

# Palestine, Israel and Lebanon: Politics and Peace Prospects



**International Peace Institute  
with Charney Research  
8 December 2010**

# Summary

Key findings from polls of 1,019 Palestinians, 1,020 Israelis, and 1,000 Lebanese and eight focus groups in Israel in August and September 2010 include:

- Palestinian mood much better than in 2009, especially on the West Bank.
- Israelis anxious despite prosperity and security.
- Lebanese unhappy about economy and security.
- President and Prime Minister popular in all three governments.
- Israel's right-wing government and Fatah would lead in elections today, Lebanon's March 14 government could face problems.
- Lebanese favor a truce with Israel.
- Phased two-state solution appeals to Israelis and Palestinians.
- Israelis are fearful and ignorant about Arab politics.
- Palestinians, Arab states and West can all encourage Israeli acceptance of a two-state plan.

# Palestinian mood has improved markedly, particularly in the West Bank, thanks to a better economy and security.

Would you say things in Palestine are headed in the right direction or wrong direction?

*(Percent saying right direction)*



## Economic situation good

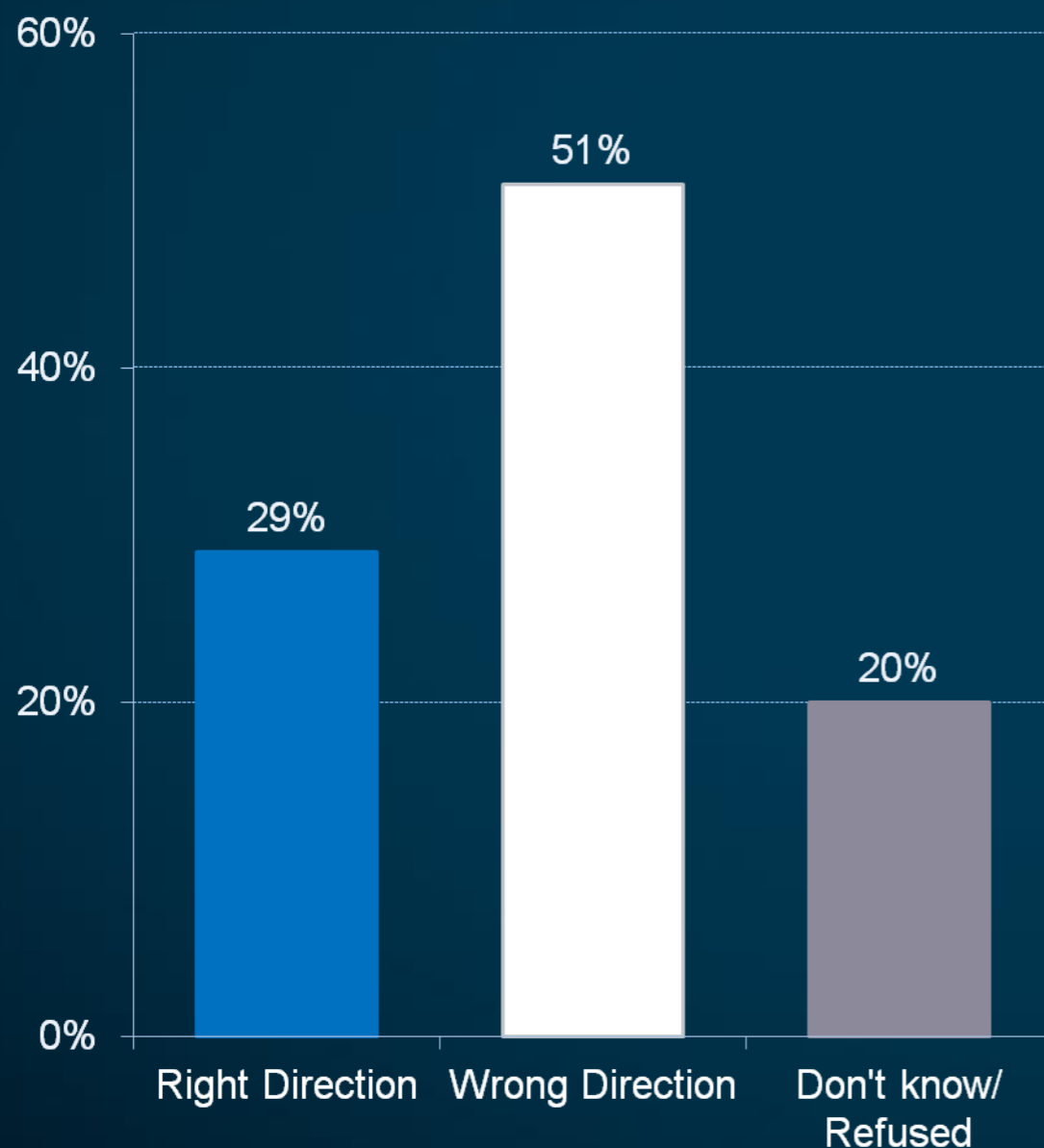
- West Bank 47% (2009: 35%)
- Gaza 34% (2009: 12%)

