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# After the Gulf War: American Jews' Attitudes Toward Israel

The 1991 National Survey of American Jews

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## 1. OVERVIEW

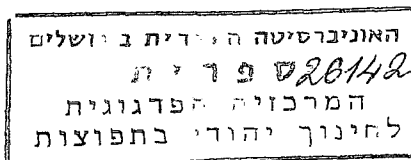
In the aftermath of the Gulf War, American Jewish attitudes shifted in a hard-line direction, according to this nationwide survey of 1159 respondents. As opposed to 1989, the last time a similar survey was conducted, American Jews are now somewhat less supportive of Israeli compromise with the Arabs over the settlements and other issues related to the territories. In addition, they have grown slightly more attached to Israel, reversing what may have been a slide in American Jewish attachment to Israel in recent years.

American Jews clearly prefer continued Israeli control of the territories to giving them over to Arab (Jordanian or Palestinian) control. While they may want the U.S. government to urge Israeli flexibility, they oppose public criticism of Israeli government policies, and they strongly oppose threats to limit or curtail U.S. foreign aid to influence Israeli policies.

Driving this shift to a more hard-line posture was a heightened sense of threat and vulnerability. American Jews are clearly worried about Israel's security, and they are far more wary of PLO intentions. Perceptions of Palestinian threat and of Israeli vulnerability apparently strengthen hard-line attitudes and weaken an interest in conciliatory gestures.

Even as their hard-line stances have strengthened, American Jews remain open to the possibilities of talks with the PLO and eventual Palestinian statehood, but only if such steps are accompanied by a cessation of hostile Palestinian acts against Israel and enhanced Israeli security.

The findings, and their context, demonstrate the extent to which perceptions of Arab moderation and extremism influence the reactions of American Jews to the Arab-Israeli conflict.



## 2. BACKGROUND

How have American Jews' attitudes toward Israel and the Arab-Israeli conflict changed since the momentous events of the Gulf War? Where do they now stand on territorial compromise, the settlements, Palestinian statehood, the PLO, Israeli policies, American policies, and many other issues surrounding the long-standing confrontation between Israel and its Arab neighbors? How attached do they now feel to Israel, a society whose defense has become the centerpiece of American Jewish activist mobilization?

These and related questions are addressed in this report on the 1991 National Survey of American Jews. This survey of 1159 Jewish respondents nationwide is the seventh in a series of studies of American Jewish public opinion dating back to 1983.

The timing of this study is especially critical. The questionnaires were completed between mid-July and mid-August 1991. It was a time when the Gulf War was still very fresh in the minds of most American Jews. In particular, many could recall dramatic, tension-filled scenes of Israeli civilians wearing gas masks, locked in sealed rooms waiting out the attacks of Iraqi Scud missiles and the threat of poison gas they carried with them. Many American Jews also could recall scenes of Palestinian Arabs standing on their rooftops cheering the onslaught of the Scud missiles as they flew overhead.

Among Israeli Jews, the Gulf War, the missile attacks, the PLO's tilt toward Saddam Hussein, and the reactions of the local Palestinian populace toward the missiles caused a perceptible shift in public opinion toward a less compromising posture. Even the Israeli Left took a far dimmer view of their Palestinian adversaries. One dovish Knesset member who has long been involved in dialogue with Palestinian leaders wrote a highly publicized column telling his erstwhile Palestinian interlocutors to "come look for me."

Since American Jewish public opinion has long mirrored both the diversity and the directions of Israeli Jewish opinion, it is not be surprising to learn that American Jews also turned rightward. Indeed, as the results demonstrate below, American Jews took a dimmer view of territorial compromise and of Palestinian intentions. Their current views on the conflict and related matters are the central concerns of this report on the 1991 National Survey of American Jews.

### 3. DATA AND METHODS

The survey data analyzed below are derived from a mail-back questionnaire completed by 1159 Jewish respondents nationwide, in a survey fielded in July and August 1991 by the Washington office of Market Facts, Inc., a national survey research company. These respondents are members of the company's Consumer Mail Panel, which consists of individuals who have agreed to be surveyed from time to time on a variety of concerns.

The 1159 individuals who returned usable questionnaires constitute more than 73 percent of the 1576 potential Jewish respondents who received the survey. (Market Facts initially mailed 1600 questionnaires to potential respondents who have previously indicated or been reported by their spouses to be Jewish. Of the 1183 respondents, 24 did not reaffirm that they were Jewish, leaving 1159 usable questionnaires and no more than 1576 potential eligible respondents in the initial mail-out.)

To facilitate comparisons with the 1989 data, over one-third of the sample (429 out of 1159) was drawn from those who had answered the 1989 questionnaire. The remaining potential respondents were selected from the larger Market Facts Consumer Mail Panel so that five key sociodemographic characteristics of the sample would closely correspond to the distributions found in the 1990 National Jewish Population Survey (NJPS) sponsored by the Council of Jewish Federations. The latter is the most authoritative and reliable source of data on the American Jewish population. The five characteristics upon which the Market Facts survey was balanced were: age, region, marital status, number of adult Jewish householders, and household income.

Naturally, it is not at all surprising that the sample here resembles the NJPS standard with respect to these five characteristics. What is reassuring, though, is that the American Jewish Committee sample resembles the authoritative NJPS in so many other ways as well with respect to measures of Jewish involvement and sociodemographic status that were not subject to direct manipulation in the sample selection procedures.

The adjoining tables compare the key characteristics of the American Jewish Committee sample with the relevant subsample of the National Jewish Population Study. The NJPS subsample consisted of all households in which the respondent or the respondent's spouse identified as a Jew by religion (i.e., they answered "Jewish" in response to "What is so-and-so's religion?"). This definition of eligibility comes closest to the Market Facts definition of the American Jewish Committee sample. (To be clear, the NJPS cast a very wide net, interviewing respondents with only a very tenuous connection with being Jewish, and thus extending well beyond those who would say that their religion is Jewish.)

Not only are the distributions of age, marital status, and region similar. We also learn that the samples are similar with respect to the distributions of sex, mixed marriage, religious-service attendance, emotional attachment to Israel, and prior travel to Israel. The AJC sample, though, reports higher rates of synagogue membership and membership in Jewish organizations -- two indicators of greater Jewish involvement -- than in the NJPS. On the other hand, we find two indicators of lesser Jewish involvement. Fewer AJC sample members serve on a board or committee

of a Jewish organization, and fewer identify as Reform and more as "Just Jewish," a nondenominational category indicative of greater remoteness from organized Jewish life.

Given the focus upon Israel in this study, the virtually complete correspondence of the distributions on two key questions is particularly significant. As noted, the two samples responded in almost identical fashion to the question "How emotionally attached are you to Israel?" In addition, almost the same proportions have been to Israel (37 percent in the AJC sample and 34 percent in the NJPS) and almost the same proportions have been there twice or more (14 versus 16 percent).

These results testify to the reasonably representative nature of the sample in the 1991 National Survey of American Jews. Of course, the critical unknown is the extent to which so-called "professional respondents" provide biased answers. That is, we do not know how people who agree to serve on the Consumer Mail Panel and respond fairly regularly to survey questionnaires are different from other Americans (or, in our case, other American Jews). However, the parallels in sociodemographic and attitudinal measures between the AJC respondents and the NJPS sample increase confidence in the representative nature of this sample.

As noted, one major objective of this research is to compare the views of American Jews in 1991 with those they held in 1989. In brief, this study asks: Have American Jews become more hawkish or more dovish over the last two years, and have they become more attached or more remote from Israel in that period? Moreover, which sorts of Jews have changed and in which direction?

To address these questions, the analysis relies heavily on the 429 respondents who completed questionnaires in both surveys. This procedure obviates a serious methodological problem in drawing inferences about trends in public opinion via comparisons across different samples drawn at different times. After all, changes in key attitude measures might arise through sheer chance, that is, through the introduction or removal of sampling biases at time-one or time-two. By using a "panel" (i.e., the same respondents at both times), we minimize the problems of sample bias. Whatever the strengths or inadequacies of the sample in 1989, they remain the same in 1991. Therefore, we can feel more confident that the changes in the panel's attitudes reflect genuine changes in attitudes in the larger American Jewish population rather than random statistical noise generated by errors in sampling.

COMPARISON OF THIS SAMPLE  
WITH THE NATIONAL JEWISH POPULATION STUDY

SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

		1991	NJPS
Sex:	MALE	47	49
	FEMALE	53	51
Median Age:		49	44
Currently married?		70	78
Highest educational degree:	High School	35	42
	B.A. or equivalent	29	30
	Professional or graduate	36	27
		100	100
<u>Region</u>			
	New England	7	8
	Middle Atlantic	38	37
	East North Central	10	10
	West North Central	2	2
	South Atlantic	21	20
	East South Central	*	*
	West South Central	2	3
	Mountain	3	4
	Pacific	18	17
		100	100
Usual stand on political issues:			
	LIBERAL	35	41
	MIDDLE-OF-THE-ROAD	41	35
	CONSERVATIVE	20	19
	NOT SURE	4	3
		100	100

1991 = The 1991 National Survey of American Jews, sponsored by the American Jewish Committee.

NJPS = The 1990 National Jewish Population Study, sponsored by the Council of Jewish Federations. (Weighted by household weights and by number of adults heads who identify their religion as Jewish.)

COMPARISON OF THIS SAMPLE  
WITH THE NATIONAL JEWISH POPULATION STUDY

JEWISH BACKGROUND

	1991	NJPS
Belong to a synagogue or temple	53	46
Belong to a Jewish organization	46	37
Serve on a board or committee of a Jewish organization	18	24
(Of currently married Jewish adults) Spouse is now Jewish	91	91
How often do you attend religious services?		
NEVER, OR JUST FOR SPECIAL FAMILY OCCASIONS	25	29
HIGH HOLIDAYS AND, PERHAPS, A FEW OTHER TIMES A YEAR	45	41
MORE OFTEN	30	30
	100	100
You think of yourself as:		
ORTHODOX	7	7
CONSERVATIVE	38	39
RECONSTRUCTIONIST	1	1
REFORM	31	40
JUST JEWISH	23	13
	100	100
How emotionally attached are you to Israel?		
EXTREMELY ATTACHED	17	13
VERY ATTACHED	23	26
SOMEWHAT ATTACHED	44	44
NOT ATTACHED	15	16
NOT SURE	2	2
	100	100
Have you ever been to Israel?		
NEVER	63	66
YES, ONCE	23	18
YES, TWICE OR MORE	14	16
	100	100

1991 = The 1991 National Survey of American Jews, sponsored by the American Jewish Committee.

NJPS = The 1990 National Jewish Population Study, sponsored by the Council of Jewish Federations. (Weighted by household weights and by number of adults heads who identify their religion as Jewish.)

#### 4. EVIDENCE OF A SHIFT TO A MORE HARD-LINE STANCE

The 1991 survey repeated word for word several questions that were asked in 1989 (and sometimes earlier). In almost all the major policy-related questions, the 1991 respondents were more hard-line than were those in 1989.

For example, in the key tracking question, "Israel should offer the Arabs territorial compromise . . . in return for credible guarantees of peace," only a slim plurality of 35 to 34 percent supports compromise. These results in 1991 constitute a shrinkage from a bigger plurality of 38 to 30 percent in 1989. A slim plurality in 1991 also supports the expansion of Jewish settlements (30 to 29 percent), as against a clear plurality in the other direction (25 versus 35 percent who disagreed) in 1989. In other words, clear opposition to settlements in 1989 turned into support for settlement, albeit by a razor-thin margin of one percentage point, in 1991.

