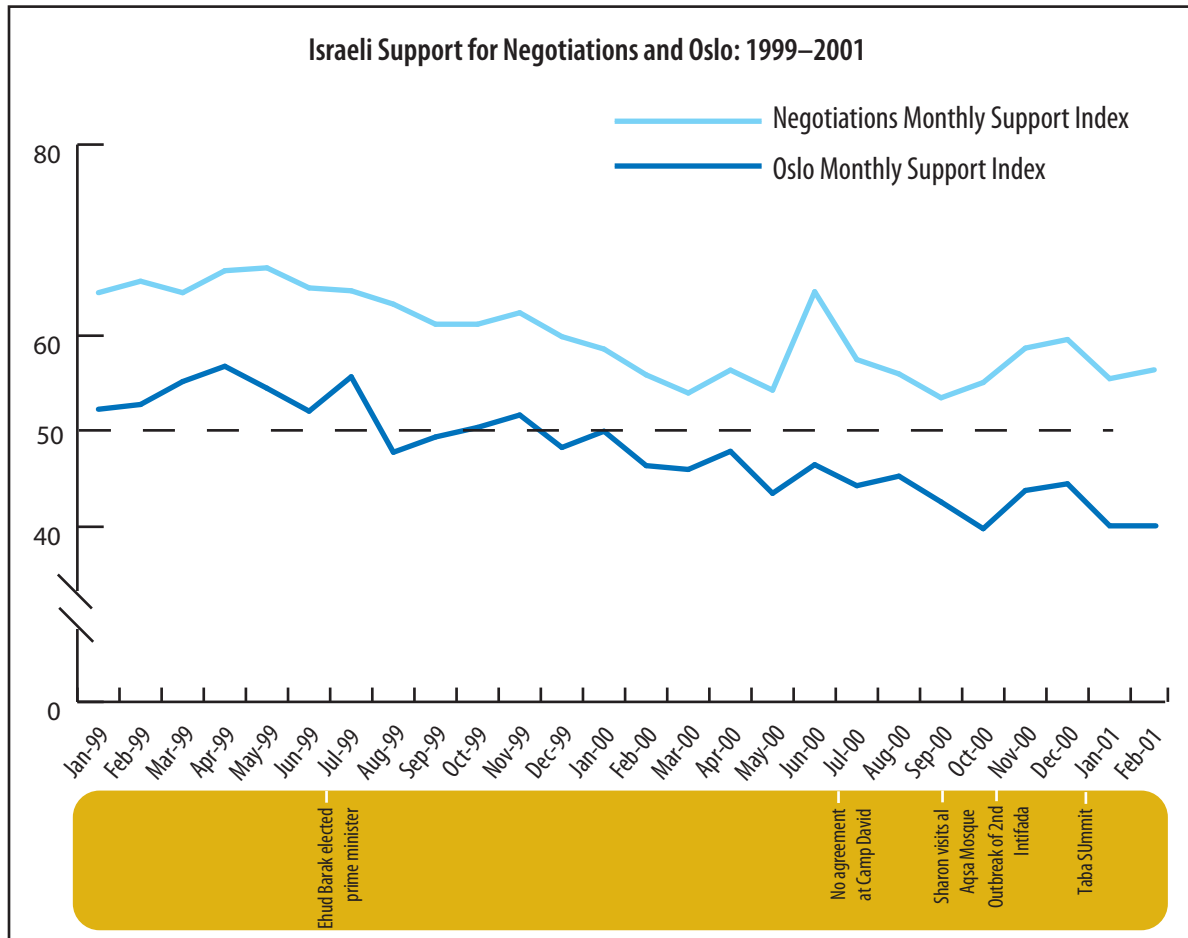
In many ways the fate of Oslo was sealed during this period. Benjamin Netanyahu had been elected prime minister on a platform committed to ending the Oslo Process and what he termed “this galloping

forward to the '67 borders.”¹² Netanyahu had been pressed by U.S. President Bill Clinton to participate in the Wye Plantation talks. At the time, Israeli peace activist Uri Avnery commented that Netanyahu would either refuse to go, or go and refuse to sign an agreement, or sign an agreement and fail to implement it.¹³ Palestinians had their own concerns. Given the stalled peace process and the distorted way the Oslo Accords were being implemented, they felt that what they were being asked to sign on to at Wye amounted to “compromise of a compromise of a compromise” moving them further away from the Accords’ original intent.

In the end, Netanyahu signed the Wye Agreement and as a respected Israeli journalist noted, “He never implemented it.”¹⁴ Caught on tape in 2001, speaking to a group of supporters, Netanyahu observed, “From that moment on I, de facto, put an end to the Oslo Accords.”¹⁵

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- 12 From 2001 video of Netanyahu that surfaced in 2010. Quoted widely, including, for example:
Kessler, Glenn. (July 16, 2010). Netanyahu: ‘America is a thing you can move very easily.’ *Washington Post*.
Tibi, Ahmad. (Sept. 3, 2010). Pressing Netanyahu is the key to success in Mideast peace talks. *Los Angeles Times*.
- 13 Avnery, Uri. (Oct. 19, 1998). Netanyahu’s last will and testament. *Ma’ariv*.
- 14 Caspit, Ben. (Sept. 17, 2013). Netanyahu to US: Iran for Palestine? *Al-Monitor Israel Pulse*.
- 15 Tibi, 2010.

ISRAELI ATTITUDES

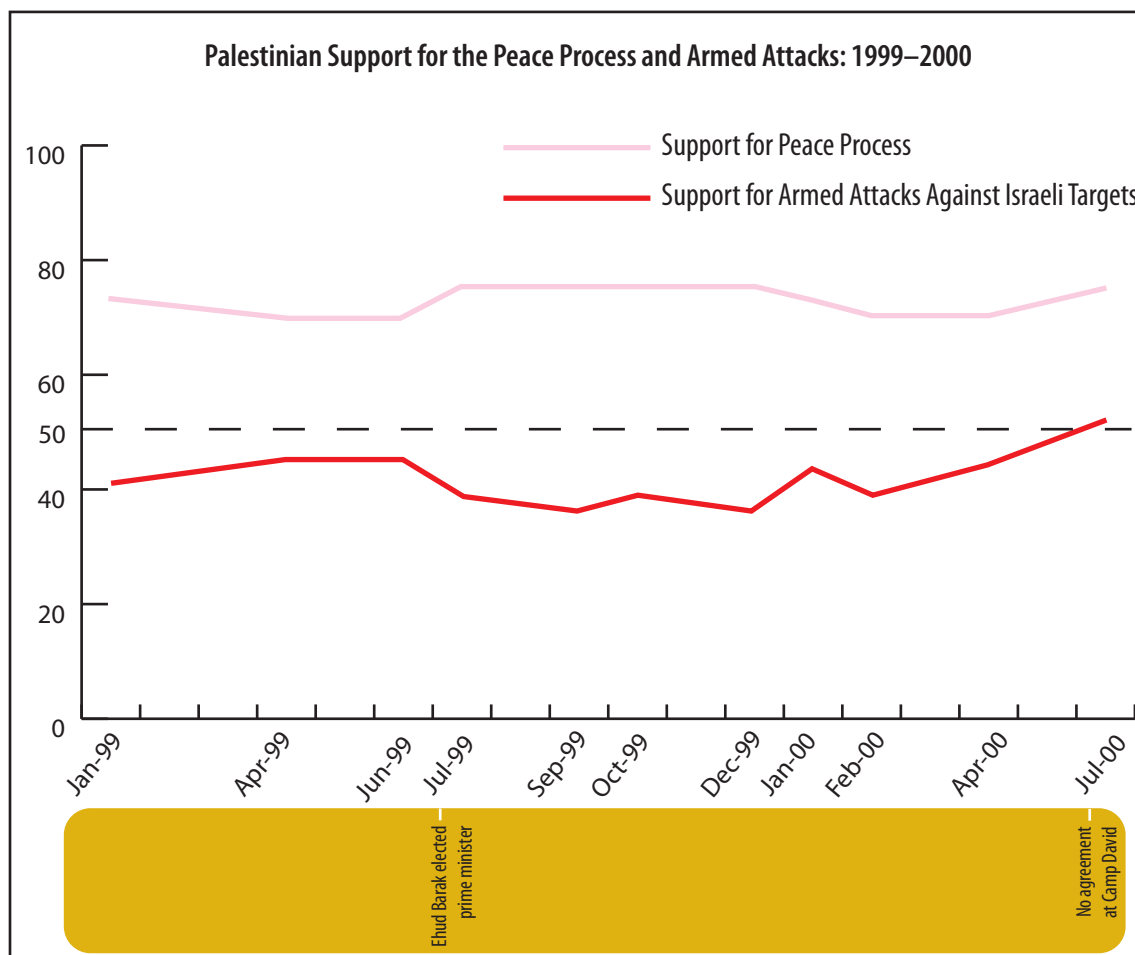


The period from 1999 to the beginning of 2001 was a tumultuous time that included Ehud Barak’s term as prime minister, the Camp David talks that ended in an impasse, the visit by Ariel Sharon to the al Aqsa Mosque sparking the second Intifada, and the failure of Israeli-Palestinian negotiations to finalize an agreement at the Taba Summit before Prime Minister Barak suspended the effort owing to electoral considerations.

During this period, Israeli public support for the peace process in general and for Oslo in particular falls about 10 points, from 65% to 56% and from 52% to 40%, respectively. There is only one evident spike in support for negotiations, from 54% in May 2000 to 65% in June, just prior to the Camp David talks in July.¹⁶ This otherwise steady decline marks the beginning of a seismic shift in Israeli public opinion about the peace process.

16 The Peace Index, <http://www.peaceindex.org/defaultEng.aspx>

PALESTINIAN ATTITUDES



During this period, the Center for Palestinian Research and Studies surveys consistently asked respondents:

1. *Do you support or oppose the current peace process between Palestinians and Israelis?*
2. *Concerning armed attacks against Israeli targets, I [support/oppose].*

The responses to these two questions are graphed above. For most of this period, from January 1999 to July 2000, support for the peace process and support for armed attacks against Israeli targets were in inverse relationship. From July 1999 to February 2000 support for the peace process was at about 75%, while support for armed struggle stayed below 40%. However, as 2000 wore on, despite a steady 70-75% of respondents in favor of continued negotiations, support for armed attacks grew to a high of 52% by July.¹⁷

Additional polling by the Jerusalem Media and Communication Centre also shows steady support, albeit at a slightly lower level (56%-60%), for the Oslo formula and/or the current peace process from February

¹⁷ Center for Palestinian Research and Studies. Index of Polls conducted between 1993 and 2000. <http://www.pcpr.org/survey/cprspolls/index.html>
 Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research: Survey Research Unit, <http://www.pcpr.org/survey/index.html>

1999 to June 2000. However, by the time the next JMCC survey was completed, in December 2000, five months after the impasse at Camp David and three months into the second Intifada, just 39% of respondents say they support the Oslo framework and 46% say they support the peace process. More strikingly, while a March 1999 poll found that 36% of Palestinian respondents “support the continuation of military operations against Israeli targets as an appropriate response under current political conditions,” and 56% oppose them, by December of 2000, 72% support military operations and just 17% do not.¹⁸

Given the unstable conditions that existed throughout the Palestinian territories in 2000 and 2001, very little relevant polling of Palestinian opinion was conducted during this time period.