## Rarely/never fear for safety or security

- West Bank 63% (2009: 42%)
- Gaza 38% (2009: 65%)

# Israelis are pessimistic and fearful about long-term security despite a strong economy and calm at present.

Would you say things in Israel are headed in the right direction or wrong direction?



Economic situation good

- 68%

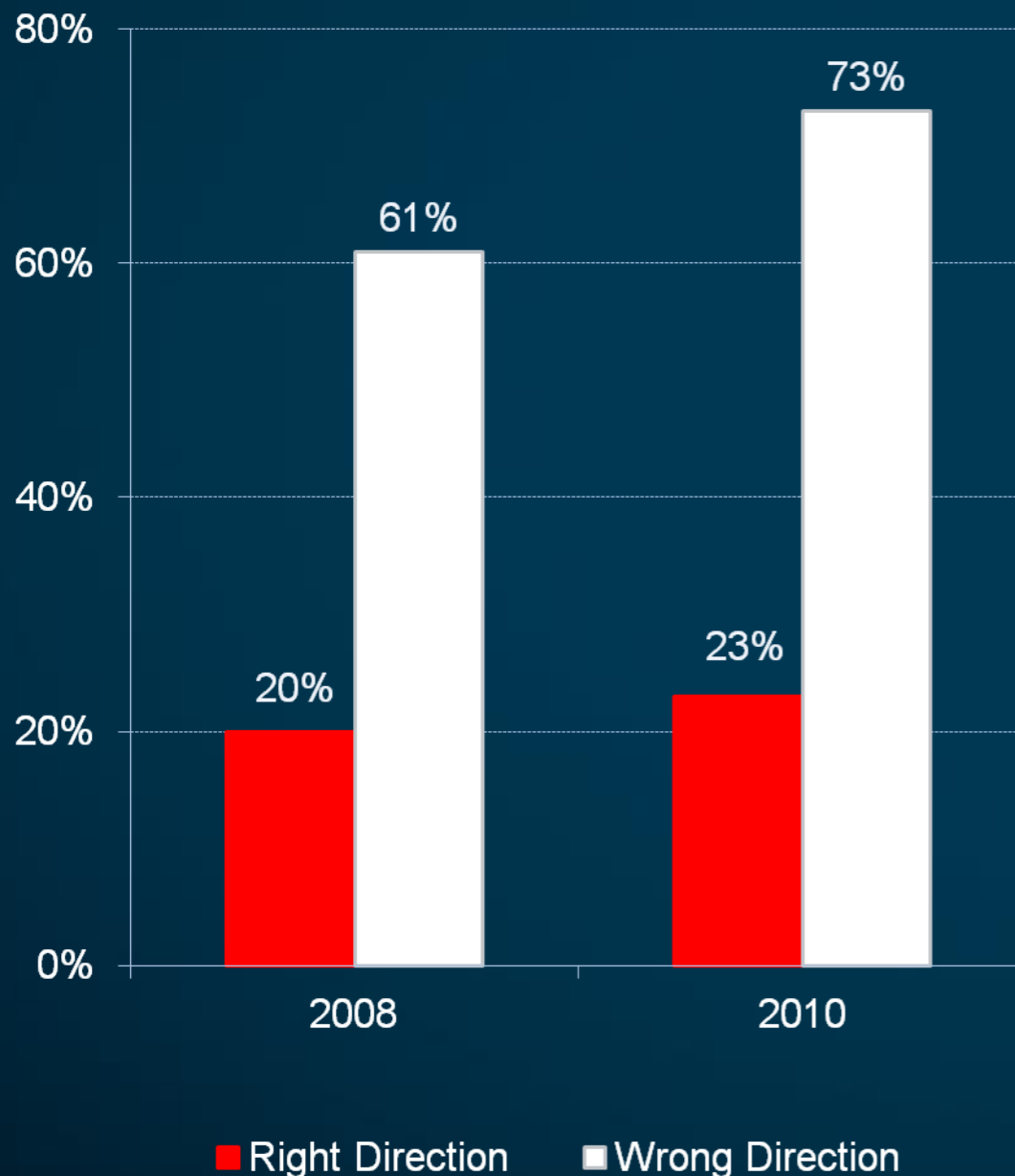
Rarely/never fear for safety or security