In 1989, a 49-to-20-percent plurality accepted the view "You can never trust the Arabs to make a real peace with Israel." In 1991, the balance was roughly the same (51 to 23 percent). We cannot be sure which Arabs the respondents were thinking about when answering this question. However, another question dealt specifically with the Palestinians. In 1989, a 62-to-8-percent majority endorsed the view that "The PLO is determined to destroy Israel." By 1991, those who thought ill of the PLO's intentions toward Israel grew substantially to a margin of 83 to 4 percent with only 13 percent not sure. Where there was a substantial minority who felt unsure about PLO intentions in 1989, the view that the PLO is determined to destroy Israel had become, by the summer of 1991, a clear consensus view among American Jews.

Concerns about the adverse impact of the Israeli occupation declined in this period. In 1989, the sample divided (26 percent agreed, 38 percent disagreed, and 35 percent were not sure) over the following proposition: "Continued Israeli occupation of the West Bank will erode Israel's democratic and humanitarian character." By 1991, only 14 percent agreed and a clear majority (57 percent) disagreed, indicating a far greater confidence that Israeli society could more readily withstand the corrosive effects associated with ruling hundreds of thousands of Palestinian Arabs.

The pattern of results for this question, dating back to 1986, suggests that the prominence of news of Palestinian resistance to Israeli occupation and Israeli countermeasures directly affect American Jews' concerns over the adverse effects of the occupation on Israeli society. The results over time show low levels of anxiety in 1986 and 1991, but relatively higher levels in 1988 and 1989 when news of the intifada was most prominent. By 1991, when the number of widely reported clashes between Palestinian protesters and Israeli troops had diminished substantially, the level of American Jewish anxiety over the occupation returned to the lower pre-intifada levels of 1986.

Further evidence of the hardening of American Jewish attitudes comes in the responses to a question on the acceptability of American Jews publicly criticizing Israeli government policies. In 1989, a 63-to-23-percent majority rejected the idea that "American Jews should not publicly criticize the policies of the government of Israel." By 1991, a huge majority still rejected this statement (thereby endorsing the right to criticize), but the margin had dropped to a narrower 55 to 30 percent. What had been a 40-percentage-point difference in 1989 declined to a 25-point difference



in 1991, clearly indicating less receptivity among American Jews to the idea of open criticism of Israeli government policies.

While there is no doubt that American Jews' attitudes did in fact become more hard-line between 1989 and 1991, the scanty evidence we have indicates that during the 1980s there were times when attitudes were more hawkish than in 1991, as well as more dovish than in 1989. In 1985 and 1986, for example, clear pluralities rejected territorial compromise, as opposed to the very slim (one point) plurality that still supported territorial compromise in the summer of 1991. In like fashion, opposition to public criticism of the Israeli government was more widespread in 1981 and 1982 (during the Lebanon War) than it was in 1991. The fluctuations over time underscore the volatility of American Jewish public opinion regarding Israel and its conflict with its Arab neighbors.

Although different analysts may disagree over how best to characterize the current position of American Jews with respect to the conflict, there is no doubt that in the wake of the Gulf War they have moved to a point that is more hard-line than they were in 1989. One key component in this change is their greater wariness regarding the Palestinians, a likely consequence of the events surrounding the war.

SINCE 1989, A SHIFT TO A MORE "HARD-LINE" STANCE BY AMERICAN JEWS:

LESS SUPPORT FOR "TERRITORIAL COMPROMISE,"  
MORE WARY ABOUT THE ARABS  
AND LESS CONCERN ABOUT THE OCCUPATION

		AGREE	DIS- AGREE	NOT SURE
Israel should offer the Arabs territorial compromise in the West Bank & Gaza in return for credible guarantees of peace	1991	35	34	31
	1989	38	30	31
	1988	42	33	26
	1986	29	36	35
	1985	30	44	26
	1984	43	37	20
	1983	40	36	25
Israel should expand Jewish settlements on the West Bank	1991	30	29	41
	1989	25	35	41
You can never trust the Arabs to make a real peace with Israel	1991	51	23	26
	1989	49	20	31
The PLO is determined to destroy Israel	1991	83	4	13
	1989	62	8	31
Continued Israeli occupation of the West Bank will erode Israel's democratic & humanitarian character	1991	14	57	29
	1989	26	38	35
	1988	30	41	29
	1986	11	52	37
American Jews should not publicly criticize the policies of the government of Israel	1991	30	55	15
	1989	23	63	14
	1988	32	56	12
	1986	22	63	16
	1983	31	57	12
	1982	43	49	8
	1981	38	57	17

## 5. THE ORTHODOX AND THE COMMUNALLY ACTIVE ARE AMONG THE MOST HAWKISH

Who is relatively more hawkish and who more dovish in the American Jewish population? To answer this question the analysis utilizes a "hawk-dove" scale that is a composite of the answers to several survey questions. The scale has been divided into dovish, moderate, and hawkish segments, with about one quarter of the population assigned (quite arbitrarily) to each of the wings (i.e., hawks and doves), and the remainder (almost half) left for the moderate middle of the spectrum.

The cross-tabular analysis relies on comparing what may be called the "net relative balance" of hawks and doves among men versus women, old versus young, and so forth. To take an example, among men we find 8 percentage points more doves than hawks; among women we find 10 percentage points more hawks than doves. The net relative balance is, therefore, 18 percentage points; that is, women are roughly 18 percentage points more hawkish than men or, we could say, men are 18 percentage points more dovish than women.

From this analysis we learn which groups are more hawkish and which more dovish. As was just noted, women are 18 percentage points more hawkish than men; respondents age 60 and over are about 6 percentage points more hawkish than those under 40; those with no more than a high-school education are 20 percentage points more hawkish than those with a professional or graduate-school education; and political conservatives are 15 percentage points more hawkish than self-described liberals.

These differences by sex, age, education, and political philosophy are certainly noticeable. But they are not at all as large as those associated with Jewish communal involvement or denomination.

On the basis of answers to questions about affiliation with synagogues, the local federation campaign, and other Jewish organization, the analysis divided the sample into three groups: the unaffiliated (the third of the population that lacks any of the specified affiliations); the affiliated (over half the population with at least one such affiliation); and the activists (one-eighth of the population with a very large number of affiliations). The hawk-dove balance shifts dramatically over these three groups. Among the unaffiliated, doves outnumber hawks by 12 percentage points; among the affiliated, hawks outnumber doves by 5 percentage points; and among the so-called activists, hawks lead doves by 20 percentage points. Clearly, hawkishness is strongly associated with greater involvement in Jewish communal life. (It is worth reiterating that the definition of who is a dove and who is a hawk is somewhat arbitrary. These terms refer merely to the relatively more dovish and the relatively more hawkish segments in this particular sample.)

Among self-described Reform Jews (to be clear, not all of these belong to Reform temples), doves outnumber hawks by a small margin, while among self-described Conservative Jews hawks outnumber doves by roughly the same small margin. A large margin divides Orthodox Jews from the rest. Among the Orthodox, as many as 61 percent qualify as hawkish as compared with just 8 percent who can be termed relatively dovish.

Of all the relationships between hawkishness and dovishness, the one most demanding of explanation, the one that seems most counterintuitive, is sex. Women are significantly more hawkish

than men. How can this finding be reconciled with a body of literature on American public opinion which finds that more American women are Democratic and that during the Vietnam War women were more dovish than men? One answer may lie in women's closer attachment to Israel (documented below). Those who are more closely attached to Israel tend to be somewhat more hawkish. But a greater part of the reason may be found in what may be the underlying reason for women's seeming liberalism in military and other matters. Some theorists have proposed that women tend to be more protective than men of that to which they feel close. In the 1960s, that protectiveness translated into opposition to the war. In the 1990s, for Jewish women, that same sentiment may translate into a greater reluctance for Israel to take risks for peace with very untrustworthy adversaries seemingly dedicated to Israel's destruction.

In sum, (in order of impact from large to small) those who are Orthodox, communally active, less well-educated, female, politically conservative, and older tend to be more hawkish. Those who are Reform (or "Just Jewish" or nondenominational), unaffiliated, highly educated, male, politically liberal, and younger tend to be more dovish.

DISTRIBUTION OF HAWKISH AND DOVISH VIEWS  
BY SEX, AGE, EDUCATION, POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY,  
DENOMINATION, AND JEWISH COMMUNAL AFFILIATION  
(PERCENTAGES, READING ACROSS)

	HAWKISH	MODERATE	DOVISH	TOTAL
SEX				
MALE	24.8	42.5	32.8	100.0
FEMALE	28.3	53.3	18.5	100.0
AGE				
18-39	25.4	49.1	25.4	100.0
40-59	26.8	44.6	28.5	100.0
60+	28.4	49.1	22.5	100.0
EDUCATION				
HIGH SCHOOL	29.2	53.1	17.7	100.0
COLLEGE DEGREE	26.4	46.4	27.3	100.0
PROFL, GRAD SCHOOL	24.0	44.8	31.2	100.0
POLITICS				
LIBERAL	25.8	45.3	28.9	100.0
MIDDLE OF ROAD	24.4	50.6	25.1	100.0
CONSERVATIVE	32.3	47.5	20.2	100.0
NOT SURE	25.0	53.1	21.9	100.0
DENOMINATN				
ORTHODOX	60.8	31.6	7.6	100.0
CONSERVATIVE	28.4	53.4	18.2	100.0
REFORM	20.4	50.1	29.4	100.0
JUST JEWISH	20.3	42.9	36.8	100.0
AFFILIATION				
UNAFFILIATED	19.2	49.7	31.1	100.0
AFFILIATED	28.1	48.4	23.5	100.0
ACTIVIST	38.7	43.0	18.3	100.0

## 6. THE BIGGEST SHIFTS TO HAWKISHNESS SINCE 1989 OCCURRED AMONG REFORM JEWS, THE HIGHLY EDUCATED, THE UNAFFILIATED, AND LIBERALS

As noted earlier, the 1991 survey reinterviewed 429 respondents who had completed the AJC-sponsored survey in 1989. Using several questions on Israeli policy asked in both 1989 and 1991, it was possible to construct two identical scales measuring hawk-dove attitudes in the same way for the same respondents in the two surveys. By comparing their values on these scales, the analysis could classify respondents in three groups: those who became more hawkish (27.5 percent), those who became more dovish (17.7 percent), and those whose views were essentially unchanged (54.8 percent). In other words, the hawk-dove balance shifted in the hawkish direction by about 10 percentage points (i.e.,  $27.5 - 17.7 = 9.8$ ).

Not all subgroups shifted equally. Men and women shifted to a more hard-line stance in roughly equal proportions. Middle-aged Jews (age 40-59) shifted to the "right" somewhat more than those who are younger or older. Those with professional or graduate degrees shifted right about 10 percentage points more often than did those with lower levels of education. Political conservatives hardly shifted at all as compared with much larger shifts among liberals and those with a middle-of-the-road political philosophy. Reform Jews hardened their attitudes substantially more than the Orthodox or the other denominational groups. And the unaffiliated group's balance of hawks and doves shifted about 15 percentage points in the hawkish direction, as compared with just 5 percentage points among the communal activists.

As a general rule, those groups that were initially the most dovish were most likely to shift in a hawkish direction.