CAMP DAVID, THE SECOND INTIFADA, AND THE MITCHELL REPORT

The events that capped this period are subject to continuing debate with Prime Minister Barak faulting the Palestinians for rejecting his generous offer and the Palestinians maintaining that no firm offer was ever made.

President Clinton had invited the Israelis and Palestinians to a summit at Camp David despite Palestinian concerns that such a summit was premature since there had been insufficient preparation and no agreement was within reach. In response, Clinton promised that it would be a “no fault” affair—committing that no side would be blamed should the summit end in an impasse.

When Clinton later blamed the failure of Camp David on Arafat for rejecting Barak’s offer, he not only broke his pledge but also helped to crystallize the anti-Palestinian narrative that took hold in Israel and the United States. This narrative helped shape Israeli belief that Palestinians weren’t interested in peace, while reinforcing the Palestinian conviction that the United States could not be counted on as an impartial mediator.

There is also continuing debate about the events that followed: Ariel Sharon’s provocative entry into the Haram as Sharif and the beginning of the second Palestinian Intifada. The most balanced treatment of these events remains the Mitchell Report—commissioned by President Clinton and delivered to President Bush in April of 2001.

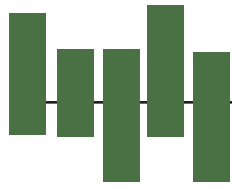
Mitchell concludes that Sharon’s visit to Haram as Sharif, which U.S. officials had urged then Prime Minister Ehud Barak to prohibit, did not directly cause the al Aqsa Intifada, but that its “provocative effect should have been foreseen.” In addition, the report notes that there is no reason to conclude either that the Palestinian Authority was seeking an opportunity to begin a campaign of violence, or that the Israeli government deliberately planned to respond with lethal force. Rather, “the roots of the current violence extend much deeper ... both sides have a ... profound disillusionment with the behavior of the other in failing to meet the expectations arising from the peace process.” Both Israelis and Palestinians felt the other side had

18 JMCC. (March, 1999). Poll No. 31 - On Palestinian Attitudes Towards Politics; JMCC. (Dec., 2000). Poll No. 39 - Four Months after the Beginning of the Palestinian Intifada: Attitudes of the Israeli and Palestinian Publics Towards the Peace Process. Available from: <http://www.jmcc.org/polls.aspx>

acted in bad faith, turning “the optimism of Oslo into the suffering and grief of victims and their loved ones.”¹⁹

The charge given to Mitchell by President Clinton was not only to assess what had caused the breakdown, but also to provide recommendations that would help lead the parties back to negotiations. After receiving the report, President Bush, unfortunately, did not fully commit his administration to implementing its recommendations. As a result of a combination of Bush’s neglect, then Prime Minister Ariel Sharon’s intransigence, and the continuing Palestinian Intifada, the ongoing and accelerating violence further derailed the peace-making effort.

19 Mitchell, George J. (April 30, 2001). *Report of The Sharm el-Sheikh Fact-Finding Committee*.



BUSH YEARS

2001–2008

A.

SHARON TO ANNAPOLIS

Mar. 2001
 Hamas suicide bombings and rocket launches

Jun. 2001
 Israel begins construction of Wall

Mar. 2002
 Arab Peace Initiative

Oct. 2003
 Geneva Accords

Nov. 11, 2004
 Death of Arafat

2001

2003

2005

2002

Mar. 29–May 3, 2002
 Israel's Operation Defensive Shield reoccupies West Bank cities

2004

Aug. 2005
 Israel's evacuation of Gaza

CLINTON YEARS 1993–2000

1993 Sep. 13, 1993 Oslo Peace Accords signed	1994 Feb. 25, 1994 Baruch Goldstein perpetrates the Hebron massacre	1995 Oct. 19, 1994 Suicide bombing in Tel Aviv	1995 Sep. 28, 1995 Oslo II signing	1996 May 31, 1996 Benjamin Netanyahu elected prime minister	1997 Jan. 15–17, 1997 Hebron Agreement	1997 Sep. 4, 1997 Suicide bombing in Jerusalem, Ben Yehuda Street	1998 Nov.–Dec. 1998 Establishment of "outposts" in the West Bank after Israeli Foreign Minister Sharon calls on settlers to "seize the hilltops"	1999 Jul. 6, 1999 Ehud Barak elected prime minister	2000 Jul. 2000 Failure to reach final status agreement at Camp David
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RABIN TO ELECTION OF NETANYAHU

NETANYAHU'S 1ST TERM TO WYE

BARAK TO TABA SUMMIT

BUSH YEARS 2001–2008

2001 Mar. 2001 Hamas suicide bombings and rocket launches	2001 Jun. 2001 Israel begins construction of Wall	2002 Mar. 2002 Arab Peace Initiative	2003 Oct. 2003 Geneva Accords	2004 Nov. 11, 2004 Death of Arafat	2005 Aug. 2005 Israel's evacuation of Gaza	2006 Jan. 25, 2006 Hamas wins Palestinian elections	2007 Jun. 14, 2007 Hamas takes control of Gaza after defeating Fatah	2008 Jun. 2007 Israel imposes blockade on Gaza	2008 Dec. 2008 – Jan. 2009 Israel launches Operation Cast Lead against Gaza
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SHARON TO ANNAPOLIS

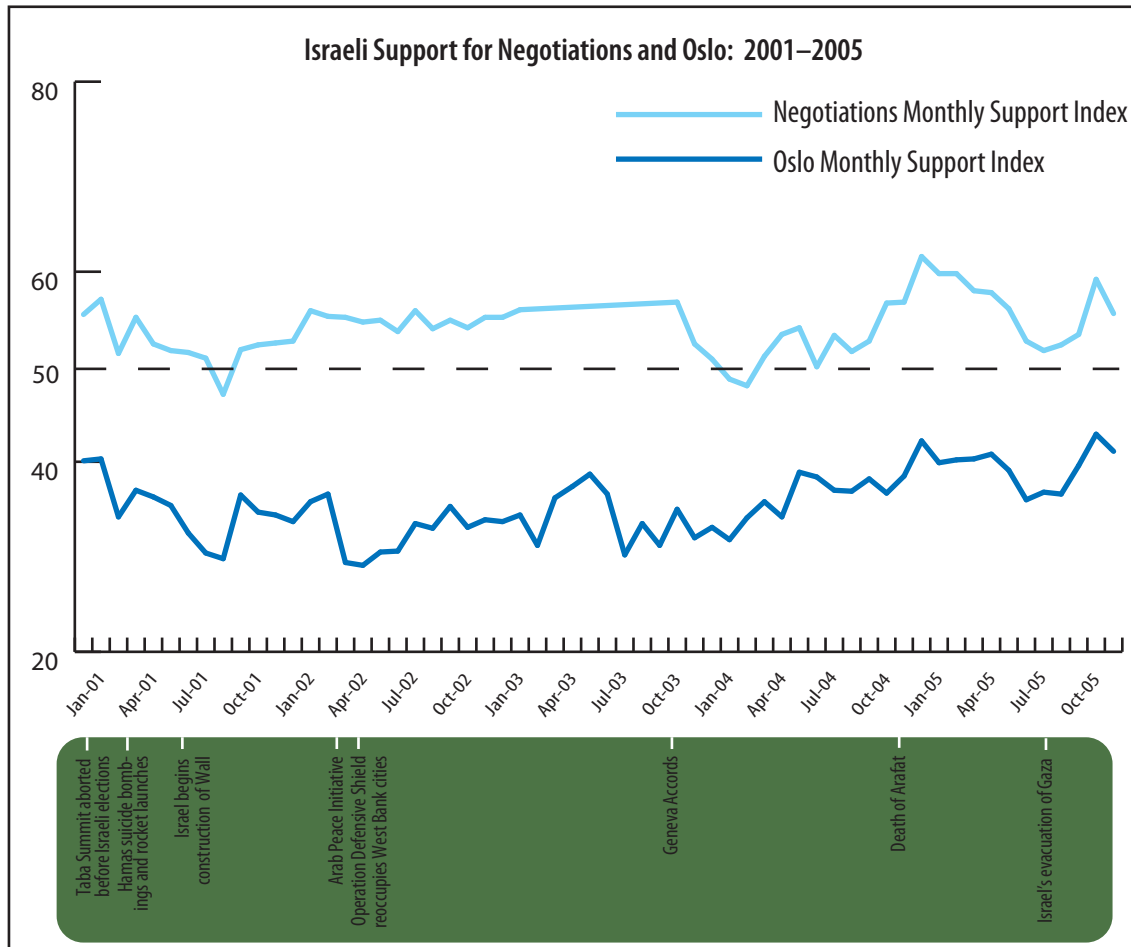
ELECTION OF HAMAS TO WAR IN GAZA

OBAMA YEARS 2009–2013

2009 Jun. 2009 Obama in Cairo	2010 Sep. 2010 Israeli settlement freeze expires; peace talks collapse	2011 Jun. 2011 Obama rebuffed by Netanyahu and U.S. Congress in effort to restart peace talks on basis of 67 borders with land swaps	2013 Mar. 2013 Obama visits Jerusalem, Ramallah, and Bethlehem
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NETANYAHU'S 2ND TERM TO START OF PEACE TALKS

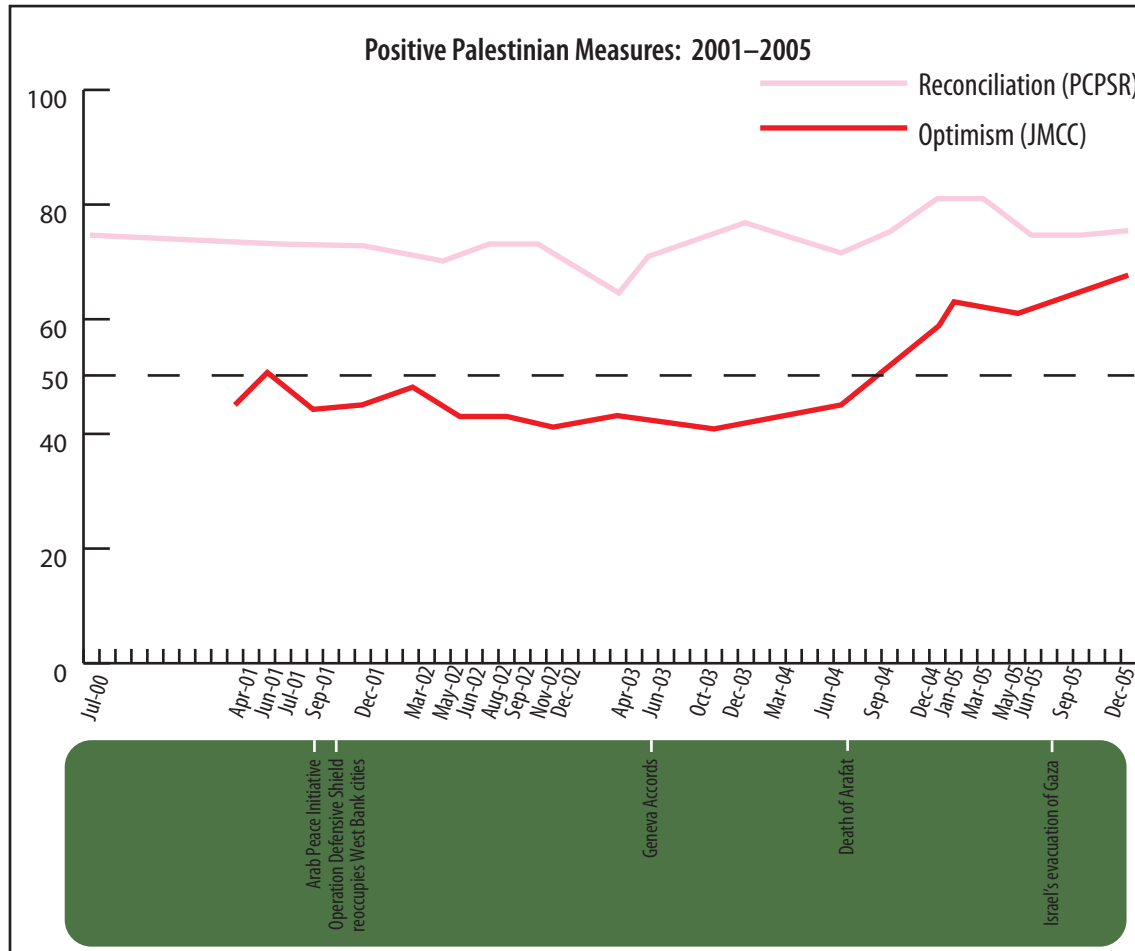
ISRAELI ATTITUDES



During the period of 2001-2005, a majority of Israelis continue to support negotiations with the Palestinians albeit at lower levels than in the previous decade. A dip in support occurs in the summer of 2001, when the initial construction of the Wall begins, while an uptick to 60% occurs at the end of 2004 and the beginning of 2005. This peaked interest in negotiations may have been a response to the death of Arafat in November 2004. Support for Oslo fluctuates between 30% and 40% for this five-year period, with a parallel decline (to 30%) in summer 2001, and rise in late 2004 and early 2005, to just over 40%.²⁰