- 53%

# Lebanese mood darker than in 2008, though economy and security somewhat better.

Would you say things in Lebanon are headed in the right direction or wrong direction?

*(Percent saying right direction)*



Economic situation good

- 19% (2008: 12%)

Rarely/never fear for safety or security

- 38% (2008: 22%)

The Hariri Tribunal has wide support

- Tribunal should pursue justice regardless of political consequences: 60%

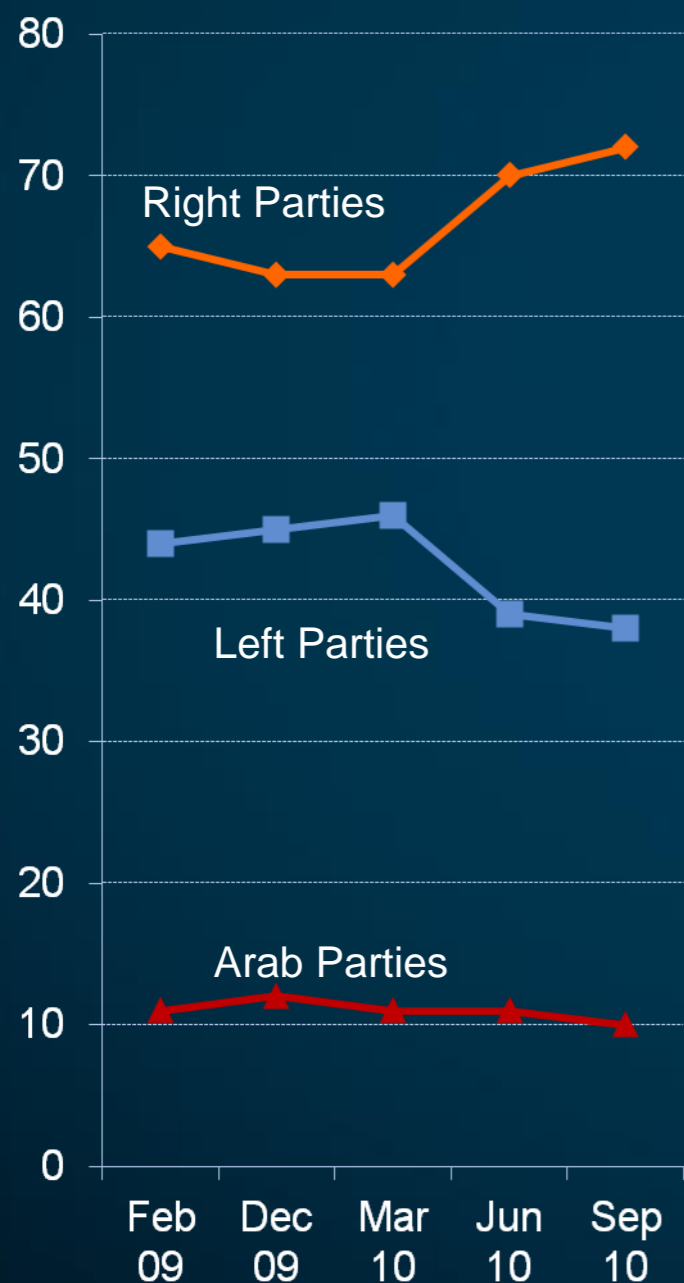
**National leadership is popular in all three governments. Fayyad only Prime Minister with majority job approval.**