CHANGES IN HAWKISH AND DOVISH ATTITUDES, FROM 1989 TO 1991  
BY SEX, AGE, EDUCATION, POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY,  
DENOMINATION, AND JEWISH COMMUNAL AFFILIATION  
(PERCENTAGES, READING ACROSS)

	MORE DOVISH	UN- CHANGED	MORE HAWKISH	TOTAL
SEX				
MALE	15.5	59.0	25.5	100.0
FEMALE	19.7	51.1	29.3	100.0
AGE				
18-39	19.4	56.9	23.6	100.0
40-59	14.4	57.5	28.2	100.0
60+	20.0	52.7	27.3	100.0
EDUCATION				
HIGH SCHOOL	22.4	49.1	28.6	100.0
COLLEGE DEGREE	16.4	60.0	23.6	100.0
PROFL, GRAD SCHOOL	14.2	56.1	29.7	100.0
POLITICS				
LIBERAL	16.0	55.8	28.2	100.0
MIDDLE OF ROAD	18.7	52.4	28.9	100.0
CONSERVATIVE	18.8	60.0	21.2	100.0
NOT SURE	21.1	42.1	36.8	100.0
DENOMINATN				
ORTHODOX	21.7	47.8	30.4	100.0
CONSERVATIVE	21.7	52.6	25.7	100.0
REFORM	13.5	55.6	30.8	100.0
JUST JEWISH	16.4	58.6	25.0	100.0
AFFILIATION				
UNAFFILIATED	14.5	55.9	29.6	100.0
AFFILIATED	18.3	56.2	25.6	100.0
ACTIVIST	24.1	46.6	29.3	100.0

## 7. RESPONDENTS ATTRIBUTE THEIR MORE HAWKISH POSTURE TO THE GULF WAR

The professional research literature on respondent recall suggests that respondents lack the capacity to accurately recall their emotions at some point in the past, much less to reconstruct how and why their feelings changed over time. Nevertheless, it is still of some interest to note that the 1991 respondents believe that their views on the Arab-Israeli conflict have moved in a more hard-line direction as a result of the Gulf War.

Almost a quarter said their opinions on Israel's political and security situation changed as a result of the Gulf War. Within this group, more say they shifted in the direction of opposition to Israel making compromises with the Arabs (13 percent) than who shifted in the other direction (8 percent), amounting to an implied net shift of 5 percentage points. Asked another way, 11 percent said they became more hawkish, and just 4 percent said they became more dovish, suggesting a shift of 7 percentage points.

Further evidence of the impact of the Gulf War can be seen in other questions. After the war, Israeli hard-liners put forth an argument which we tried to encapsulate on the questionnaire in the following fashion: "As a result of the Gulf War and the Scud missile attacks on Israel, would you say that . . . It is even more clear that Israel must hold on to the West Bank to provide Israel with strategic depth against Arab attack." Respondents agreed with this view by a lopsided majority of 67 to 11 percent.

Earlier this report alluded to the pivotal and potent influence of fear, threat, and perceived vulnerability on American Jewish public opinion. Support for the view that fears for Israeli security may have prompted the shift to the more hard-line posture comes in the large majority (67 to 27 percent) who agreed with the following statement: "During the war, I was more worried about the fate of Israel than I have ever been in the last 10-15 years."

To be sure, these responses in which respondents were asked to recall how (or why) their views have changed bear little correspondence with the real shifts that took place among the respondents. Among the 429 respondents whose views were surveyed in both 1989 and 1991, there is no correlation whatsoever between how their views changed and how they say their views changed over the two years between surveys.

To elaborate, based upon their answers to the same hawk-dove questions in 1989 and 1991, the analysis could categorize respondents in terms of types of change: some became more hawkish, somewhat fewer become more dovish, and most held the same relative position on the hawk-dove spectrum. Comparing those who said they became more hawkish with those who said they became more dovish with those who said they had not changed their views, we find no differences with respect to the proportions of those who actually changed their attitudes in one direction or the other. In other words, based upon their actual recorded answers, particular respondents in 1991 had no ability to accurately report who among them became more hawkish or more dovish. These results are consistent with a long history of social-science research that casts doubt upon the accuracy of recall questions.



The previous AJC-sponsored National Surveys of American Jews have demonstrated that perceptions of unremitting Arab hostility reinforce opposition to compromise. In the world of public opinion, moderation begets moderation, and extremism begets extremism. The changes in American Jewish opinion that have occurred as a result of the Gulf War and their apparent reactions to the war itself are certainly consistent with this theoretical perspective. For, in areas that are new to this study, we also find evidence of what many observers would call a fairly hard-line posture on the part of American Jews.

A PERCEIVED SHIFT TO THE "RIGHT"  
AS A RESULT OF THE GULF WAR

Has the Gulf War changed your opinions regarding Israel's political and security situation?

YES	24
NO	65
NOT SURE	11

(IF YES) Would you say that you now are more in favor of Israel making compromises with the Arabs or are you less in favor of compromises?

		NET CHANGE
NO CHANGE	76	
MORE	8	
LESS	13	5
NOT SURE	3	

(IF YES) Are you now more "dovish" or more "hawkish"?

		NET CHANGE
NO CHANGE	76	
MORE DOVISH	4	
MORE HAWKISH	11	7
NEITHER	6	
NOT SURE	3	

As a result of the Gulf War and the Scud missile attacks on Israel, would you say that ...

	YES	NO	NOT SURE
It is even more clear that Israel must hold on to the West Bank to provide Israel with strategic depth against Arab attack	67	11	22

	AGREE	DIS- AGREE	NOT SURE
During the War, I was more worried about the fate of Israel than I have ever been in the last 10-15 years	67	27	6

## 8. OPPOSITION TO RETURN OF TERRITORIES AND TO A PALESTINIAN STATE; NEAR UNANIMITY ON HOLDING JERUSALEM

What solutions to the Arab-Israeli dispute do these respondents prefer? How do they feel about "trading land for peace"?

By a 45-to-27-percent margin, the sample agreed that "Israel should reject the principle of 'trading land for peace.'" Since a slim plurality, as we saw earlier, supports territorial compromise, it is clear that a small number of respondents hold seemingly discrepant views in that they support territorial compromise but reject trading land for peace.

Respondents were presented with four alternative solutions to "the problem of Palestinians in the Middle East" and were asked which one they preferred. A substantial minority (37 percent) did not feel comfortable expressing preference for any of the solutions. The remainder preferred the solutions more often advanced by right-of-center Israeli leaders to those advanced by their left-of-center counterparts.

Thus 15 percent endorsed Israeli annexation, a view most often advanced by political parties to the right of Likud. Another 32 percent preferred Israeli military control of the territories with "local self-rule for the Palestinians," a view that comes close to what seems to be the thinking of most Likud leaders. Just 12 percent preferred what some have called the Jordanian option, a view advanced by Shimon Peres and others in the Labor party. Only 4 percent said they preferred "the establishment of an independent Palestinian state in all of the West Bank and Gaza," a view advanced by several non-Zionist Israeli political parties. (The Zionist political parties to the left of Labor condition acceptance of a Palestinian state on numerous Israeli security guarantees and PLO concessions.)

Of course, what people "prefer" may not correspond with what they are willing to accept. This question elicits what may be the maximalist preferences of the sample. Here it is noteworthy that most of those who prefer only local self-rule for the Palestinians would, according to their answers to another question, also accept a Palestinian state in the context of a peace agreement and real security for Israel.

When questions are framed in terms of rights, morality, and legitimacy (as opposed, perhaps, to political wisdom or prudence), the respondents exhibit relatively little sympathy for a Palestinian state. A very solid majority of 54 to 13 percent agree that "Since Jordan is already a Palestinian state, there's no need for another Palestinian state." Just 27 percent agree and 40 percent disagree that "Palestinians have a right to a state on the West Bank and Gaza, so long as it does not threaten Israel."

Last, on the question of Jerusalem, American Jews parallel the Israelis in their near unanimous support (80 to 4 percent) for the view "As part of any peace settlement, Israel must retain control of a united Jerusalem as its capital city." Israeli parties of the left as well as the right, even those which vigorously advocate territorial compromise, are also nearly unanimous in the view that Jerusalem must never again be divided and that it must remain Israel's capital.

A PLURALITY PREFERS THAT  
ISRAEL RETAIN CONTROL OF THE TERRITORIES  
RATHER THAN "TRADING LAND FOR PEACE" OR  
GIVING THE AREAS OVER TO ARAB CONTROL

	AGREE	DIS- AGREE	NOT SURE
Israel should reject the principle of "trading land for peace"	45	27	28
Which one of the following would you prefer as a solution to the problem of the Palestinians in the Middle East?			
Israeli annexation of all of the West Bank and Gaza	15		
Israeli military control of all of the West Bank and Gaza, with local self-rule for the Palestinians	32		
The return of major portions of the West Bank and Gaza to Jordan, with appropriate security arrangements for Israel	12		
The establishment of an independent Palestinian state in all of the West Bank and Gaza	4		
I don't know which of these solutions I prefer	23		
I don't know which is the preferable solution because I haven't followed the situation closely enough	14		
	100		

REJECTION OF PALESTINIANS RIGHT TO A STATE ON THE WEST BANK & GAZA

	AGREE	DIS- AGREE	NOT SURE
Since Jordan is already a Palestinian state, there's no need for another Palestinian state	54	13	33
Palestinians have a right to a state on the West Bank & Gaza, so long as it does not threaten Israel	27	40	33

NEAR-UNANIMITY ON HOLDING JERUSALEM

As part of any peace settlement, Israel must retain control of a united Jerusalem as its capital city	80	4	15
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9. MIXED VIEWS ON JEWISH SETTLEMENTS,  
BUT A PLURALITY NOW SUPPORTS  
EXPANSION

This survey was conducted in the summer of 1991, just before the question of Jewish settlements in the territories emerged at the center of controversy. Undoubtedly, the decision in September 1991 by President Bush to explicitly tie a settlement freeze to the provision of loan guarantees for absorbing Soviet Jewish immigrants to Israel affected the way American Jews think about the settlements.

Nevertheless, it is still of some interest to learn how these respondents view the issue of Jewish settlement in the territories, particularly in the West Bank, where almost all the settlement activity has taken place.

As noted earlier, a slim plurality of 30 to 29 percent favors the expansion of these settlements. In like fashion an almost equally slim plurality (31 to 33 percent) rejects a proposal floated by Washington during the spring and summer of 1991 that "In return for a real end to the Arab economic boycott, Israel should be willing to halt expansion of West Bank settlements." The answers to these questions show that the sample is divided on the question of settlements, although, barring sampling error, the balance of those with an opinion tips in favor of settlements. On yet a third question, the balance seems to tip against settlements. By a 39-to-31-percent plurality, the sample agrees with a view often voiced by administration officials: "The West Bank settlements represent a major obstacle to peace." (To be sure, advocates of settlement might well agree with this statement and support expanding settlement nonetheless.)

VIEWS ON THE JEWISH SETTLEMENTS

		AGREE	DIS- AGREE	NOT SURE
Israel should expand Jewish settlements on the West Bank	1991	30	29	41
	1989	25	35	41
In return for a real end to the Arab economic boycott, Israel should be willing to halt expansion of West Bank settlements		31	33	36
The West Bank settlements represent a major obstacle to peace		39	31	31

10. SUPPORT FOR PLO-ISRAEL TALKS AND A PALESTINIAN STATE  
ONLY IF ISRAEL'S SECURITY IS SAFEGUARDED

As we have seen, the vast majority of American Jews are very suspicious of PLO intentions and they prefer all solutions to the Arab-Israel conflict offered other than a Palestinian state. Also as we have seen, feelings of threat and vulnerability play a major role in influencing American Jewish views on the conflict. What happens to Jews' opinions when threat and vulnerability are removed, even hypothetically? How do American Jews then react to accommodating Palestinian national aspirations?

By more than a two-to-one majority (51 to 23 percent), American Jews agree with the following statement: "If the PLO recognizes Israel's right to exist, and it ceases all acts of terror, and there's a complete 'cease-fire' in the Arab uprising, then Israel should agree to conduct negotiations with the PLO."

Israelis are divided on negotiating with the PLO. Some, on the political right, oppose talks with the PLO under any circumstances. Others, on the political left, favor official talks and have been conducting informal dialogue for years with PLO officials. A large number in the middle would favor talks only if certain conditions are met. It is clear that the majority of American Jews favor a conditional go-ahead for Israeli-PLO talks. (The conditions listed here come close to what in Israel has become known as the "Yariv-Shemtov Formula" for talks with the PLO: recognition coupled with cessation of hostilities.)