²⁰ The Peace Index, <http://www.peaceindex.org/defaultEng.aspx>

PALESTINIAN ATTITUDES



According to surveys by the Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research (PCPSR) conducted throughout this period, between 70% and 80% of respondents say they “support reconciliation between the two peoples after reaching a peace agreement leading to the establishment of a Palestinian state recognized by Israel.” Optimism is, however, relatively low from 2001 to 2004, hovering around 45%, though it does rise significantly in December of 2004 to 59% and ends the period in December of 2005 at 68% during the lead up to the Palestinian elections.²¹

At the same time, however, public support for armed attacks against Israeli soldiers and settlers in the West Bank and Gaza Strip spikes dramatically to about 90% for most of this period. Additionally, from the end of 2001 until the end of 2004, a majority say they support armed attacks against Israeli civilians inside of Israel. These numbers begin to decline sharply in 2005, but are still about 40% by the end of the year.²²

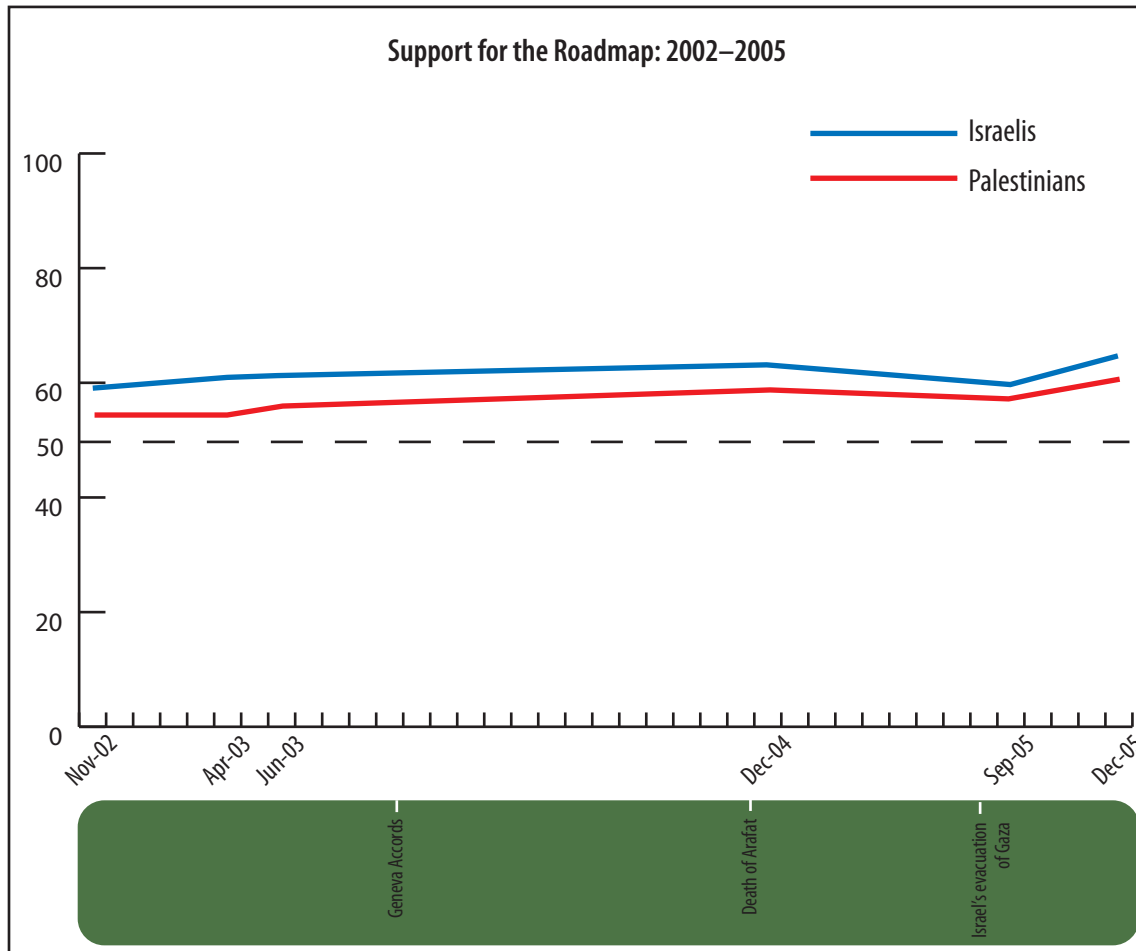
Support for Oslo dwindled from 58% in June of 2000 to 30% in September of 2001. Opposition to Oslo reached its apex in September of 2002, when 66% said they opposed the Oslo framework while just 29%

21 JMCC, <http://www.jmcc.org/polls.aspx>

22 Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research: Survey Research Unit, <http://www.pcpsr.org/survey/index.html>

still supported it.²³ JMCC ceased asking Palestinian respondents about their support of Oslo in December 2002.

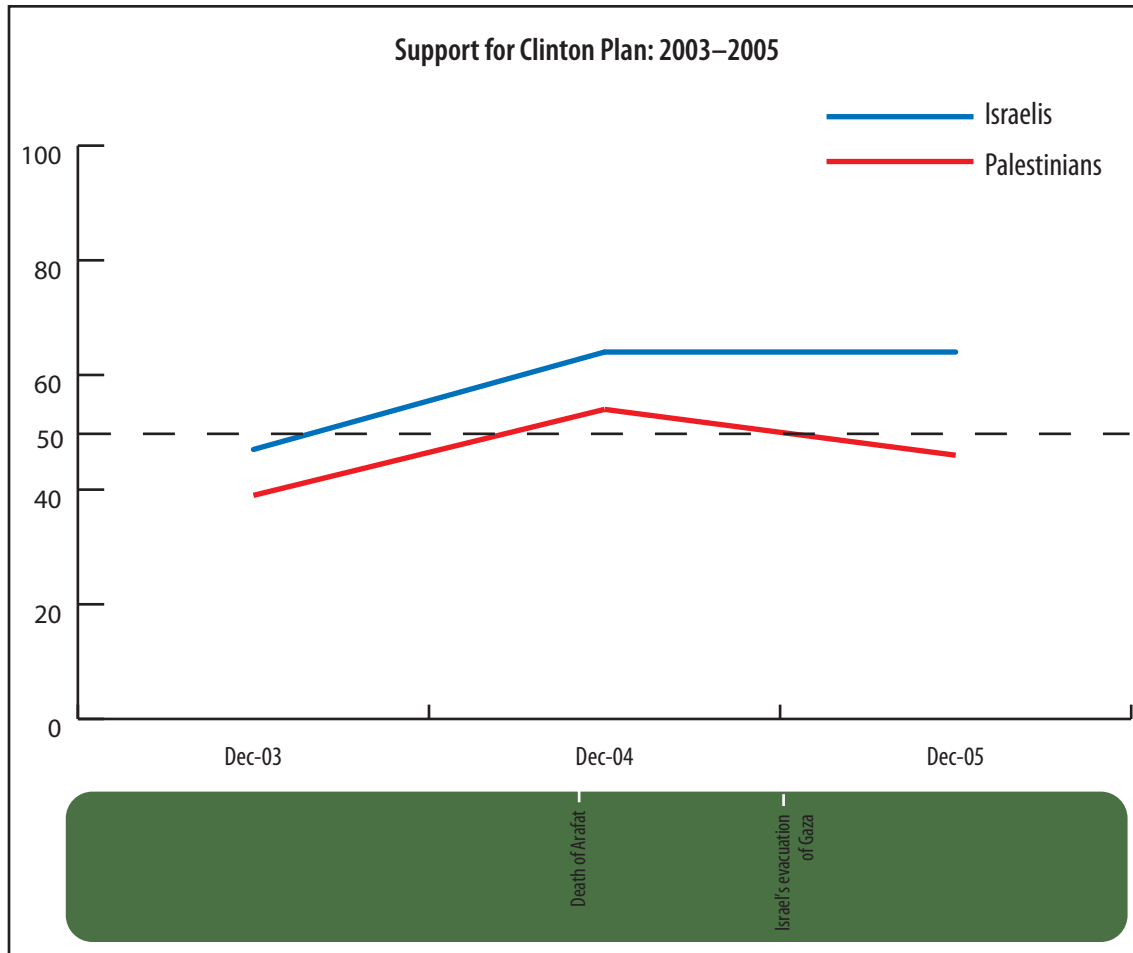
COMPARING ISRAELI AND PALESTINIAN ATTITUDES



Around the same time, joint polls conducted by the Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research and the Truman Institute for the Advancement of Peace at the Hebrew University, Jerusalem, began intermittently asking Palestinians and Israelis about their support for the Roadmap, first with respect to the draft plan released in November 2002 and then referring to the final plan issued in April 2003 by the United States and the “Quartet” (the U.S., European Union, Russia, and the United Nations). Majorities of respondents in both communities consistently expressed support for this formula during this period.²⁴