	<b>President Favorability</b>	<b>Prime Minister Favorability</b>	<b>PM Job Good/ Excellent</b>
<b>Palestinian Authority</b>	<b>Abbas 67%</b>	<b>Fayyad 69%</b>	<b>Fayyad 58%</b>
<b>Israel</b>	<b>Peres 75%</b>	<b>Netanyahu 51%</b>	<b>Netanyahu 42%</b>
<b>Lebanon</b>	<b>Suleiman 87%</b>	<b>Hariri 63%</b>	<b>Hariri 36%</b>

# Israel's ruling coalition and Fatah lead in voting intentions, while Lebanon's March 14 government could face difficulty in elections today.

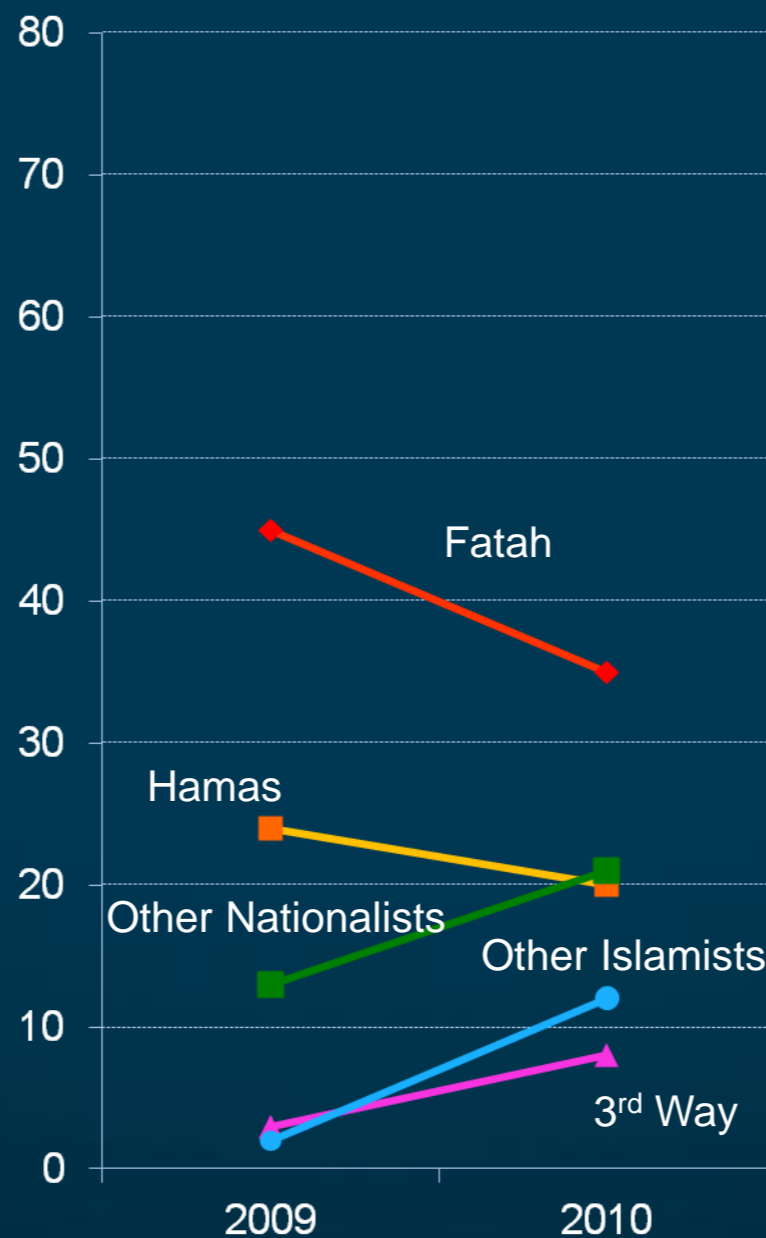