Perhaps even more surprising in light of their other attitudes is the willingness of American Jews to contemplate a Palestinian state. Recall that earlier we saw that a plurality rejects the notion that Palestinians have "a right" to such a state even if it would not threaten Israel. However, a majority of 51 to 21 percent agree that "In the framework of a peace agreement, Israel should be willing to allow for the establishment of a Palestinian state with security arrangements acceptable to Israel."

Again, the results underline the importance of the perception of the severity of Arab threat and Israeli vulnerability for shaping basic attitudes toward the conflict. Heightened threat and vulnerability are accompanied by more hard-line attitudes; diminished threat and diminished vulnerability, even if only hypothetical, generate a greater willingness to support Israeli compromise.

EVEN THOUGH JEWS ARE WARY ABOUT THE PLO,  
MOST ARE READY FOR ISRAEL TO TALK TO NON-THREATENING PALESTINIANS &  
TO ACCEPT A PALESTINIAN STATE IF ARRANGEMENTS ACCEPTABLE TO ISRAEL

	AGREE	DIS- AGREE	NOT SURE
If the PLO recognizes Israel's right to exist, and it ceases all acts of terror, and there's a complete "cease-fire" in the Arab uprising, then Israel should agree to conduct negotiations with the PLO	51	23	26
In the framework of a peace agreement, Israel should be willing to allow for the establishment of a Palestinian state with security arrangements acceptable to Israel	51	21	28

## 11. ONE THIRD PERCEIVE UNFAIR ISRAELI TREATMENT OF PALESTINIAN ARABS

The perception of Israeli fairness (or lack thereof) in treatment of the Palestinian Arabs has been a subject of some contention among Israelis, American Jews, and advocates of Israeli and Arab positions in several arenas. Those who think that Israel is being unfair to the Palestinians are certainly more likely to question the moral legitimacy of Israeli government policies and positions, while those who think the Palestinians are being treated fairly are certainly less likely to be disturbed by those stances.

The questionnaire asked respondents to say "how fairly is each of the following [eight] groups being treated in Israel." While pluralities or majorities gave Israel high marks for fair treatment of all vulnerable population groups, the greatest concern (as measured by the number who responded "somewhat unfairly" or "very unfairly") centered around the Palestinian Arabs. Over two-fifths (44 percent) said Israel treats Palestinian Arabs fairly, while a third (33 percent) thought they are being unfairly treated. These figures are almost identical with those reported in 1989.

The respondents clearly differentiate Palestinian Arabs from their counterparts living within Israel. For Israeli Arabs, 55 percent say they are subject to fair treatment and just 23 percent say they are being treated in an unfair fashion.

When asked about "the Israeli government's response to the Palestinian uprising," only 16 percent regard it as "too harsh," even fewer (13 percent) say it is "too lenient," and all the rest say it is "about right" (45 percent) or are not sure (26 percent). When considered in light of the earlier results where about one-third say Palestinian Arabs are subject to unfair Israeli treatment, these results suggest two inferences. First, Palestinians may evoke less sympathy among American Jews when they are seen in the context of a violent uprising rather than abstractly. Second, not all of the feelings of discomfort with Israeli treatment of Palestinians relate directly to Israeli responses to the uprising. Rather (since 33 percent is clearly twice as large as 16 percent), some American Jews are critical of Israeli treatment of Palestinians even if they do not feel that Israeli responses to the uprising have been too harsh.

However one looks at these results, there clearly is a significant minority of American Jews that feels uncomfortable with how Palestinian Arabs have been treated. The number, though amounting to only a third, is noteworthy in that it occurs among a population that is otherwise very sympathetic to and supportive of Israel. Presumably, the argument that Palestinian Arabs are being unfairly treated receives an even more sympathetic hearing among Americans generally than among American Jews. Moreover, this argument may represent a potential weak point in the public-relations battle for the enthusiastic support of American Jews for Israeli government policies.



PERCEPTION OF ISRAELI TREATMENT OF PALESTINIAN ARABS

In your view, how fairly is each of the following groups being treated in Israel?

	FAIR	UNFAIR	NOT SURE
Palestinians on the West Bank			
1991	44	33	23
1989	44	32	25
Israeli Arabs			
1991	55	23	21
1989	59	19	23
1986	42	28	30

Do you think the Israeli government's response to the Palestinian uprising has been too harsh, too lenient or about right?

TOO HARSH	16
TOO LENIENT	13
ABOUT RIGHT	45
NOT SURE	26

## 12. SUPPORT FOR ISRAEL'S USE OF ATOMIC WEAPONS UNDER DESPERATE CIRCUMSTANCES

Recent news accounts report that Israel placed its nuclear forces on alert during the Gulf War to retaliate against possible Iraqi attack with chemical or biological weapons. Would the American Jewish public have supported Israel's use of atomic weapons in such circumstances? Apparently, they would have. A 74-to-26-percent majority said it would be "justified for Israel to use atomic weapons in response to an attack from another state by biological or chemical weapons." A smaller majority of 60 to 40 percent felt it justified for Israel to do so "under desperate circumstances, in order to avoid destruction in a conventional (nonatomic) war." Apparently the difference in the response to these two questions derives from the more pointed and specific formulation in the first question. It is of some note that these figures suggest a degree of support for Israeli use of atomic weapons that is as great as, if not greater than, the support by the Israeli public as revealed in a recent survey designed and analyzed by Professor Asher Arian.

These results are significant not only for what they tell us of likely American Jewish reaction to possible U.S. pressure on Israel to rid itself of nuclear weaponry. They also indicate the depth of commitment to Israel's physical survival on the part of American Jewry. The willingness to support the hypothetical Israeli use of nuclear weapons signifies the extent to which American Jews see Israel confronting mortal danger and the extent to which they think it reasonable for Israel to place the region, if not the world, in danger of nuclear destruction in order to safeguard its very existence.

SUPPORT FOR ISRAEL'S USE OF ATOMIC WEAPONS  
UNDER DESPERATE CIRCUMSTANCES

Would it be justified or not justified for Israel to use atomic weapons in response to an attack from another state by biological or chemical weapons?

	U.S. JEWS 1991	ISRAELI JEWS 1990
ABSOLUTELY JUSTIFIED	38	50
JUSTIFIED	36	24
UNJUSTIFIED	17	15
ABSOLUTELY UNJUSTIFIED	9	6

Would it be justified or not justified for Israel to use atomic weapons under desperate circumstances, in order to avoid destruction in a conventional (non-atomic) war?

	U.S. JEWS 1991	ISRAELI JEWS 1990
ABSOLUTELY JUSTIFIED	23	27
JUSTIFIED	37	23
UNJUSTIFIED	27	34
ABSOLUTELY UNJUSTIFIED	13	17

### 13. THE U.S. AND ISRAEL: URGE FLEXIBILITY, BUT NO PRESSURE

How do the respondents, as American citizens, believe the U.S. government ought to formulate its policies toward Israel and the Arab-Israeli conflict?

A slim plurality (41 to 37 percent) believe that the United States should "continue to urge Israel to adopt a more flexible stance toward the Arabs." However, despite apparent support for greater Israeli flexibility and for American government encouragement of that flexibility, the respondents draw a line between mere urging and more vigorous forms of pressure.

More than a two-to-one majority (54 to 22 percent) want the United States to "stop criticizing Israel for expanding the West Bank settlements." (Pointedly, this question was asked before U.S. criticism of Israeli settlements was as widely publicized as it was in September 1991.) A similar margin (21 to 48 percent) rejects the idea that "public criticism of Israel by the U.S. Administration is useful for prodding the Israeli government in the peace process."

If a clear majority are opposed to public criticism of Israeli settlements, an overwhelming majority of 80 to 8 percent oppose the idea of the U.S. threatening "to reduce foreign aid to Israel unless Israel adopts a more flexible stance toward the Arabs." When asked their views on the desired level of U.S. foreign aid to Israel, just 4 percent wanted it reduced; most (53 percent) wanted it kept the same; and almost a third (30 percent) wanted it increased.

We asked respondents whether, with respect to making compromises for peace, the United States should apply more or less pressure to several Arab groups and the Israelis. Of those with an opinion, very lopsided majorities (between 65 and 78 percent) favored more pressure on the Palestinians, the Syrians, the Jordanians, and the Saudis, and hardly any (1 to 3 percent) asked for less pressure. The sample distinguished the Egyptians from these groups; 33 percent wanted more pressure, 9 percent less, and the majority wanted about the same as now or were not sure.

As might be expected, the responses with respect to the Israelis were quite different. About half wanted the same amount of pressure as now or had no opinion. The remainder split almost evenly between more pressure (24 percent) and less pressure (28 percent), constituting a tilt in the direction of less pressure.

Clearly American Jews are divided on how they want their government to relate to Israel and the other parties to the conflict. We find those who want the United States to urge more flexibility and those who oppose this view. About a fifth to a quarter even prefer continued criticism of Israeli settlements and other forms of increased pressure on Israel to make compromises for peace (though, it should be clear, most American Jews oppose these suggestions). But these tendencies must be distinguished from attempts to use foreign aid as an instrument of American encouragement or pressure. Hardly any American Jews favor threats to reduce foreign aid or, for that matter, the actual reduction of foreign aid to Israel.

PLURALITY FAVOR THE U.S. URGING ISRAELI FLEXIBILITY,  
BUT MAJORITY OPPOSE U.S. CRITICISM, PRESSURE,  
AND THREATS TO CUT FOREIGN AID

	YES	NO	NOT SURE
Should the U.S. . . .			
Continue to urge Israel to adopt a more flexible stance toward the Arabs?	41	37	22
Stop criticizing Israel for expanding the West Bank settlements?	54	22	24
Threaten to reduce foreign aid to Israel unless Israel adopts a more flexible stance toward the Arabs?	8	80	12
Should the U.S. increase its economic and military aid to Israel, reduce it, or keep it about the same?			
INCREASE	30		
KEEP ABOUT THE SAME	53		
DECREASE	4		
NOT SURE	13		
	AGREE	DIS- AGREE	NOT SURE
Public criticism of Israel by the U.S. Administration is useful for prodding the Israeli government in the peace process	21	48	31

ALMOST UNANIMOUS SUPPORT FOR THE U.S. PRESSURING ARABS,  
MIXED VIEWS ON THE U.S. PRESSURING ISRAEL

With respect to making compromises for peace, do you think the U.S.  
should apply MORE PRESSURE or LESS PRESSURE toward each of the fol-  
lowing parties, or should it apply ABOUT THE SAME amount of pressure  
as now?

TOWARD THIS GROUP, THE U.S. SHOULD APPLY ...	MORE PRESS- URE	LESS PRESS- URE	ABOUT THE SAME	NOT SURE
THE PALESTINIANS	78	1	8	12
THE SYRIANS	75	1	11	13
THE JORDANIANS	74	2	11	13
THE SAUDIS	65	3	20	12
THE EGYPTIANS	33	9	45	13
THE ISRAELIS	24	28	37	12

14. PUBLIC CRITICISM OF ISRAEL SEEN AS NOT USEFUL  
AND SUSPECT, BUT ULTIMATELY PERMISSIBLE

Previous AJC-sponsored surveys of American Jewry have demonstrated repeatedly and uniformly that American Jews reject the idea that they "should not publicly criticize the policies of the government of Israel." As noted earlier, on almost every survey including the most recent, clear majorities reject the idea that they should not criticize. Only in 1982, during the war in Lebanon, did the margin against opposing criticism slip below a majority to a 49-to-43-percent plurality.

But saying that American Jews reject the idea that they should not issue public criticism is not the same as saying that they think it is a good idea. In fact, when asked whether public criticism of Israel "is useful for prodding the Israeli government in the peace process," a 41-to-27 percent plurality disagreed when such criticism is proffered by "established American Jewish organizations." Even more disagreed (48 to 21 percent) when the question was phrased in terms of the "United States administration" making such criticism.