²³ JMCC, <http://www.jmcc.org/polls.aspx>

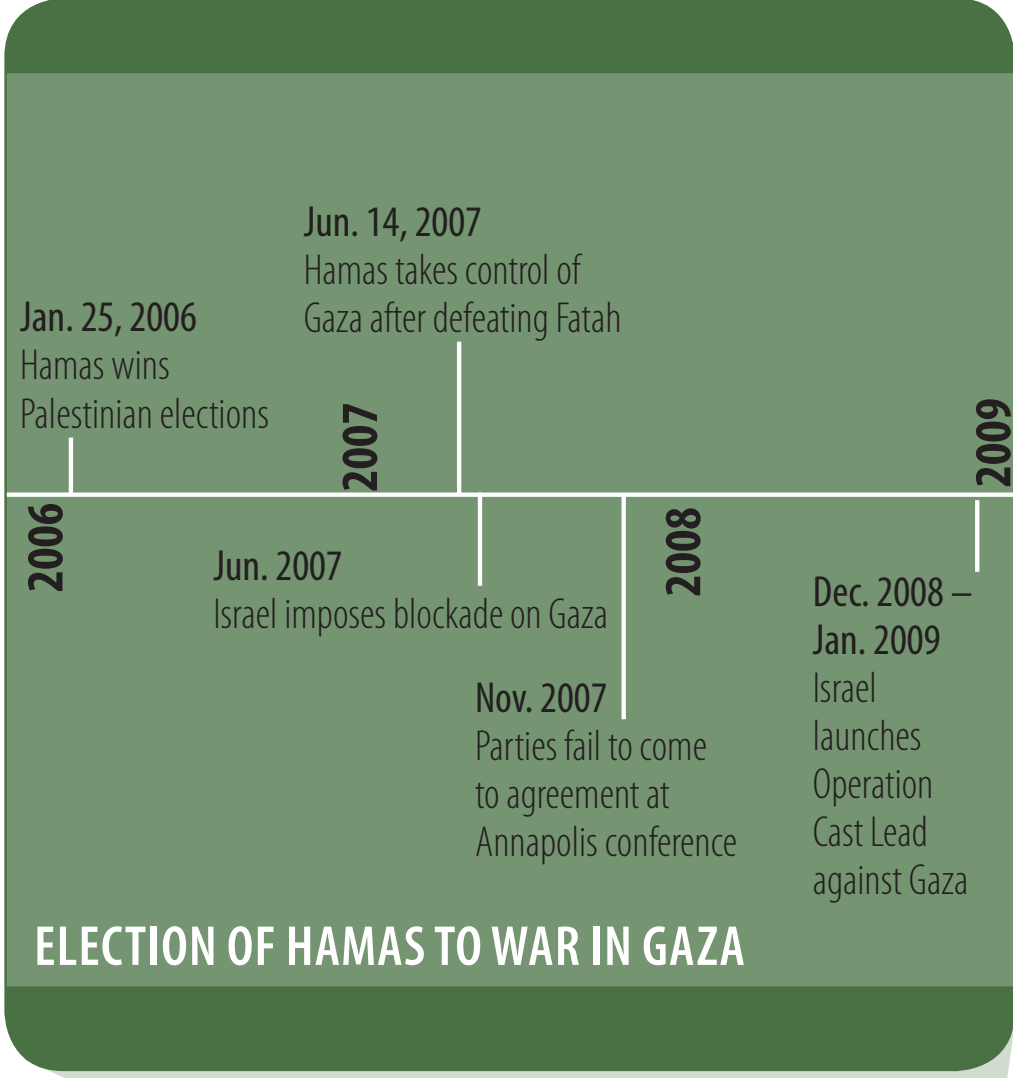
²⁴ Harry S. Truman Research Institute for the Advancement of Peace, Hebrew University, Jerusalem. Joint Polls Archive, http://www.truman.huji.ac.il/?cmd=joint_polls.256



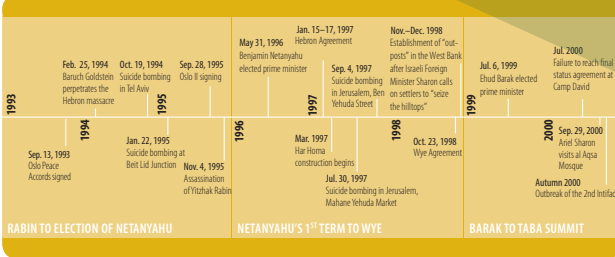
While the support of Israeli respondents for the Clinton framework increases during this period from 47% in December 2003 to 64% in December 2004 and the same in December 2005, Palestinian support rises and then falls, from 39% in December 2003 to 54% in December 2004 to 46% in December 2005. It may be the evacuation of Gaza by the Israelis in August 2005 resulted in stable support for this framework on the Israeli side, but a decline in support on the part of Palestinians.²⁵

25 Truman Institute, http://www.truman.huji.ac.il/?cmd=joint_polls.256

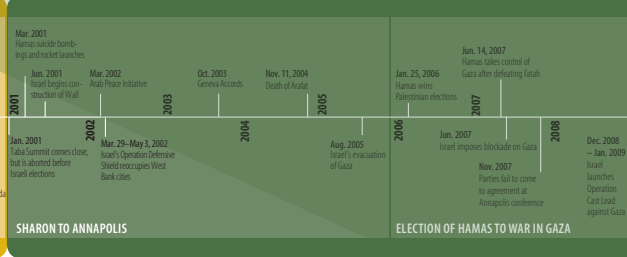
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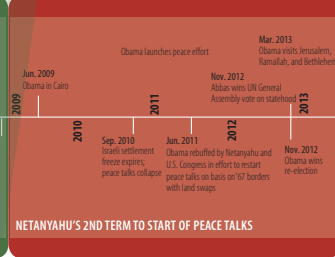
CLINTON YEARS 1993–2000



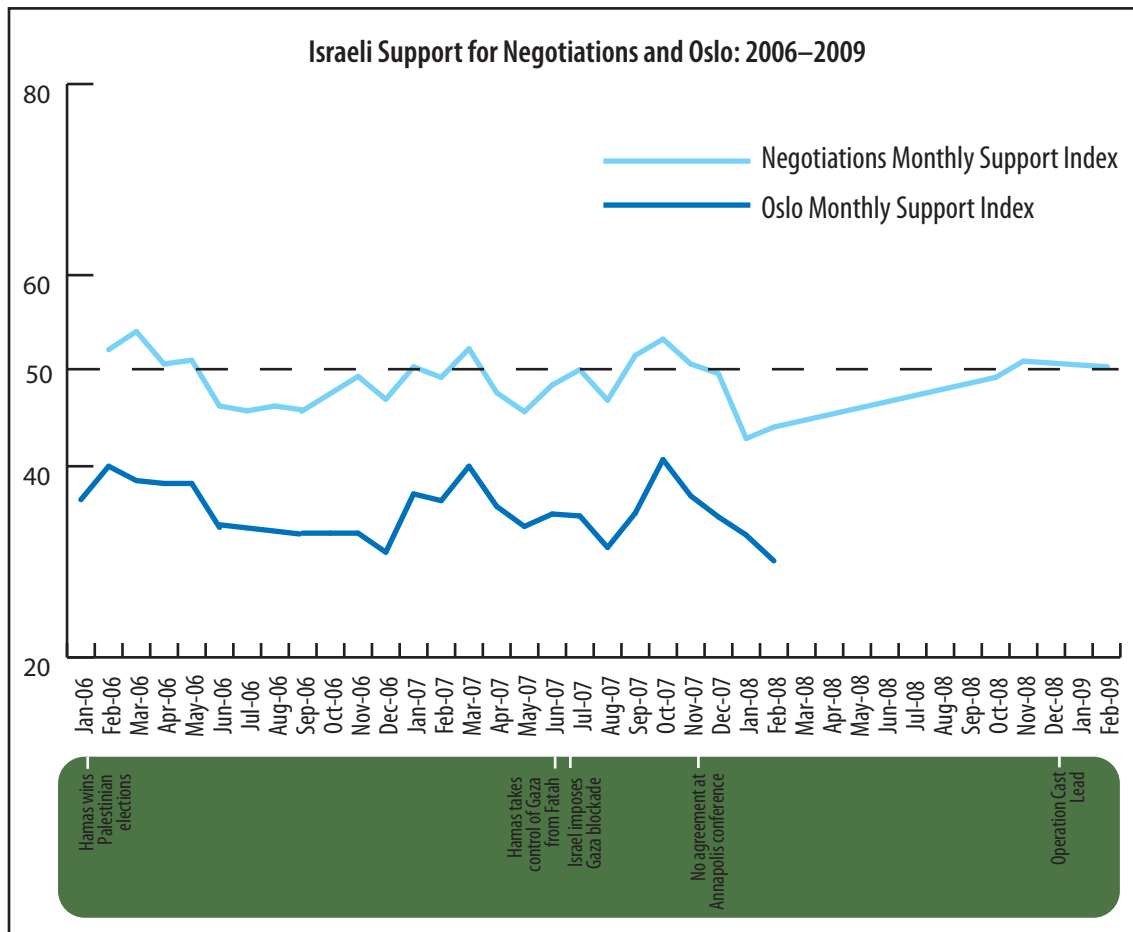
BUSH YEARS 2001–2008



OBAMA YEARS 2009–2013



ISRAELI ATTITUDES

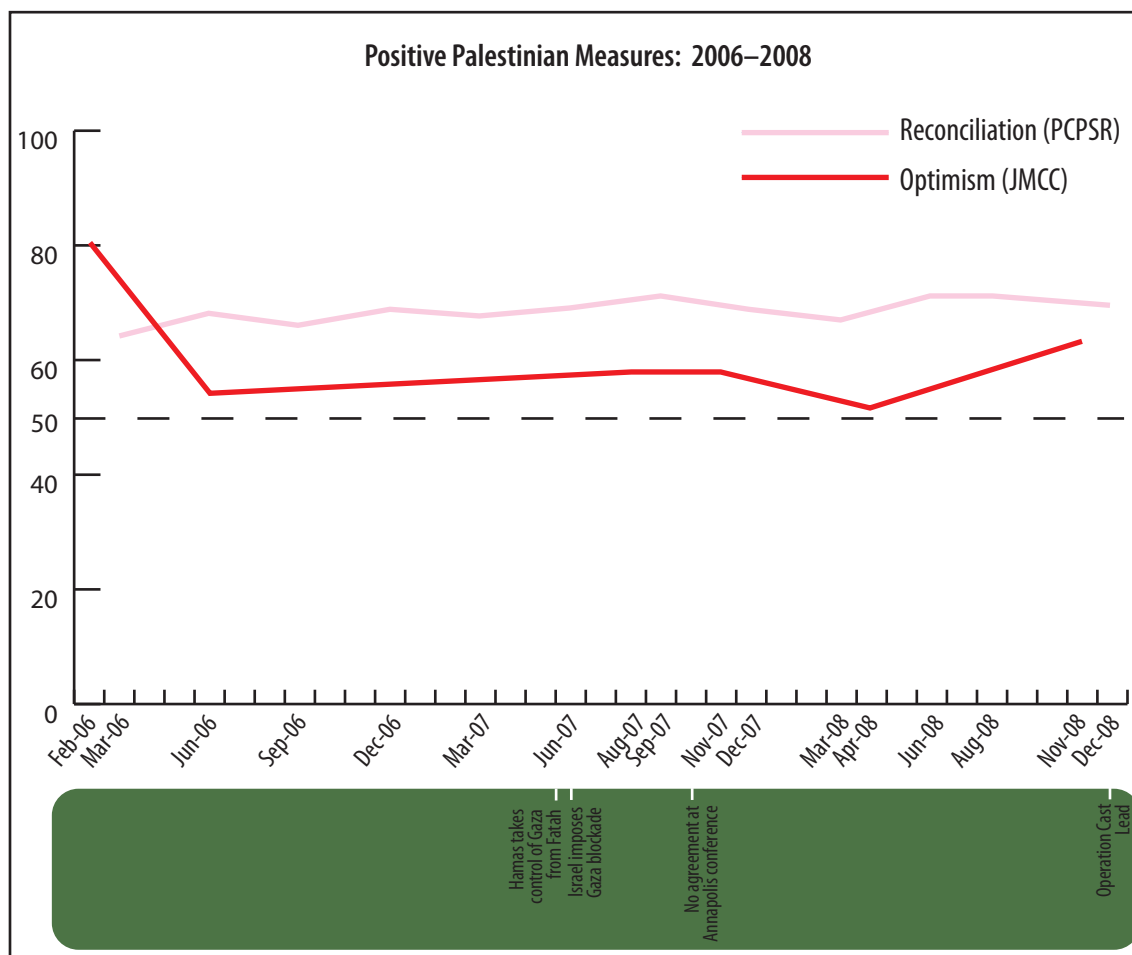


Tumult marks this period from beginning to end, centered particularly on the Gaza Strip. As 2006 begins, Hamas emerges as the victor in Palestinian parliamentary elections. Then in June 2007 Hamas takes control of Gaza after defeating Fatah, and Israel imposes a blockade on Gaza. An attempt to reach agreement on the “Roadmap” proposal in Annapolis, Maryland, in November of 2007, ends in failure. This period ends with the Gaza War, a three-week Israeli offensive termed Operation Cast Lead, from December 2008 into January 2009.

Against this backdrop of events, Israeli support for negotiations continues to oscillate just above and below 50%, while support for Oslo wavered between 30% and 40% throughout the period. The Oslo monthly index is discontinued in February 2008 with a final level of 30% support for the Accords.²⁶ Despite having given up on the “Oslo process,” Israeli support for negotiations remains steady, albeit at an anemic 50%.

26 The Peace Index, <http://www.peaceindex.org/defaultEng.aspx>

PALESTINIAN ATTITUDES



Palestinian public opinion remains committed to the peace process during this difficult stretch of time, with a very consistent 70% of respondents to the PCPSR surveys saying they are supportive of the peace process.²⁷ Optimism, as measured by the JMCC polls, is markedly high (80%) in February 2006, falls to a low of 54% in June 2006, and lands at 63% in November 2008.²⁸

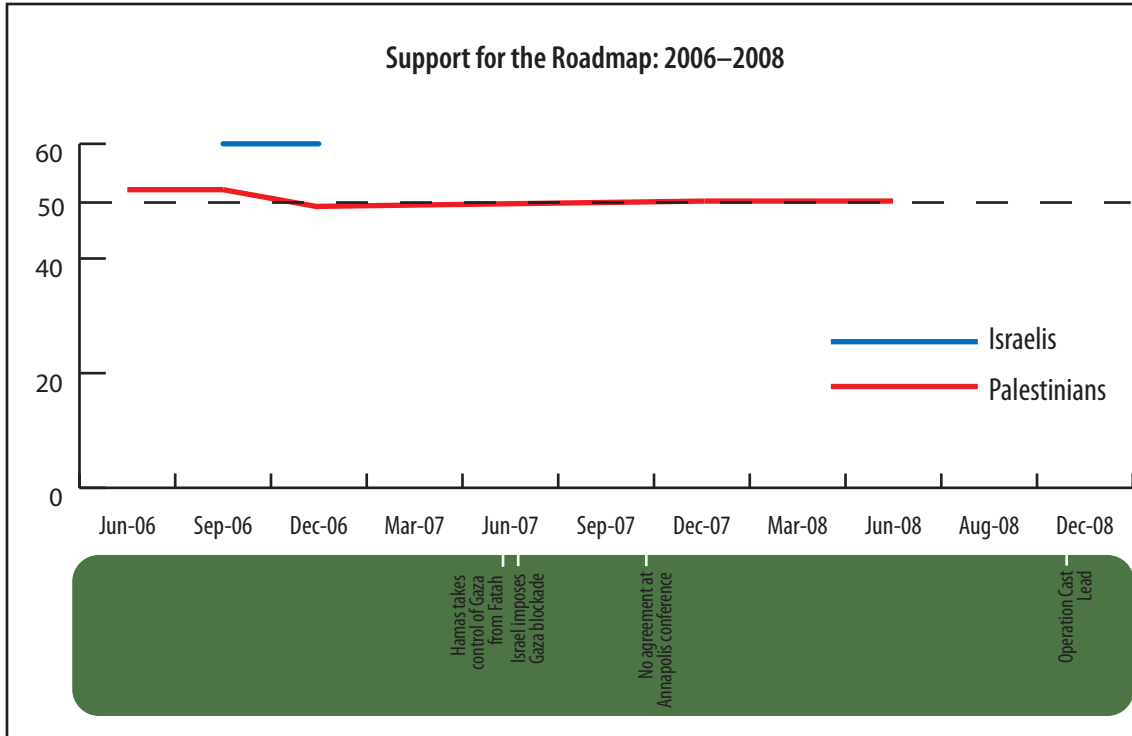
COMPARING ISRAELI AND PALESTINIAN ATTITUDES

As noted above, the Oslo Index from the Israel Democracy Institute was discontinued in February 2008, and the JMCC only sporadically asked about Palestinian support for Oslo in recent years—including in June 2006 when 44% said they support Oslo, compared to 68% in December of 1997. But joint polls of Israelis and Palestinians conducted by the Truman Institute for the Advancement of Peace at the Hebrew University, Jerusalem, and the Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research have asked both communities about their respective support for other proposed settlement frameworks including the Roadmap, the Arab Peace Initiative, and the components of the Clinton Plan as a complete package.²⁹

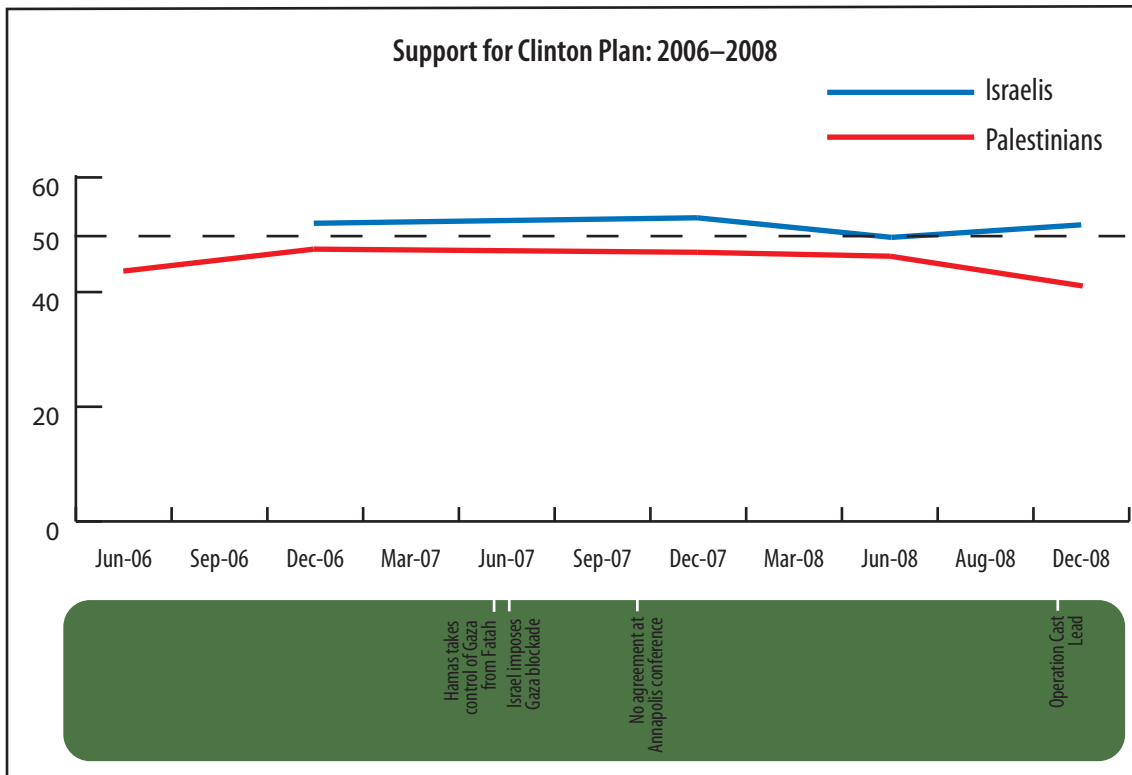
27 Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research: Survey Research Unit, <http://www.pcpsr.org/survey/index.html>

28 JMCC, <http://www.jmcc.org/polls.aspx>

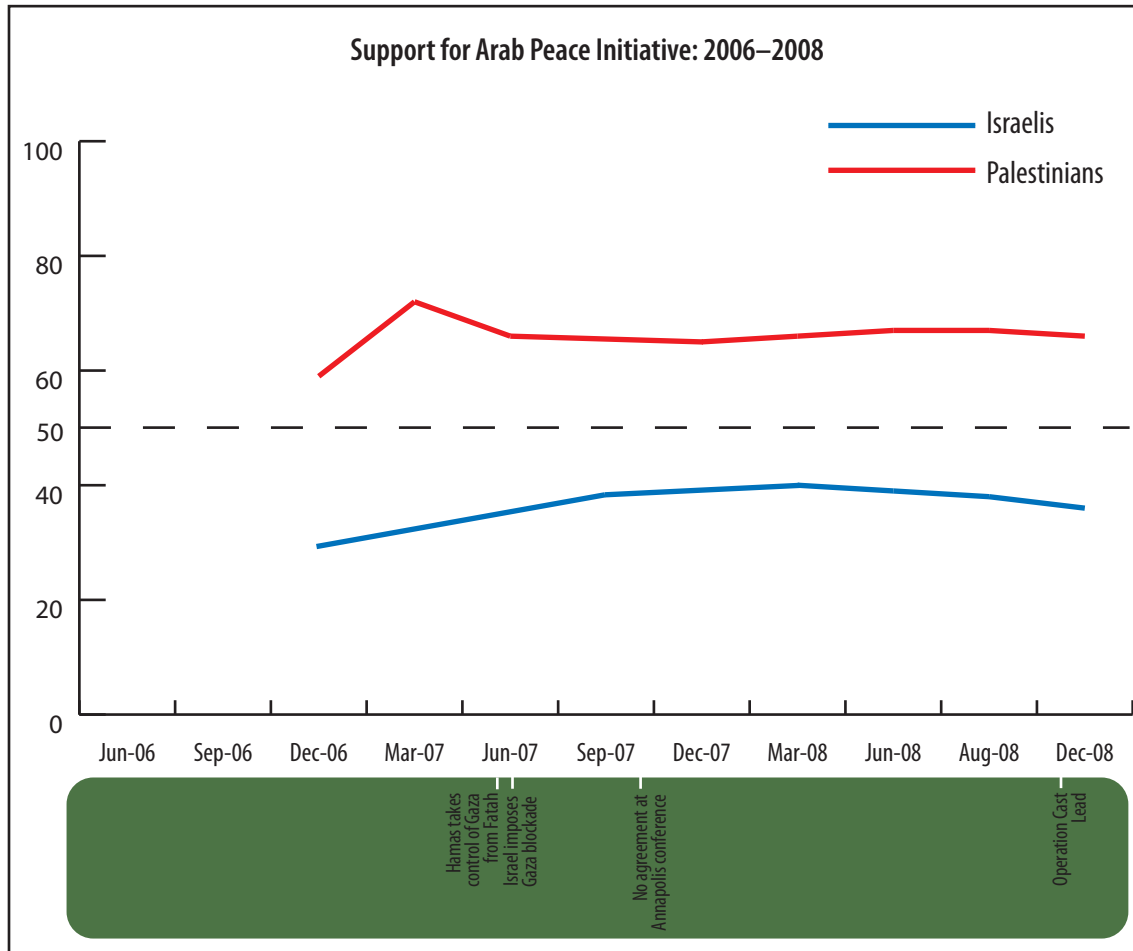
29 Truman Institute, http://www.truman.huji.ac.il/?cmd=joint_polls.256



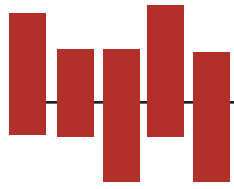
During this period, the limited amount of Israeli data available puts support in this community for the Roadmap at about 60%, while Palestinian support was consistently around 50%.