Not only do a plurality of American Jews fail to see how public criticism of Israel is useful, a plurality (40 to 33 percent) suspects that "the criticism of Israel we hear derives mainly from anti-Semitism."

In short, while endorsing the theoretical right of American Jews to criticize Israeli government policies, many American Jews fail to see much value in such criticism and many also are suspicious of the motives of those (presumably non-Jews) who might publicly criticize Israel.

CRITICISM OF ISRAEL:  
NOT USEFUL, SUSPECT,  
BUT PERMISSIBLE

	AGREE	DIS- AGREE	NOT SURE
Public criticism of Israel by established American Jewish organizations is useful for prodding the Israeli government in the peace process	27	41	32
Public criticism of Israel by the U.S. Administration is useful for prodding the Israeli government in the peace process	21	48	31
The criticism of Israel that we hear derives mainly from anti-Semitism	40	33	27
American Jews should not publicly criticize the policies of the government of Israel			
1991	30	55	15
1989	23	63	14
1988	32	56	12
1986	22	63	16
1983	31	57	12
1982	43	49	8
1981	38	57	17

## 15. THE NEWS MEDIA: UNFAIR TO ISRAEL

Over the years, many American Jewish organization officials have criticized the news media for presenting an unfair and unbalanced portrait of Israel in its ongoing conflict with its Arab neighbors. Such complaints were especially pronounced during the war in Lebanon in 1982 and during the Palestinian uprising in 1988 and 1989, although they recurred with regularity at other times as well.

To what extent are these critics' views shared by the wider American Jewish public? Apparently, fairly substantial majorities of American Jews are indeed critical of the news media for their presentation of Israel. Echoing a theme often voiced by communal leaders, a 62-to-19 percent majority agree that "the American news media use a double standard in judging Israel more harshly than the Arab countries." In like fashion, a similar majority (61 to 21 percent) agree that "the news media run too many news stories that present Israel in a negative light."

Now, one could argue that respondents could accept these first two statements yet still regard the news media as approaching the Middle East without prejudice. Perhaps, as several journalists have argued, Israel, which claims to adhere to Western democratic standards, deserves to be judged more harshly than the nondemocratic Arab states; and perhaps there are so many negative stories about Israel in part because so much of the news is genuinely negative. (As one pro-Israel journalist wrote in 1988, "If Israel wants to see fewer pictures of Israeli soldiers beating Arab youngsters, then fewer soldiers should beat Arab youngsters.")

However, the American Jewish public largely rejects such rationales. A 52-to-27-percent majority disagrees with the idea that "By and large, the American news media are fairly balanced in their coverage of the Arab-Israeli conflict."

Of course, it is not at all unusual for partisans of one side in a conflict to claim that their side is being mistreated by the major media. Palestinian Arab advocates also claim with regularity that the news media are unbalanced in their coverage of the Middle East conflict, but their idea of lack of balance is quite different than that held by most American Jews who complain of lack of balance. The point here is that when Jewish leaders criticize the press for biased reporting they can be presumed to generally enjoy the support of the American Jewish public.



THE NEWS MEDIA:  
UNFAIR TO ISRAEL

	AGREE	DIS- AGREE	NOT SURE
The American news media use a double standard in judging Israel more harshly than the Arab countries	62	19	19
The news media run too many news stories that present Israel in a negative light	61	21	19
By and large, the American news media are fairly balanced in their coverage of the Arab-Israeli conflict	27	52	21

Do you believe that each of the American groups and individuals below is generally friendly, mixed or neutral, or generally unfriendly toward Israel?

	GENERALLY FRIENDLY	MIXED OR NEUTRAL	GENERALLY UNFRIENDLY	NO IM- PRESSION
TV network newscasters	15	54	22	9
The major newspapers	13	53	24	9

## 16. PERCEPTION OF ISRAEL'S FRIENDS AND ENEMIES IN THE AMERICAN PUBLIC

The construction of American Jewish attitudes takes place in the context of threat and vulnerability. The feelings of peril and weakness extend beyond the realm of the Middle East itself where Israel is seen as confronting very powerful enemies bent on its destruction. In addition, American Jewish pro-Israel activists view the United States as a battlefield, though of a different sort. Here the battle is for public support and ultimately political influence among government elites. It is an arena with friends and enemies of various sorts.

The 1991 questionnaire asked respondents to judge the friendliness (or antagonism) of several key groups and government officials toward Israel. Their responses indicate some very clear elements of a Jewish worldview as it looks out upon the broader American political landscape. The question asked whether "you believe that each of the . . . groups . . . below is generally friendly, mixed or neutral, or generally unfriendly toward Israel."

Of all groups listed, the Democrats were the only one rated as friendly to Israel by a majority (58 percent) of the respondents. About a quarter said "mixed or neutral" and only 2 percent thought of the Democrats as generally unfriendly. These results contrast sharply with the responses to Republicans. Here just 24 percent (less than half as many as for the Democrats) rated Republicans as friendly. Most (52 percent) saw them as mixed or neutral, and a small number (11 percent) saw Republicans as unfriendly to Israel.

Of course, it is not clear which Democrats and which Republicans respondents had in mind when answering this question. As we shall see, feelings about the constituencies who make up the electoral support for these parties are far more suspicious than they are of the parties themselves. One possibility is that when many respondents see the words *Democrats* and *Republicans* they tend to think of congressional leaders from those parties.

With respect to administration officials (who, under a Republican president, are all Republican), the respondents are largely divided between those who see Messrs. Bush, Quayle, Cheney, and Baker as generally friendly, and the slightly larger number who rate these four individuals as mixed or neutral. A small number see Bush, Quayle, and Cheney as unfriendly, while over a fifth (23 percent) regard James Baker as unfriendly. The lowest ratings were reserved for White House chief of staff John Sununu, seen as unfriendly to Israel by 39 percent and friendly by only 9 percent. Perhaps press reports that Mr. Sununu has counseled the president to adopt a more pro-Arab stance and his ethnic background (he is of Lebanese descent) contribute to the feeling among American Jews that the former New Hampshire governor is generally unfriendly to Israel.

With respect to major white Christian religious groups, the typical reaction of American Jews is that these groups are mixed or neutral toward Israel. On balance, they regard mainstream Protestants as slightly more friendly than evangelical Protestants, who, in turn, are rated as slightly more friendly than Catholics.

These findings are especially curious in light of the record of the official church bodies associated with each of these population groups. The so-called mainstream Protestant churches have

often issued statements critical of Israeli policies while the more fundamentalist churches have tended to back some of the more hard-line stances of the Israeli government in recent years. American Roman Catholic bishops, while not especially outspoken on the Middle East, have been credited by Jewish communal interreligious-affairs officials with pushing the Vatican to more vigorously condemn and combat anti-Semitism. Apparently, the wider Jewish public remains oblivious to these institutional activities.

While Jews may be characterized as somewhat cautious about white Christian attitudes toward Israel, as a group they are clearly suspicious of Hispanics' attitudes and downright distrustful of blacks' views. Hardly any respondents see Hispanics as generally friendly to Israel, while the rest of those with a clear opinion are divided between a plurality (37 percent) who see Hispanics as mixed or neutral and over a quarter (27 percent) who regard them as generally unfriendly. Only with respect to the blacks does a clear plurality (47 percent) of respondents think the group is essentially unfriendly to Israel. Just 6 percent say that blacks are generally friendly to Israel, and another 29 percent respond that they are mixed or neutral.

One anomaly here is that Democrats are seen far more favorably than blacks, Hispanics, and Catholics, who, aside from Jews, make up much of the traditional Democratic constituency. Similarly, Republicans evoke a more sympathetic reaction than do either of the Protestant groups who typically make up the backbone of Republican voting strength. Why do Jews feel more comfortable with political-party labels than with religious or ethnic labels? (To be clear, previous AJC-sponsored surveys have uncovered the same pattern of results.)

One element at work here is the traditional and historic Jewish mistrust of other groups with strong religious or group-oriented commitments. The "historical mythos" of American Jews sees anti-Semitism as most prevalent among conservative nationalist and religious groups. Established, middle-of-the-road, political affiliations, by contrast, betoken (if only unconsciously) the progressive, enlightened, and modernized segment of the population which, Jews assume, is less anti-Semitic and, by extension, less anti-Israel.

The very low ratings of blacks are consistent with the results from the other AJC surveys that asked about Jewish perceptions of other American groups. Blacks, uniformly and by a wide margin, are seen as the most anti-Semitic and most anti-Israel group in the population. Statements and off-hand remarks by Jesse Jackson, Louis Farrakhan, and some local African-American leaders have helped strengthen and solidify the impression among Jews that black people generally are unfriendly to Jews and Israel.

PERCEIVED FRIENDS: DEMOCRATS, BUSH, QUAYLE, CHENEY  
PERCEIVED HOSTILITY AMONG: BLACKS, HISPANICS, AND SUNUNU

Do you believe that each of the American groups and individuals below is generally friendly, mixed or neutral, or generally unfriendly toward Israel?

	GENERALLY FRIENDLY	MIXED OR NEUTRAL	GENERALLY UNFRIENDLY	NO IM- PRESSION
<u>Political Parties</u>				
Democrats	58	27	2	13
Republicans	24	52	11	13
<u>Political Leaders</u>				
President Bush	34	41	15	10
Vice Pres. Dan Quayle	29	30	10	31
Sec. of Defense Cheney	26	36	10	28
Sec. of State James Baker	26	36	23	15
Chief of Staff J. Sununu	9	23	39	29
<u>Religious &amp; Ethnic Groups</u>				
Mainstream Protestants	17	50	8	25
Evangelical Protestants	18	34	20	28
Catholics	14	47	21	18
Blacks	6	29	47	18
Hispanics	5	37	27	32

## 17. THE FEW WHO DIFFERENTIATE PREFER ISRAELI DOVES TO HAWKS

The questionnaire asked respondents to distinguish between various Israeli political movements, that is, between doves and hawks, between Likud and Labor, and between Gush Emunim and Peace Now.

About half (or more) of the sample declined to make such distinctions, possibly because these names and categories carried little meaning for them. Of those who could express a clear preference one way or another, more seemed to favor the more dovish than the more hawkish group in the pair.

For example, with respect to Israeli doves those with a favorable impression outnumbered those with an unfavorable view by 35 to 20 percent, as opposed to a far more narrow 28-to-20-percent split for Israeli hawks. When asked whether certain groups had too much or too little power in Israeli society, by 16 to 4 percent the sample said Likud had too much rather than too little power; for the Labor party, the pattern reverses (too much, 7 percent; too little, 15 percent). We see similar results for Gush Emunim on the political right and Peace Now on the political left.

These results, showing an unmistakable preference for the political left in Israel, are clearly out of sync with the more centrist policy views presented above. They may mean that those who feel informed and comfortable enough to make distinctions among Israeli political groups are more often dovish than hawkish in their views.

FEW CAN DIFFERENTIATE BETWEEN ISRAELI HAWKS AND DOVES  
THOSE WHO DO, MORE STILL FAVOR THE DOVES

What is your impression of each of the following Israeli leaders and groups?

	1991			1989		
	FAVOR- ABLE	UNFAVOR- ABLE	DON'T KNOW	FAVOR- ABLE	UNFAVOR- ABLE	DON'T KNOW
Israeli "doves"	35	20	46	36	17	47
Israeli "hawks"	28	25	45	28	26	43

In your view, which of the following groups has too much power, and which has too little power in Israeli society?