Support for the Clinton Plan, presented as a complete settlement package, was also quite consistent, with Israeli support just above 50% and Palestinian support just below 50%. Palestinian support for this proposal, however, declined in December 2008 to 41%. And this decline continued; the August 2009 survey found Palestinian support for the Clinton parameters at just 38%.

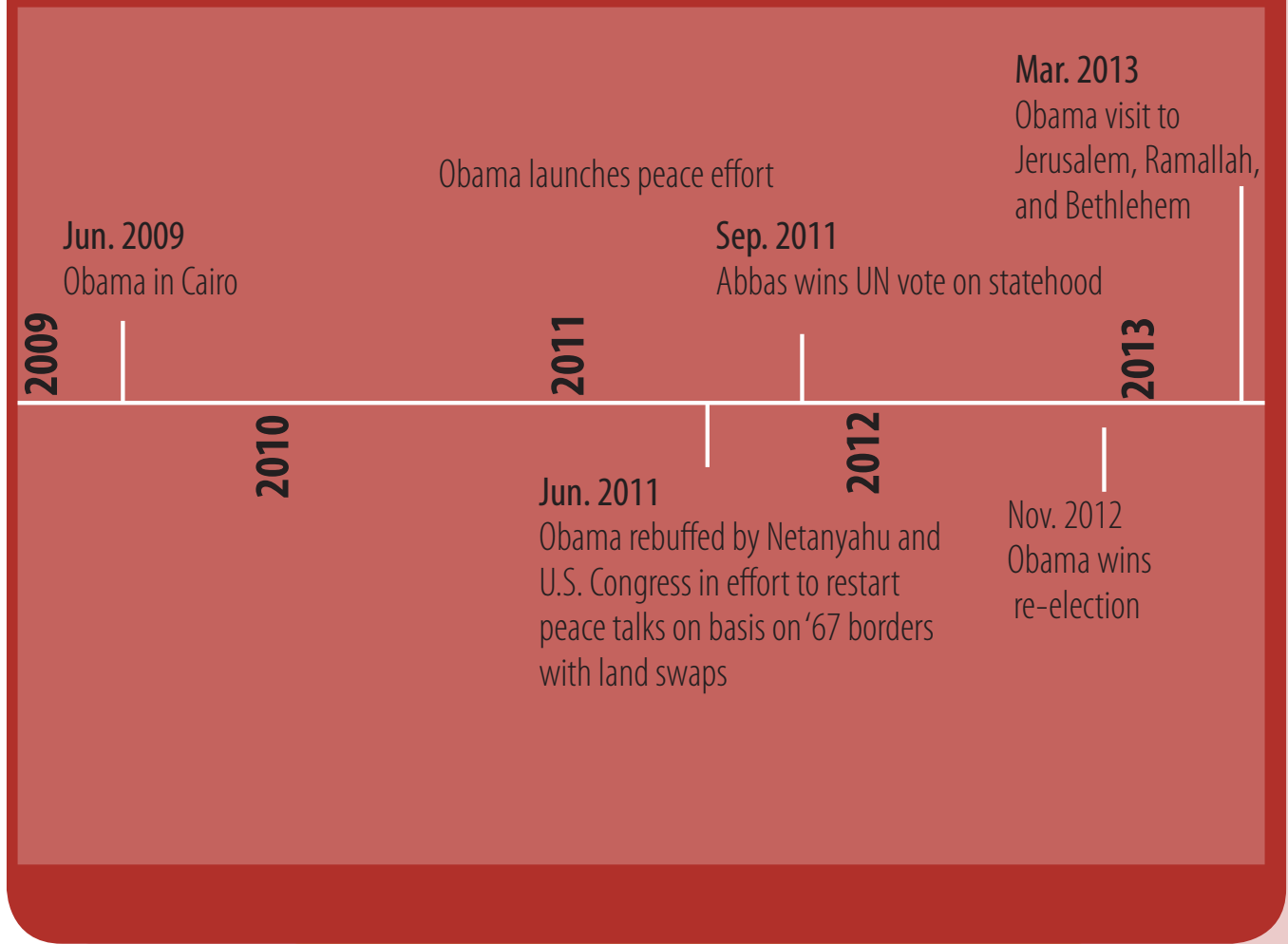


Finally, we see more stable numbers with respect to support for the Arab Peace Initiative, though the two communities are further apart on this proposal than on the Roadmap or the Clinton Plan. About two-thirds of Palestinian respondents approve of this initiative, while about 40% of Israeli respondents are in favor of it.

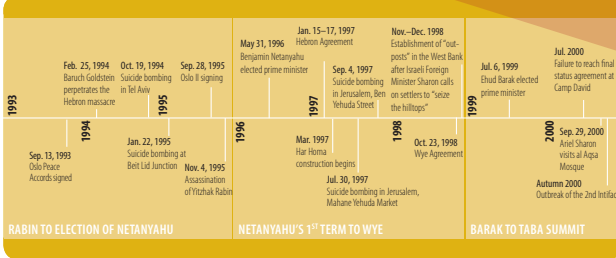


OBAMA YEARS 2009–2013

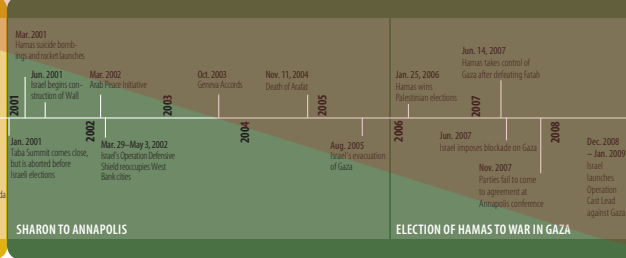
A. NETANYAHU'S 2ND TERM TO START OF PEACE TALKS



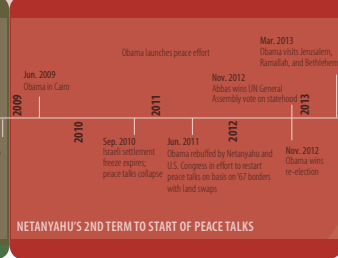
CLINTON YEARS 1993–2000



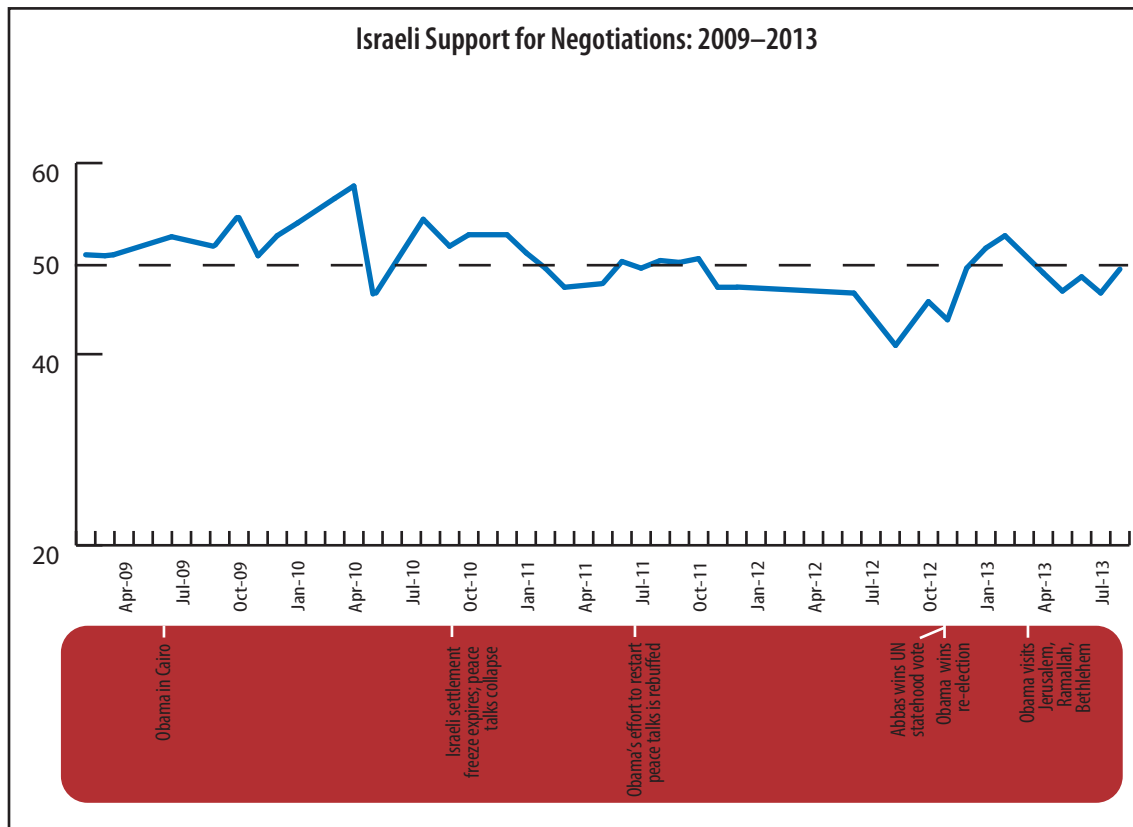
BUSH YEARS 2001–2008



OBAMA YEARS 2009–2013



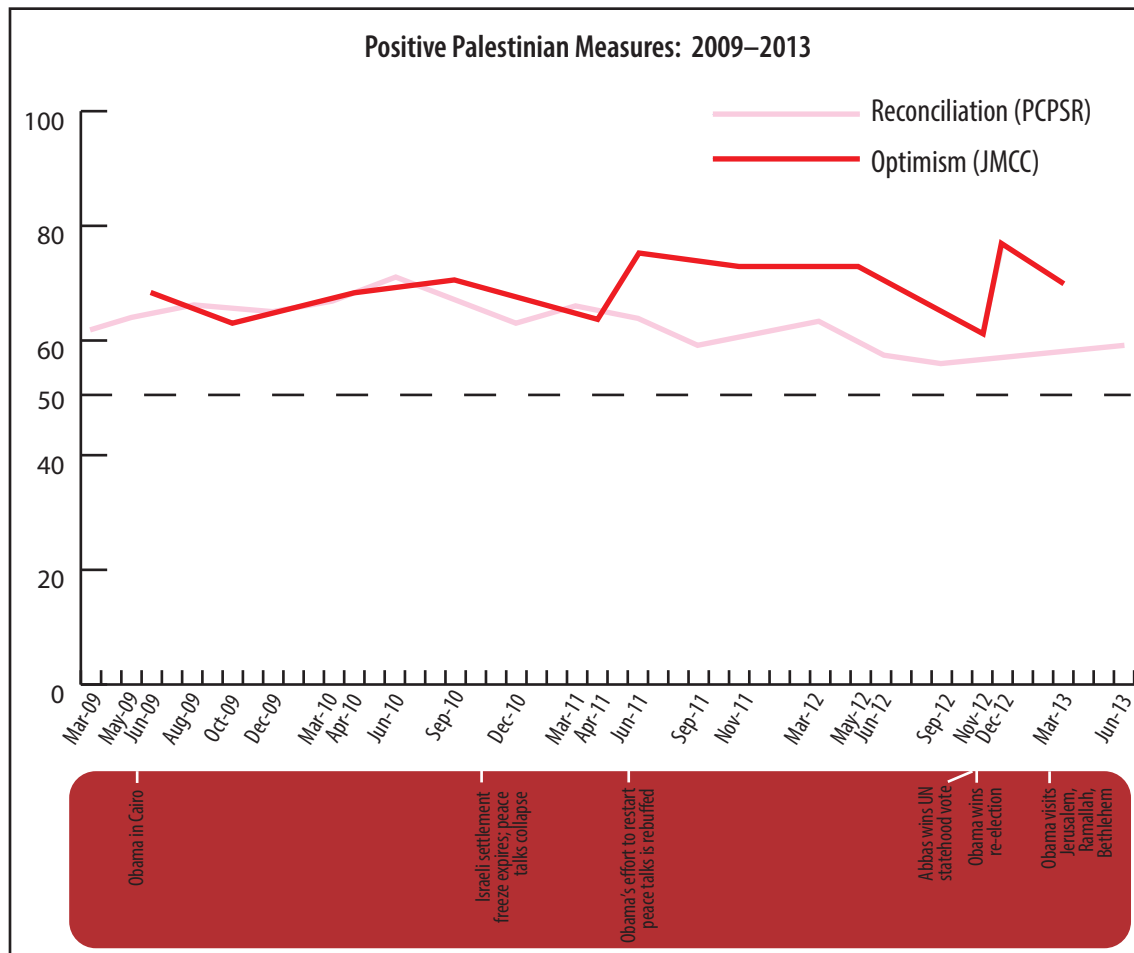
ISRAELI ATTITUDES



Since January 2011 in only a handful of months (between Obama’s re-election in November 2012 and his visit to the region in March 2013) has a majority of the Israeli public supported negotiations, with the lowest point being hit in August 2012 (40.7%). Looking back to the 1990s, it is evident that Israeli support for the peace process has fallen considerably.³⁰

30 The Peace Index, <http://www.peaceindex.org/defaultEng.aspx>

PALESTINIAN ATTITUDES



Among Palestinians, polls during this period show a persistent optimism. Surveys from the JMCC found a rising sense of optimism, with more than seven in ten respondents saying they are optimistic about the future for much of 2011 until the present.³¹ The number of Palestinians who say they are supportive of the peace process hit a peak of 71% in June 2010 but has fallen off to 59% by June 2013.³²

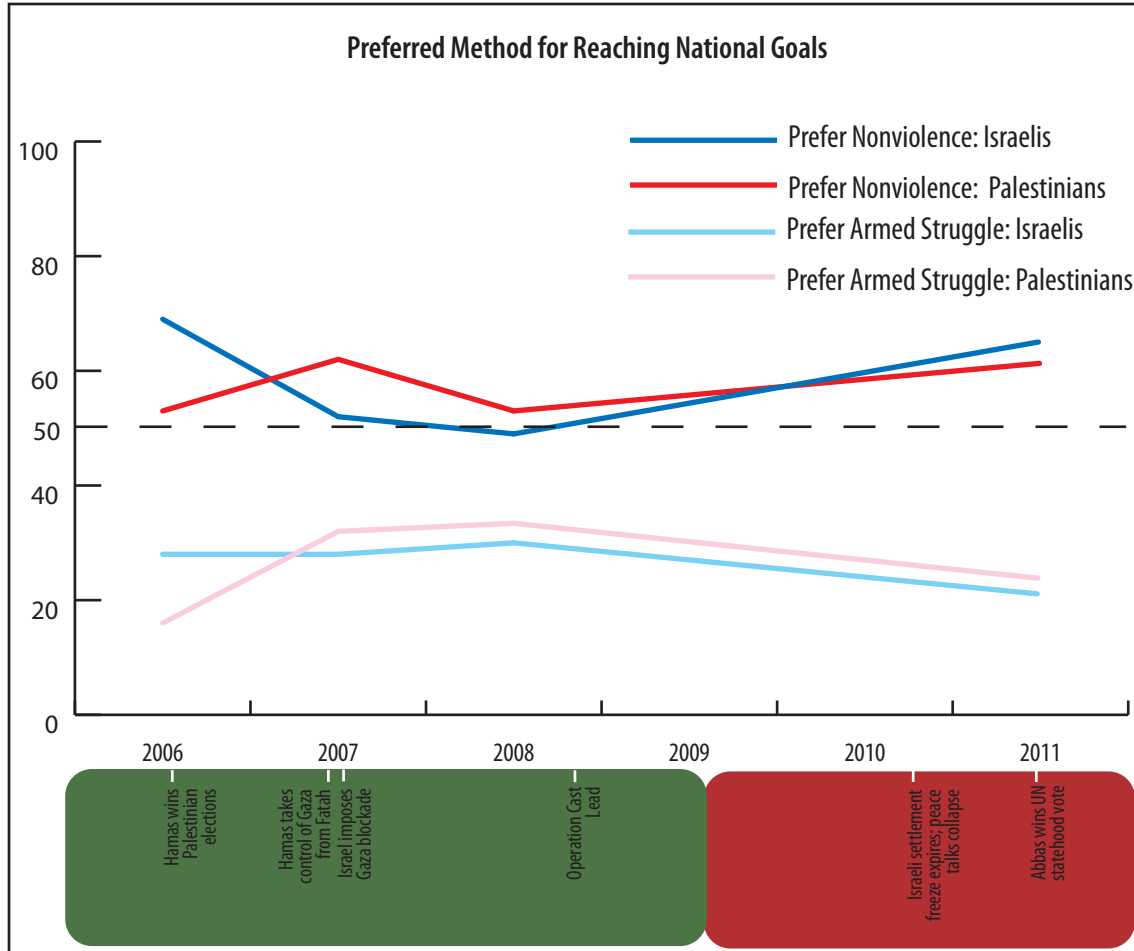
COMPARING ISRAELI AND PALESTINIAN ATTITUDES

On both sides, this period saw a rising sense that nonviolence is a preferable strategy to armed struggle to achieve national goals. In several surveys between 2006 and 2011, Gallup asked Israelis and Palestinians: “Which statement comes closer to your own view? When it comes to achieving self-determination and security for my people [I believe mostly in nonviolent forms of resistance and negotiation; I believe mostly in armed struggle and military solutions]?”³³

31 JMCC, <http://www.jmcc.org/polls.aspx>

32 Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research: Survey Research Unit, <http://www.pcpsr.org/survey/index.html>

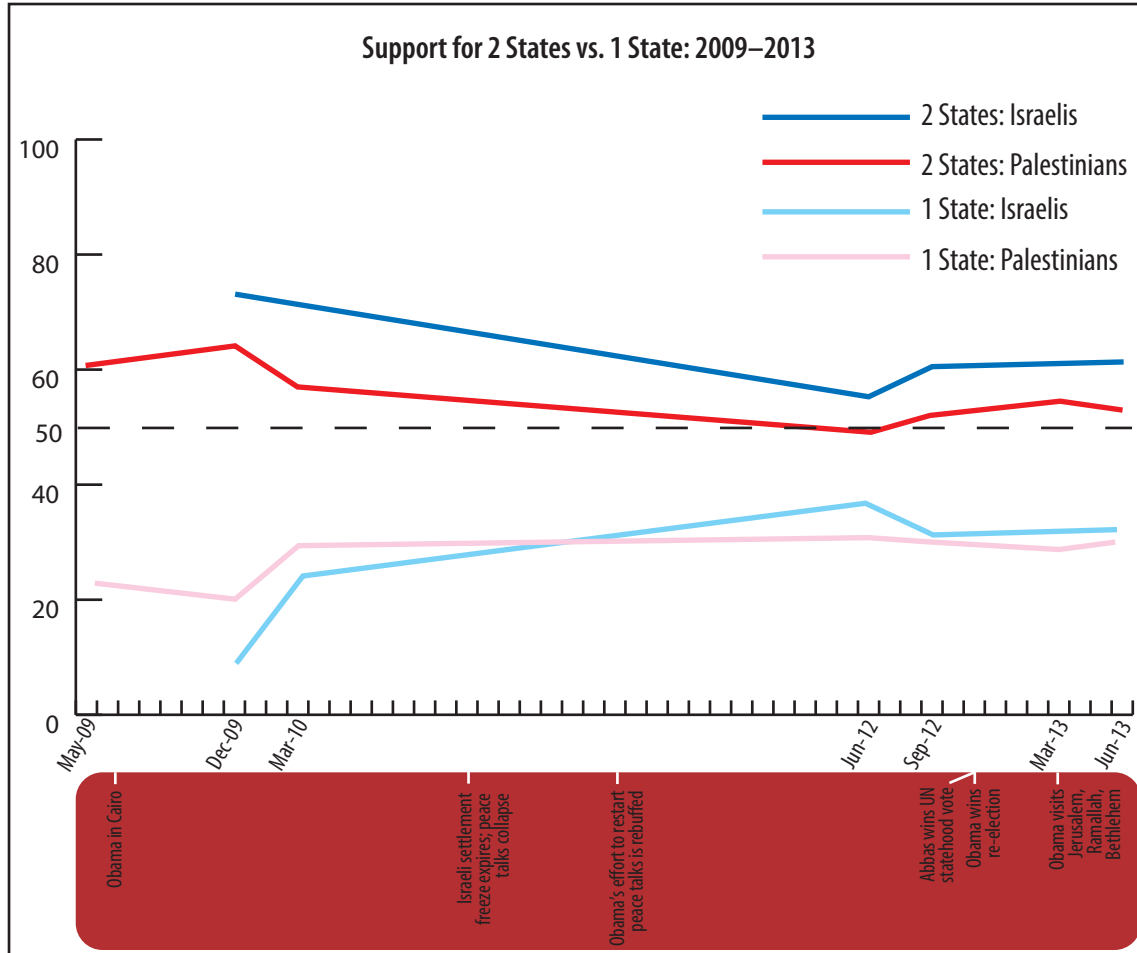
33 Saad, Lydia, and Steve Crabtree. (March 30, 2012). Opinion Briefing: Israeli-Palestinian Conflict. GALLUP World. <http://www.gallup.com/poll/153548/opinion-briefing-israeli-palestinian-conflict.aspx>