THIS GROUP HAS ...	TOO MUCH POWER	TOO LITTLE POWER	ABOUT THE RIGHT AMOUNT	NOT SURE
The Likud Party	16	4	23	57
Labor Party	7	15	23	55
Orthodox religious parties	52	5	7	36
Gush Emunim, the Jewish settler movement	16	8	15	61
Peace Now, the Israeli peace movement	9	16	17	59

# 18. STABLE, IF NOT SLIGHTLY INCREASED, ATTACHMENT TO ISRAEL

Previous AJC-sponsored studies detected a trend that many Jewish communal leaders regarded as somewhat worrisome. Measures of attachment to Israel seemed to be declining over the years. Moreover, younger Jews said they were significantly less attached to Israel than older Jews. Obviously, these findings pointed to a continued erosion in American Jewish support for Israel.

The latest survey suggests that the slide in Israel attachment, such as it may have been, has ceased. Moreover, the formerly large gaps in pro-Israel sentiment between old and young have narrowed somewhat.

To illustrate, in 1989 just 22 percent said they felt "very close" to Israel; in 1991, the comparable proportion had grown to 31 percent. In 1989, 60 percent said they often talked about Israel with friends and relatives as compared with 68 percent in 1991. Not all indicators of attachment showed increases from 1989 to 1991, but most did.

More detailed analysis demonstrates that the younger respondents (those under 40 years of age) experienced larger increases in attachment to Israel in the period between the two surveys. In 1989, only 34 percent of those under 40 scored high on a composite measure of Israel attachment as compared with 59 percent of those 60 and over. In 1991, those scoring high amounted to 47 percent of those under 40 and 61 percent of those 60 and over. Thus, the gap in Israel attachment between old and young has narrowed, largely as a result of substantial increases in attachment among younger adults and stability in attachment among the older adults.

STABLE LEVELS OF ATTACHMENT TO ISRAEL SINCE 1989  
MOST FEEL "CLOSE" OR "ATTACHED" TO ISRAEL

	1991	1989
How close do you feel to Israel?		
VERY CLOSE	31	22
FAIRLY CLOSE	41	40
FAIRLY/VERY DISTANT	25	31
NOT SURE	4	8
	100	100
How emotionally attached are you to Israel?		
EXTREMELY ATTACHED	17	
VERY ATTACHED	23	
SOMEWHAT ATTACHED	44	
NOT ATTACHED	15	
NOT SURE	2	
	100	
Caring about Israel is a very important part of my being a Jew	68	73
If Israel were destroyed, I would feel as if I had suffered one of the greatest personal tragedies in my life	65	65
Often talk about Israel with friends & relatives	68	60
Have seriously considered living in Israel	17	14
Consider self a Zionist	26	25



## 19. THE ORTHODOX AND COMMUNAL ACTIVISTS ARE MOST DEEPLY ATTACHED TO ISRAEL

Several items measuring attachment to Israel were combined to form a composite scale of attachment. Analysis of this scale provides information on which population subgroups are more (or less) attached to Israel.

To a small extent, women are more attached to Israel than men, as are those with less rather than more education, and liberals rather than conservatives.

More substantial differences separate older from younger Jews. Repeating findings from earlier surveys, we find that older Jews express greater attachment to Israel than younger adults. However, as was just noted, the gaps between older and younger Jews in 1991 are far narrower than they were in 1989. Detailed analysis of the 429 respondents surveyed in both the 1989 and 1991 studies demonstrated how this narrowing came about. Apparently, older Jews experienced hardly any net change in their attachment to Israel. In the same period, younger and middle-aged Jews increased their attachment by small but noticeable amounts. As a result, by 1991 the former large gap between older and younger Jews in attachment to Israel had shrunk considerably.

Whether the old-young gap will remain as small as it was in the summer of 1991 remains to be seen. Either of two processes is at work. One possibility is that the Gulf War (or other events over the two years) occasioned a deep-seated and permanent change in the sentiments of younger Jews. Alternatively, the 1991 survey picked up the residue of an episodic surge in attachment to Israel that is destined to subside once the sense of immediate danger to Israel recedes. Which process is at work? Will young people fall back to their earlier lower levels of attachment to Israel? To borrow a cliché from the news weeklies: only time will tell.

The difference in attachment between liberals and conservatives, or more precisely the near absence of a difference, is especially noteworthy. As we saw earlier, liberals are clearly more disposed to take a dovish approach to the Arab-Israel conflict than are political conservatives. Conservative critics have charged that liberals do so in part because they care less about Israel. These data suggest that, if anything, liberals are slightly more attached to Israel than conservatives. In any event, the findings clearly refute the notion that liberals as a group take dovish stances because of a weaker feeling of attachment to Israel. Instead, the liberals' (and conservatives') political worldview and fundamental inclinations are undoubtedly brought to bear upon their specific views on the Arab-Israel conflict.

The differences with sex, education, political philosophy, and even age pale into insignificance when compared with those associated with communal involvement and denomination. The analysis divided respondents using arbitrary boundaries into three groups: a quarter who are termed "distant" from Israel; a half who are "moderately close"; and a quarter who are "close."

Among the unaffiliated, the "distant" outnumber the "close" by 23 percentage points; among the affiliated, the "close" outnumber the "distant" by 13 percentage points; and among the activists, those who are "close" to Israel lead those who are "distant" by 43 percentage points. In other words, the balance between those who are distant and close shifts by fully 66 percentage points when comparing

the activists with the unaffiliated.

A swing of equally large magnitude can be observed in the transition from Orthodox to Reform Jews. Among the Orthodox, hardly any may be termed "distant" (3 percent) and over two-thirds (68 percent) qualify as close. In contrast, among self-described Reform Jews, as many as 30 percent give "distant" answers and just 18 percent may be called closely attached to Israel. The distribution of Conservative Jews' responses places them, as a group, about midway between the Orthodox and the Reform respondents.

ATTACHMENT TO ISRAEL  
BY SEX, AGE, EDUCATION, POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY,  
DENOMINATION, AND JEWISH COMMUNAL AFFILIATION  
(PERCENTAGES, READING ACROSS)

	DISTANT	MODERATE	CLOSE	TOTAL
SEX				
MALE	26.6	45.0	28.4	100.0
FEMALE	21.1	51.1	27.8	100.0
AGE				
18-39	26.7	46.7	26.7	100.0
40-59	28.0	46.5	25.5	100.0
60+	16.8	51.3	32.0	100.0
EDUCATION				
HIGH SCHOOL	21.0	50.5	28.5	100.0
COLLEGE DEGREE	22.9	52.4	24.7	100.0
PROFL, GRAD SCHOOL	26.9	43.3	29.8	100.0
POLITICS				
LIBERAL	20.8	47.9	31.3	100.0
MIDDLE OF ROAD	24.6	49.7	25.7	100.0
CONSERVATIVE	24.5	44.5	31.0	100.0
NOT SURE	31.3	53.7	14.9	100.0
DENOMINATN				
ORTHODOX	2.5	29.6	67.9	100.0
CONSERVATIVE	11.9	52.5	35.6	100.0
REFORM	29.7	52.5	17.8	100.0
JUST JEWISH	42.1	41.4	16.5	100.0
AFFILIATION				
UNAFFILIATED	36.1	51.3	12.6	100.0
AFFILIATED	19.5	48.6	32.0	100.0
ACTIVIST	9.0	39.3	51.7	100.0

## 20. POSITIVE PERCEPTIONS OF ISRAELIS' PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

Not only do many American Jews profess strong attachment to Israelis. Many, if not most, tend to hold Israelis personally in high regard.

The questionnaire presented respondents with a variety of characteristics, some positive and some negative, and asked respondents to report the extent to which each trait applied to Israelis. Most respondents thought that these positive traits apply to Israelis "to a great extent": industrious (70 percent), heroic (61 percent), efficient (56 percent), peace loving (54 percent), and democratic (53 percent).

The negative characterizations elicited far less support. For example, to focus on the least widely endorsed characterization, only 5 percent regarded Israelis as "racist" to a great extent. But given that "racist" is such a loaded term and that American Jews are generally reluctant to criticize Israelis, is it a sign of weakness in the American Jewish image of Israel that an additional 36 percent said Israelis were racist "to some extent"?

One way of looking at these findings is to conclude that American Jews largely reject the characterization of Israelis as racist. Another way to look at it is to say that, of those with an opinion, more think that Israelis are racist to at least some extent (41 percent) than who think that Israelis are "hardly at all" racist (40 percent). Whether the glass of American Jewish public opinion in this regard is half full or half empty may depend on subjective evaluation of these results.

Similar distributions are found with respect to "religiously extremist."

Where we find an unambiguous body of ill feeling toward Israelis is with respect to the characterizations of "militarist" and "chauvinist (excessively nationalist)." About a third regard Israelis as chauvinist to a great extent, and another 40 percent feel they are chauvinist to some extent, and just 9 percent answer hardly at all. The distribution for "militarist" is roughly parallel. Thus, if there is a negative image of Israelis among American Jews it lies in the sense that they may be too militarist or too nationalist. American Jews may well understand why Israelis have become militarist and chauvinist, but they may be uncomfortable with these perceived characterizations all the same.

PERCEPTIONS OF CHARACTERISTICS OF ISRAELIS

To what extent do you think each of the following descriptions applies to most Israelis?

	TO A GREAT EXTENT	TO SOME EXTENT	HARDLY AT ALL	DON'T KNOW OR NOT SURE
Industrious	70	20	1	9
Heroic	61	26	2	11
Efficient	56	29	4	11
Peaceloving	54	35	2	9
Democratic	53	33	3	11
Chauvinist	34	40	9	17
Militarist	32	48	9	12
Religiously extremist	9	41	34	16
Racist	5	36	40	18

## 21. MUCH MORE SYMPATHY FOR ISRAELI SECULARISTS THAN FOR RELIGIOUS PARTISANS

As is well known, the divide between the secular and religious population segments in Israel constitutes a major social and political cleavage within Israeli society. In the late 1980s, this division received more attention from American Jews than it had before. The periodic violent clashes between secular and religious forces in Israeli society and, in particular, the political struggle over "Who is a Jew?" in 1988 heightened American Jewish awareness of the religious-secular conflict in Israel. In that struggle, American Jews sided strongly with the secularists. Both the American Jewish public and most American Jewish leaders opposed the religious parties' attempt to change Israeli law to deny the applicability of the Law of Return to those born-Gentiles who are converted to Judaism by non-Orthodox rabbis.

In 1991, we find further evidence of American Jewish support for the secular side in the religious-secular conflict within Israel. The questionnaire asked respondents, "In order to prevent religious-secular conflicts within Israel, in which of the following directions should Israel move?" Just 17 percent said, "Toward becoming a state based on Jewish religious law." In contrast, 83 percent answered, "Toward separating religion and state."

Further evidence of American Jews' lack of sympathy for religious partisans in Israel is found in other questions. The survey asked respondents whether certain groups in Israel had too much or too little power. With respect to Orthodox religious parties, most (52 percent) responded that they have "too much power," and hardly any (5 percent) said they have too little power. More than any other Israeli group in the list, respondents felt that the Orthodox have too much power.

The question on fair versus unfair treatment elicited a pattern of answers consistent with the sense that respondents feel the Israeli Orthodox are possibly too well treated in Israel. Only 4 percent feel that "religious Jews" are unfairly treated in Israel, fewer than for any other group presented in the questionnaire. In like fashion, 43 percent feel they are very fairly treated, more than any other group in the question; an addition 28 percent say that religious Jews are somewhat fairly treated. In contrast, 29 percent say that Conservative and Reform Jews are subject to unfair treatment in Israel and just 18 percent say they are very fairly treated. Certainly, a good number of respondents must feel that non-Orthodox Jews are getting a "raw deal" while Orthodox Israeli Jews are the subject of what may be considered excessively fair treatment.

In any event, the main conclusion that permeates these data is that the vast majority of American Jews tend to align with non-Orthodox forces in Israel and they tend to have little sympathy for the religious or Orthodox political parties.

# THE RELIGIOUS-SECULAR CONFLICT WITHIN ISRAEL

In order to prevent religious-secular conflicts within Israel, in which of the following directions should Israel move?

Toward becoming a state based on Jewish religious law	17
Toward separating religion and state	83

Do Orthodox religious parties have too much power, or too little power in Israeli society?

TOO MUCH POWER	52
TOO LITTLE POWER	5
ABOUT THE RIGHT AMOUNT	7
NOT SURE	36

In your view, how fairly is each of the following groups being treated in Israel?

	VERY FAIRLY	SOMEWHAT FAIRLY	SOMEWHAT UNFAIRLY	VERY UNFAIRLY	NOT SURE
Religious Jews	43	28	3	1	25
Secular Jews	20	36	13	2	29
Conserv. & Reform Jews	18	31	22	7	22

## 22. RELATIVELY MUTED REACTION TO THE MASS MIGRATION OF SOVIET AND ETHIOPIAN JEWS TO ISRAEL

The enormous migration of Soviet Jews to Israel and the nearly complete evacuation of thousands of Ethiopian Jews to Israel were, to say the least, major events in Israel and the Jewish communal world. The United Jewish Appeal made these events the occasion to launch highly successful special fund-raising campaigns that netted hundreds of millions of dollars of "plus giving," that is, contributions above and beyond the usual gifts to the local Jewish federation drives. The vigorous organizational response to these momentous events reflected widespread and genuine feelings of warmth, pride, and excitement at the sight of thousands of formerly oppressed Jews arriving in Israel and undertaking new lives in the Jewish homeland. It is fair to say that these reactions typified the vast majority of volunteer activists and professional staff members in organized American Jewish life.

In this context it might be somewhat surprising to learn of what may be a far more muted reaction among the Jewish public. When asked for their reactions to the Ethiopian and Soviet migration, just under a quarter chose "thrilled and excited," about half said they were merely "pleased," and another quarter actually said they were not much affected. Upon reflection, these results should not be all that surprising. In an analysis of the 1989 AJC-sponsored National Survey of American Jewry (*Content or Continuity? Alternative Bases for Commitment*), I suggested that American Jewry can be accurately portrayed as divided into three groups. About a quarter may be seen as intensively involved in one or another aspect of Jewish life (either at home, in the community, or more generally in both); about half can be called "moderately affiliated" in that they belong to some Jewish institutions but are not deeply involved in Jewish life; and one quarter may be seen as fairly peripheral to conventional Jewish life. The responses to the Ethiopian and Soviet migrations certainly correspond to this portrait.

In this regard, it is noteworthy that just under half agree that the migrations made them "feel a special responsibility to contribute to charities that help settle Jews in Israel"; undoubtedly some fraction of these individuals did so.

Well-informed Jewish communal leaders are aware of major problems in the handling of the Soviet Jewish absorption in Israel. Throughout the early part of 1991, even Israeli political leaders from the ruling party were highly critical of what was then a slow pace of home-building and job-creation. In contrast, when asked for their views on the efficiency of this effort, the vast majority (69 percent) said they were uninformed on the issue. Of those who did respond with a definitive answer, most (26 percent) regarded the effort as "reasonably efficient and well-managed," while hardly any (5 percent) termed it plagued by "excessive waste and mismanagement." When asked about the treatment of Soviet Jews in Israel (a group that has complained bitterly about the lack of progress in housing and employment), 66 percent termed their treatment fair, and just 6 percent said they were being treated unfairly.

To be sure, one could be intimately well-informed about the situation of Soviet Jews in Israel and still think that, on balance, the effort is well-managed and the treatment of Soviet Jews is very fair. However, the greater likelihood here is that these results suggest that the American Jewish public is largely oblivious to the difficulties encountered by recent Soviet Jewish immigrants and,

without evidence to the contrary, provides positive responses to questions about Israeli efficiency and fairness.

The lesson to be drawn from these particular findings is that the American Jewish public is simply less well-informed than Jewish communal leadership about Israel and other matters of importance to organized Jewry. The point is rather simple and obvious. Yet, it is fair to say that Jewish leadership (like leadership in other spheres and communities) is often rather surprised to learn of the extent to which their putative constituency in the rank and file is remote, cognitively and emotionally, from their concerns.

# REACTIONS TO THE MASS MIGRATION OF SOVIET AND ETHIOPIAN JEWS

Which of the following best describes your reaction to this year's massive migration of Soviet and Ethiopian Jews to Israel?

I wasn't much affected	25
I was pleased	52
I was thrilled and excited	23

	AGREE	DIS- AGREE	NOT SURE
--	-------	---------------	-------------

The recent Soviet and Ethiopian immigration to Israel has made me feel a special responsibility to contribute to charities that help settle Jews in Israel

49	30	21
----	----	----

How would you characterize how well Israeli officials are handling the absorption of Soviet Jews?

Reasonably efficient and well-managed	26
Excessive waste and mismanagement	5
Don't know enough	69

How fairly are Soviet immigrants being treated in Israel?

VERY FAIRLY	31
SOMEWHAT FAIRLY	35
SOMEWHAT UNFAIRLY	5
VERY UNFAIRLY	1
NOT SURE	29



### 23. THE POLLARD AFFAIR

Jonathan Pollard, the American Jew who was convicted of spying on behalf of the Israeli government, has become the subject of a campaign by several American Jewish supporters who claim he was treated unfairly. They assert that his sentence was far too harsh, that American Jewish organizations failed to take up his cause lest they be charged with "dual loyalty," and that the Israeli government failed to adequately stand behind him, notwithstanding his long period of espionage that provided Israel with thousands of secret American documents.

The campaign on behalf of Jonathan Pollard has captured the attention and, to some extent, the sympathy of many Jewish communal leaders. Several established organizations have, in fact, been working on behalf of Pollard, although much of that activity has been conducted sub rosa. To what extent is the larger Jewish public aware of the Pollard issue? Moreover, how do rank-and-file Jews feel about the campaign to reduce his sentence?

Consistent with the portrait of a public with limited information, just over half (55 percent) of American Jews claim to be familiar with the case of Jonathan Pollard. Of those with an opinion, those who think his sentence was too harsh outnumber those who think otherwise by a three-to-one ratio (29 to 9 percent). Moreover, of the minority with views on the matter, those who favor American Jewish organizations campaigning on his behalf outnumber those who oppose such efforts by less than a two-to-one margin (23 to 13 percent).

Unfortunately, these few questions do not provide information on the depth of concern and commitment associated with these views. They do suggest that not many members of the Jewish public would strenuously oppose efforts to work on behalf of Jonathan Pollard. But at the same time, only a small minority of individuals have heard of the case, think he was done an injustice, and would demand that Jewish communal organizations take up his cause.

JONATHAN POLLARD

Are you familiar with the case of Jonathan Pollard?

YES (ANSWER NEXT 2 QUESTIONS)	55
NO (SKIP NEXT 2 QUESTIONS)	45

Do you think his sentence of life imprisonment was too harsh?

NO ANSWER OR NOT FAMILIAR	57
YES	29
NO	9
NOT SURE	5

Do you favor or oppose American Jewish organizations campaigning to reduce his sentence?

NO ANSWER OR NOT FAMILIAR	57
FAVOR	22
OPPOSE	13
NOT SURE	8

## 24. A FINAL WORD

The findings reported above are far too far-ranging and too disparate to be readily summarized. However, a few overarching themes do emerge from these data.

First, we find numerous continuities over time. Levels of attachment and distributions of opinions on major policy questions have generally not changed over the last decade of AJC-sponsored surveys. Moreover, the surveys reveal that the same groups in the population that are inclined to be close or remote from Israel or to be dovish or hawkish continue to hold these sentiments.

Second, with that said, we do find noticeable and interesting changes in opinion that are consistent with the major events between studies. Over the years, such developments as the Palestinian uprising, the "Who is a Jew?" controversy, and, most recently, the Gulf War have left their immediate and long-range imprint on the public opinion of American Jews.

The third observation is directed at the likely readers of this report: communal leaders, scholars, journalists, public officials, and others with a keen and sophisticated interest in American Jewry and its relationship with Israel. Readers such as these tend to be surprised at both the seemingly low levels of sophistication, familiarity, and consistency in the Jewish public. Such reactions are not uncommon to public-opinion research. Elites, when confronted with survey-research findings, are often amazed (or fascinated) to learn of how little the public seems to know about matters that are of prime interest to policymakers and about how often the public seems to take contradictory stances on vital issues.

The same observations can and should be made about American Jewry and its relationship with Israel. It is true that American Jews may be the best-educated ethnoreligious group in the United States, that Israel is a major topic of concern to the news media, and that Israel has occupied the most prominent place on the American Jewish public agenda for more than two decades. However, despite all these factors, in the eyes of many elite individuals, American Jewry as a whole must still appear relatively ignorant, unsophisticated, and inconsistent.

THE 1991 NATIONAL SURVEY OF AMERICAN JEWS

	YES	NO	NOT SURE
Do you often talk about Israel with friends & relatives?	68	30	3
Have you ever seriously considered living in Israel?	17	79	4
Do you consider yourself a Zionist?	26	62	12
Do you intend to visit Israel within the next 3 years?	28	48	25
Do you have any close friends or immediate family living in Israel?	37	60	3
How close do you feel to Israel?	31 VERY CLOSE 41 FAIRLY CLOSE 20 FAIRLY DISTANT 5 VERY DISTANT 4 NOT SURE		
Have you ever been to Israel?	63 NEVER 23 YES, ONCE 14 YES, TWICE OR MORE		
When were you in Israel last?	63 NEVER BEEN TO ISRAEL 15 Before 1981 9 1981-1985 9 1986-1989 3 1990-91		
How concerned would you be about your safety were you to travel to Israel?	18 VERY CONCERNED 32 NOT CONCERNED	47 SOMEWHAT CONCERNED 3 NOT SURE	
How closely do you follow the news about Israel?	40 VERY CLOSELY 10 NOT CLOSELY	49 SOMEWHAT CLOSELY 1 NOT SURE	
How familiar are you with Israel's political and security situation?	24 VERY FAMILIAR 14 NOT FAMILIAR	61 SOMEWHAT FAMILIAR 1 NOT SURE	

To what extent do you get your information and ideas about Israel from each of the following sources?

	TO A GREAT EXTENT	TO SOME EXTENT	HARDLY AT ALL	NOT SURE
TV news broadcasts	53	41	6	*
Daily newspapers and news magazines	46	46	8	*
Jewish newspapers and magazines	26	31	42	2
Friends or family members	18	48	33	1
People in my synagogue or Jewish organization	14	32	50	3

#### THE GULF WAR

Did the United States do the right thing in starting military action against Iraq, or should we have waited longer to see if economic sanctions worked?

80 DID THE RIGHT THING  
11 SHOULD HAVE WAITED 9 NOT SURE

Has the Gulf War changed your opinions regarding Israel's political and security situation?

24 YES 65 NO 11 NOT SURE

(IF YES -- YOUR OPINIONS HAVE CHANGED) Would you say that you now are more in favor of Israel making compromises with the Arabs or are you less in favor of compromises?

76 NO CHANGE  
8 MORE  
13 LESS  
3 NOT SURE

(IF YES -- YOUR OPINIONS HAVE CHANGED) Would you say that as a result of the Gulf War you are now more "dovish" or more "hawkish" regarding the Arab-Israel conflict?

76 NO CHANGE  
4 MORE DOVISH  
11 MORE HAWKISH  
6 NEITHER  
3 NOT SURE

As a result of the Gulf War and the Scud missile attacks on Israel, would you now say that ...