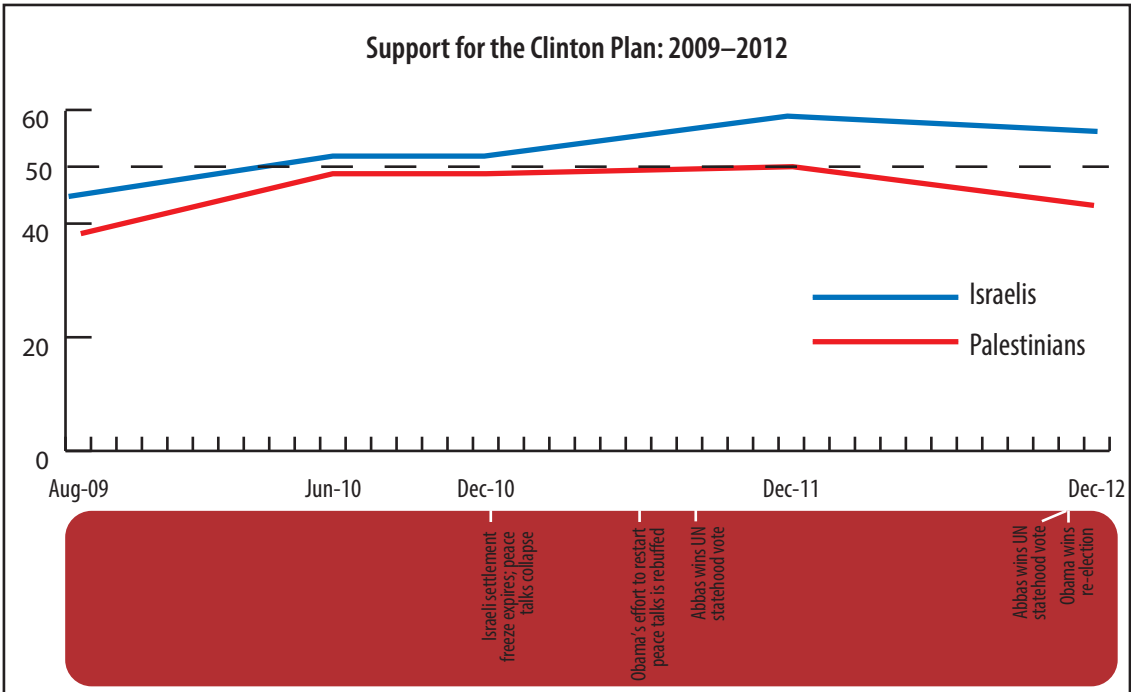
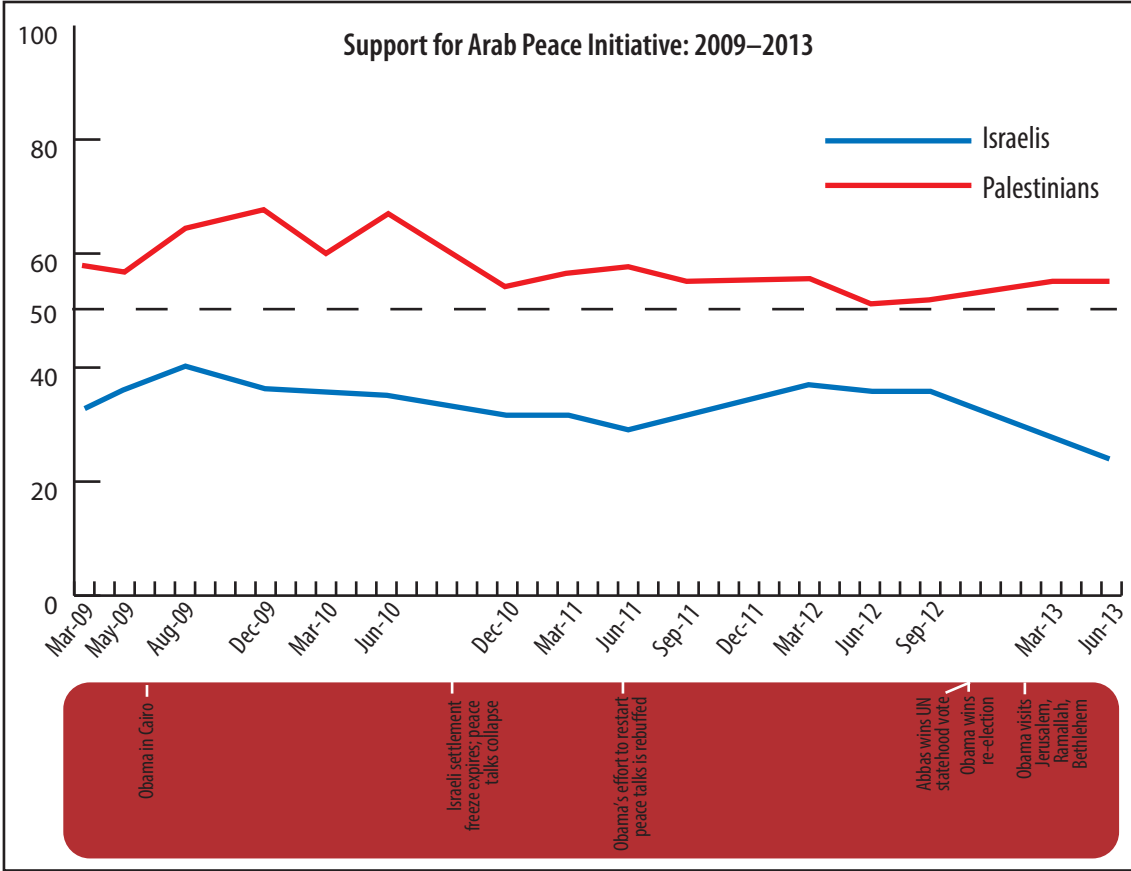
While the preference for negotiation and nonviolent resistance fell between 2006 and 2008 in lieu of a preference for armed struggle, by 2011 nonviolence had rebounded at the expense of armed struggle in both communities.

Again, we can compare Palestinian and Israeli support for the various peace plans that have been put forward since the Oslo Accords, utilizing data from the joint polls of Israelis and Palestinians conducted by the Truman Institute and the Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research about the Arab Peace Initiative, the components of the Clinton Plan as a complete package, and a 2-state vs. a 1-state solution.³⁴

³⁴ Truman Institute, http://www.truman.huji.ac.il/?cmd=joint_polls.256



Looking first at general support for a two-state solution, this basic framework has experienced a decline in support in both communities in recent years. Israeli support fell from 73% in December 2009 to 62% in the most recent June 2013 survey, while Palestinian support dropped from a high of 64% in December 2009 to 53% in June 2013. A 1-state solution has far more limited support, though it appears that a somewhat stable 30% of both communities find this idea palatable.



Turning now to specific two-state proposals: The Arab Peace Initiative (API) continues to be preferred by Palestinians, while the Clinton Plan is viewed more positively by Israelis, though the difference in opinion is less striking with respect to the latter proposal than it is to the former.

Israeli support for the API has never topped 40% and the most recent survey in June 2013 marks its lowest score to date from Israeli respondents: just 24% support this proposal. Palestinian support for the API, however, has been relatively steady since December 2010, between 50% and 60%, most recently at 56% (June 2013).

With respect to taking the various pieces of the Clinton Plan as one comprehensive package—including mutual recognition of two states for two peoples, creation of a demilitarized, independent Palestinian state, a multinational peace-keeping force, Israeli withdrawal plus limited land swaps, Jerusalem as capital of two states, and resolution of the refugees question—the support of both communities inched upward in 2009 and 2010. Among Israelis support was most recently at 56%, while Palestinian support declined slightly in 2012 to 43%.



CONCLUSION

Here are a few points that can be deduced from this survey of the ebb and flow of Israeli and Palestinian opinion during the two decades since Oslo.

In Israel, support for negotiations and the idea of peace has always been more popular than the terms of a peace agreement that might be acceptable to the Palestinians. Thus, monthly tracking polls of Israeli opinion during the first decade after Oslo show Israeli support for “negotiations” in the abstract consistently scoring higher than support for the Oslo Accords. During the first decade after the 1993 signing ceremony, data reveals that while there were some slight fluctuations in support in reaction to events, both positive and negative, for the most part opinions remain fairly constant. There was one exception and that was the spike in positive attitudes toward peace following the assassination of then Prime Minister Rabin—owing most probably to the majority’s desire to reject the assassin’s objective “to kill peace” and the increase in public confidence resulting from the overwhelming international support for Israel that was forthcoming.

With the second Palestinian Intifada, however, a seismic shift in Israeli attitudes occurred. During this period there was a significant decline in support for both negotiations and the Oslo process. Events during the next decade only contributed to a hardening of views: a spike in terror attacks resulting in then Prime Minister Ariel Sharon’s move to re-occupy the West Bank, the election of Hamas followed by their take-over of Gaza, rocket fire from Gaza into Israel, and two Israeli wars with Hamas in Gaza. All this time, polling continued to record ebbs and flows in Israeli attitudes toward peace, but overall numbers remained at a substantially lower level than before.

Throughout the two decades of Oslo, Israelis continued to express support for peace and negotiations as the way to peace, but they were becoming increasingly distrustful of the Palestinians, feeling that they were not committed to the same goals. While Israelis focused on their own needs, aspirations, and insecurities, they ignored the needs and the vulnerabilities of the Palestinians. Israelis appeared unaware of the impact that delays in meeting Palestinian aspirations were having on the trust Palestinians had in the peace process and in its promise to deliver an end to the occupation. And the Israeli public also never seemed to understand the impact their policies (land confiscation, settlement construction, excessive security measures, and the daily acts of humiliation that defined the occupation) were having on Palestinian attitudes toward them and the prospects for peace.

As we saw with Israeli opinion during the past two decades, Palestinian opinion toward the Oslo process also experienced fluctuations in response to events. The ebbs and flows were, however, more dramatic.

And unlike the Israelis, Palestinians were more positively inclined toward the outcome of the peace effort than they were toward the process itself. They had labored either in diaspora or under occupation for so long that they had high expectations that the projected timetable outlined in the Accords they had signed with the Israelis would be kept and peace would become a reality.

Palestinians had become exhausted during the first Intifada and had desperately wanted to normalize their lives and be free of the oppressive occupation. It appears that their hopes in the Oslo process were ill-founded. **Palestinians were the weakest party in the relationship, but were expected to do the heaviest lifting.** Despite having no control over their borders so that they could freely engage in commerce, Palestinians were expected to create jobs (after Israel closed its borders throwing almost 100,000 laborers out of work). Despite possessing limited arms and equipment and credibility, they were expected to control terrorists who sought to sabotage the peace process. And they were expected to control a restive population frustrated at the lack of work, continued land confiscation, home demolitions, settlement expansion, and unmet Oslo deadlines.

Given this mindset, it should be no surprise that shifts in Palestinian attitudes toward peace would be more volatile than those of the Israelis.

If the Israeli blind spot has been a failure to understand the anger and lack of trust created by the oppressive policies and behaviors they display toward the Palestinians, the Palestinian acceptance of and tolerance for the use of violence has been their counterproductive blind spot. Observing the ebbs and flows of Palestinian support for “military operations against Israelis” and comparing that with Palestinian support for negotiations can be a useful metric with which to measure Palestinian frustration. But Palestinian support for violence only resulted in fueling Israeli insecurity and their lack of trust and confidence in the prospects for peace.

In the end, these tragic flaws of both parties to the Oslo Accords could not be overcome. Both Israelis and Palestinians had issued a “cry for help” and no one responded.

Recalling the optimism of Sha’ath and Beilin, two of the lead peace negotiators quoted at the beginning of this review, it is clear that the hopes of both were unrealized. **Left to themselves, both Israelis and Palestinians lacked the ability to complete what they had begun. They needed forceful help and firm intervention, and it was not forthcoming.**

As a result, instead of experiencing a “new Israel” and more freedom, more land, and more opportunity to grow their economy, Palestinians encountered new Israeli-imposed restrictions on their movement, an increase in land confiscation, settlement and road construction, less employment, and less hope in the future. And instead of experiencing a “new PLO,” Israelis found themselves facing new threats to their security and less trust in the possibility of peace.

Twenty years after Oslo, not only has the initial optimism of Israelis and Palestinians been diminished, but it has now been replaced by a hardened cynicism in both societies, coupled with new “facts on the ground” that only make peace-making more complicated than it was in 1993. **It is ironic that while the lasting contribution of Oslo is the near-universally recognized need for a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, it appears that today both societies are further away from the realization of that goal than they were 20 years ago when they first recognized each other as national communities.**



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