YES NO NOT  
SURE

It is even more clear that Israel must hold on to the West Bank to provide Israel with strategic depth against Arab attack

67 11 22

The U.S. will come to Israel's defense in times of acute danger

52 8 40

I feel closer to Israel than I felt before the War

40 43 17

I feel less optimistic about chances of resolving the Arab-Israel conflict than I felt before the War

24 43 34

ISRAEL, THE ARABS, AND RELATED ISSUES

	AGREE	DIS- AGREE	NOT SURE
During the War, I was more worried about the fate of Israel than I have ever been in the last 10-15 years	67	27	6
The U.S. should use all means at its disposal to bring about the downfall of Iraq's President, Saddam Hussein	85	7	8
Israelis have good reason to feel let down by American Jews who essentially stopped visiting Israel in the period leading up to the Gulf War	17	66	17
Caring about Israel is a very important part of my being a Jew	68	19	13
If Israel were destroyed, I would feel as if I had suffered one of the greatest personal tragedies in my life	65	19	17
American Jews should not publicly criticize the policies of the government of Israel	30	55	15
You can never trust the Arabs to make a real peace with Israel	51	23	26
The refusal of most Arabs to accept the legitimacy of the State of Israel represents a major obstacle to peace	92	2	6
Continued Israeli occupation of the West Bank will erode Israel's democratic & humanitarian character	14	57	29
Israel should expand Jewish settlements on the West Bank	30	29	41
In return for a real end to the Arab economic boycott, Israel should be willing to halt expansion of West Bank settlements	31	33	36
The West Bank settlements represent a major obstacle to peace	39	31	31
As part of any peace settlement with the Arabs, Israel must retain control of a united Jerusalem as its capital city	80	4	15
Israel should offer the Arabs territorial compromise in the West Bank & Gaza in return for credible guarantees of peace	35	34	31

	AGREE	DIS- AGREE	NOT SURE
Israel should reject the principle of "trading land for peace"	45	27	28
Since Jordan is already a Palestinian state, there's no need for another Palestinian state	54	13	33
Palestinians have a right to a state on the West Bank & Gaza, so long as it does not threaten Israel	27	40	33
In the framework of a peace agreement, Israel should be willing to allow for the establishment of a Palestinian state with security arrangements acceptable to Israel	51	21	28
The PLO is determined to destroy Israel	83	4	13
If the PLO recognizes Israel's right to exist, and it ceases all acts of terror, and there's a complete "cease-fire" in the Arab uprising, then Israel should agree to conduct negotiations with the PLO	51	23	26
Public criticism of Israel government's policies by established American Jewish organizations is useful for prodding the Israeli government in the peace process	27	41	32
Public criticism of Israel government's policies by US Administration officials is useful for prodding the Israeli government in the peace process	21	48	31
The criticism of Israel that we hear derives mainly from anti-Semitism	40	33	27
The American news media use a double standard in judging Israel more harshly than the Arab countries	62	19	19
The news media run too many news stories that present Israel in a negative light	61	21	19
By and large, the American news media are fairly balanced in their coverage of the Arab-Israel conflict	27	52	21
The recent Soviet and Ethiopian immigration to Israel has made me feel a special responsibility to contribute to charities that help settle Jews in Israel	49	30	21
Soviet Jews who settle in Germany are doing something wrong	19	55	26

Which of the following best describes your reaction to this year's massive migration of Soviet and Ethiopian Jews to Israel?

- 25 I wasn't much affected
- 52 I was pleased
- 23 I was thrilled and excited

How would you characterize how well Israeli officials are handling the absorption of Soviet Jews? Is it your impression that ...

- 26 The absorption of Soviet Jews is being conducted in a reasonably efficient and well-managed fashion
- 5 The absorption of Soviet Jews has been marred by excessive waste and mismanagement on the part of Israeli officials
- 69 I don't know enough about this issue to have a clear impression either way

#### U.S. POLICY ISSUES

In your view, what is the main reason that the U.S. supports Israel?

- 30 Because of shared values such as freedom and democracy
- 52 Because Israel is a strategic asset
- 14 Because of American Jewish influence
- 2 Because of poor relations between America and the Arabs
- 3 Because the USSR supports the Arabs

YES NO NOT  
SURE

Should the U.S. substantially reduce its military budget, even if that means that it might be harder for the U.S. to support and defend the State of Israel? 38 37 25

Should the U.S. continue to urge Israel to adopt a more flexible stance toward the Arabs? 41 37 22

Should the U.S. threaten to reduce foreign aid to Israel unless Israel adopts a more flexible stance toward the Arabs? 8 80 12

Should the U.S. stop criticizing Israel for expanding the West Bank settlements? 54 22 24

Should the U.S. increase its economic and military aid to Israel, reduce it, or keep it about the same?

- 30 INCREASE
- 4 DECREASE
- 53 KEEP ABOUT THE SAME
- 13 NOT SURE



With respect to making compromises for peace, do you think the U.S. should apply MORE PRESSURE or LESS PRESSURE toward each of the following parties, or should it apply ABOUT THE SAME amount of pressure as now?

TOWARD THIS GROUP, THE U.S. SHOULD APPLY ...

	MORE PRESS- URE	LESS PRESS- URE	ABOUT THE SAME	NOT SURE
THE PALESTINIANS	78	1	8	12
THE SYRIANS	75	1	11	13
THE SAUDIS	65	3	20	12
THE ISRAELIS	24	28	37	12
THE EGYPTIANS	33	9	45	13
THE JORDANIANS	74	2	11	13

Do you believe that each of the American groups and individuals below is generally friendly, mixed or neutral, or generally unfriendly toward Israel?

	GENERALLY FRIENDLY	MIXED OR NEUTRAL	GENERALLY UNFRIENDLY	NO IM- PRESSION
Mainstream Protestants	17	50	8	25
Evangelical Protestants	18	34	20	28
Catholics	14	47	21	18
Blacks	6	29	47	18
Hispanics	5	37	27	32
President Bush	34	41	15	10
Vice President Dan Quayle	29	30	10	31
Sec. of State James Baker	26	36	23	15
Sec. of Defense R. Cheney	26	36	10	28
Chief of Staff John Sununu	9	23	39	29
Democrats	58	27	2	13
Republicans	24	52	11	13
TV network newscasters	15	54	22	9
The major newspapers	13	53	24	9

What is your impression of each of the following Israeli leaders and groups?

	VERY FAVORABLE	SOMEWHAT FAVORABLE	SOMEWHAT UNFAVORABLE	VERY UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW OR NOT SURE
Moshe Arens	23	31	3	1	43
David Levy	14	25	3	1	57
Shimon Peres	21	34	7	2	35
Yitzhak Rabin	22	32	4	1	41
Yitzhak Shamir	25	30	11	3	32
Ariel Sharon	17	26	11	7	39
Israeli "doves"	9	26	15	5	46
Israeli "hawks"	9	21	18	7	45

In your view, which of the following groups has too much power, and which has too little power in Israeli society?

THIS GROUP HAS ...	TOO MUCH POWER	TOO LITTLE POWER	ABOUT THE RIGHT AMOUNT	NOT SURE
The Likud Party	16	4	23	57
Labor Party	7	15	23	55
Orthodox religious parties	52	5	7	36
Gush Emunim, the Jewish settler movement	16	8	15	61
Peace Now, the Israeli peace movement	9	16	17	59

In your view, how fairly is each of the following groups being treated in Israel?

	VERY FAIRLY	SOMEWHAT FAIRLY	SOMEWHAT UNFAIRLY	VERY UNFAIRLY	NOT SURE
Israeli Arabs	21	34	19	4	21
Palestinians on the West Bank	11	33	25	8	23
Conservative & Reform Jews	18	31	22	7	22
Women	22	30	20	4	24
Sephardim	20	32	10	1	37
Religious Jews	43	28	3	1	25
Secular Jews	20	36	13	2	29
Soviet immigrants	31	35	5	1	29

To what extent do you think each of the following descriptions applies to Israelis?

	TO A GREAT EXTENT	TO SOME EXTENT	HARDLY AT ALL	DON'T KNOW OR NOT SURE
Peaceloving	54	35	2	9
Racist	5	36	40	18
Industrious	70	20	1	9
Militarist	32	48	9	12
Efficient	56	29	4	11
Democratic	53	33	3	11
Heroic	61	26	2	11
Chauvinist (excessive- ly nationalist)	34	40	9	17
Religiously extremist	9	41	34	16

Does it seem that peace between Israel and the Arab states in the future is possible?

- 21 I am sure it is possible
- 59 I think it is possible, but I'm not sure
- 15 I think it is impossible, but I'm not sure
- 4 I am sure it is impossible

Which one of the following would you prefer as a solution to the problem of the Palestinians in the Middle East?

- 15 Israeli annexation of all of the West Bank and Gaza
- 32 Israeli military control of all of the West Bank and Gaza, with local self-rule for the Palestinians
- 12 The return of major portions of the West Bank and Gaza to Jordan, with appropriate security arrangements for Israel
- 4 The establishment of an independent Palestinian state in all of the West Bank and Gaza
- 23 I don't know which of these solutions I prefer
- 15 I don't know which is the preferable solution because I haven't followed the situation closely enough

Turning to the situation in the West Bank and Gaza, do you think the Israeli government's response to the Palestinian uprising has been too harsh, too lenient or about right? 16 TOO HARSH 13 TOO LENIENT  
45 ABOUT RIGHT 26 NOT SURE

JONATHAN POLLARD

Are you familiar with the case of Jonathan Pollard?

- 55 YES (ANSWER NEXT 2 QUESTIONS)
- 45 NO (SKIP NEXT 2 QUESTIONS)

Do you think his sentence of life imprisonment was too harsh?

- 57 NOT ANSWERED 29 YES 9 NO 5 NOT SURE

Do you think American Jewish organizations ought to campaign to reduce Pollard's sentence?

- 57 NOT ANSWERED 22 YES 13 NO 8 NOT SURE

Would it be justified or not justified for Israel to use atomic weapons under desperate circumstances, in order to avoid destruction in a conventional (non-atomic) war?

- 23 ABSOLUTELY JUSTIFIED
- 37 JUSTIFIED
- 27 UNJUSTIFIED
- 14 ABSOLUTELY UNJUSTIFIED

Would it be justified or not justified for Israel to use atomic weapons in response to an attack from another state by biological or chemical weapons?

- 38 ABSOLUTELY JUSTIFIED
- 36 JUSTIFIED
- 17 UNJUSTIFIED
- 9 ABSOLUTELY UNJUSTIFIED

In order to prevent religious-secular conflicts within Israel, in which of the following directions should Israel move?

17 Toward becoming a state based on Jewish religious law  
83 Toward separating religion and state

How emotionally attached are you to Israel?

17 EXTREMELY ATTACHED 23 VERY ATTACHED  
44 SOMEWHAT ATTACHED 15 NOT ATTACHED 2 NOT SURE

#### JEWISH BACKGROUND

You think of yourself as: 7 ORTHODOX 38 CONSERVATIVE  
1 RECONSTRUCTIONIST 31 REFORM 23 JUST JEWISH

Do you belong to a synagogue or temple? YES NO  
53 47

Do you currently belong to any Jewish organizations other than a synagogue or temple? 46 54

Do you now serve on a board or committee of a Jewish organization? 18 82

(IF YOU ARE MARRIED) Is your spouse Jewish? 91 9

How often do you attend religious services?

27 NEVER, OR JUST FOR SPECIAL FAMILY OCCASIONS  
43 HIGH HOLIDAYS AND, PERHAPS, A FEW OTHER TIMES A YEAR  
30 MORE OFTEN THAN A FEW TIMES A YEAR

#### BACKGROUND

You think of yourself as a:

16 REPUBLICAN 60 DEMOCRAT 21 INDEPENDENT 4 NOT SURE

Your usual stand on political issues:

35 LIBERAL 39 MIDDLE-OF-THE-ROAD 20 CONSERVATIVE 6 NOT SURE

You are: 47 MALE 53 FEMALE

Median age: 49

Do you have any children living with you now? 40 YES 60 NO

Are you currently married? 71 YES 29 NO

Your highest educational degree: 35 High School  
29 B.A. or equivalent  
36 Professional or graduate