Israelis

No. of seats



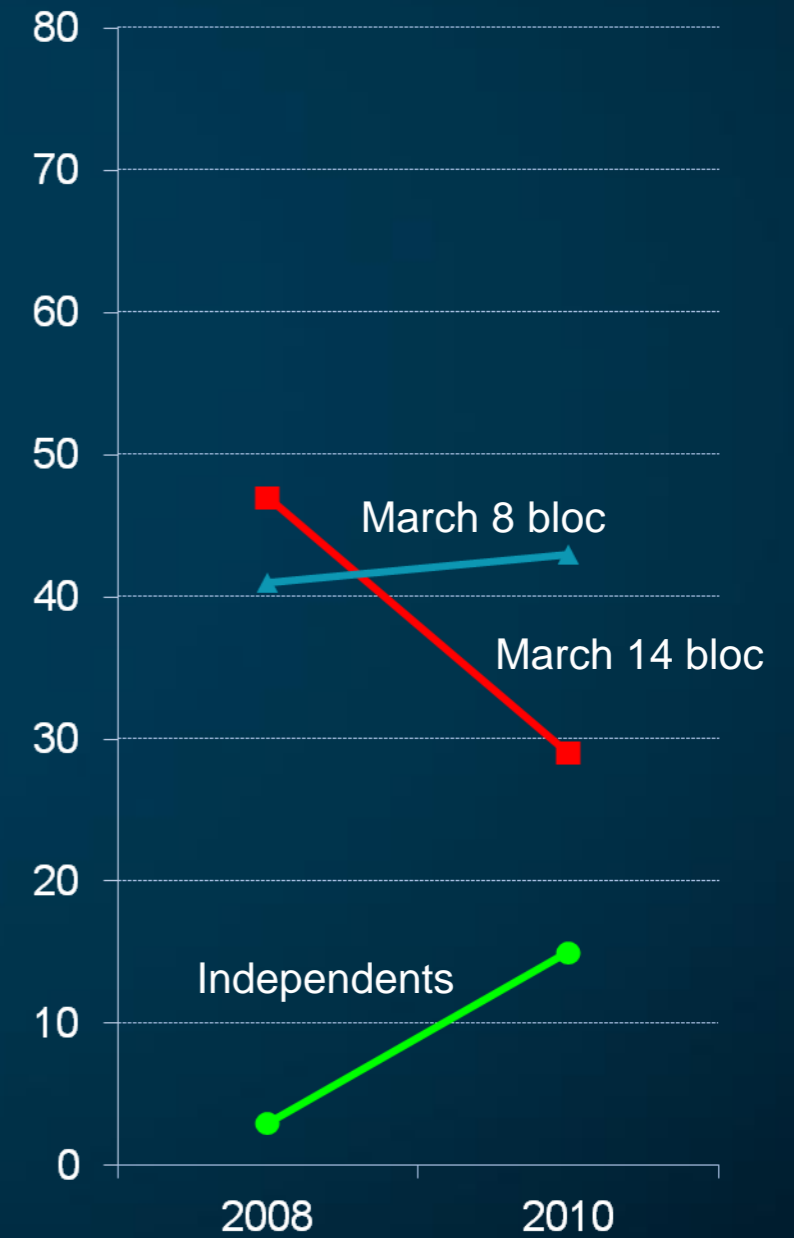
Palestinians

Vote %



Lebanese

Vote %



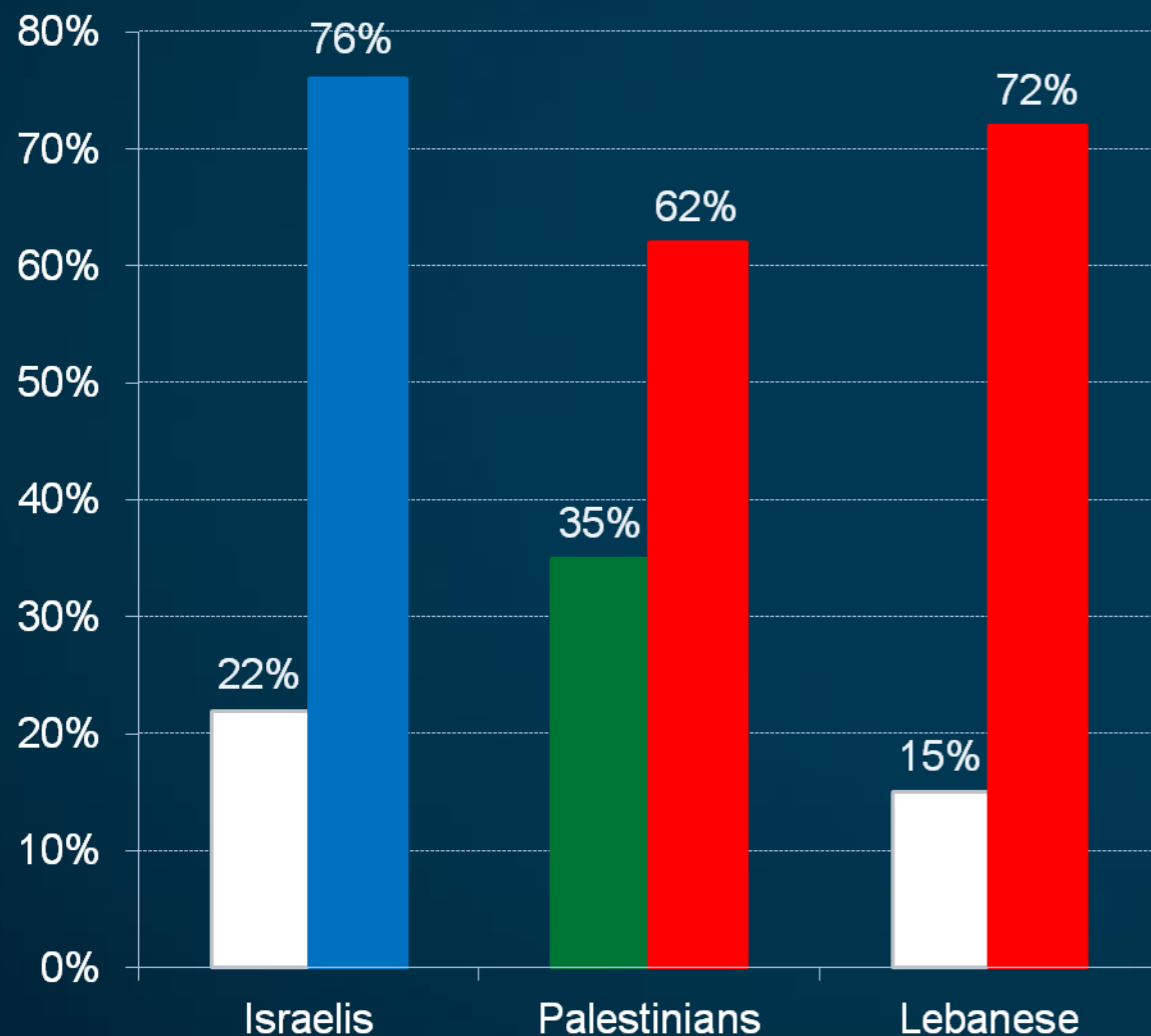
# Doubts about other countries ability to make peace and mistrust towards their leaders.

Is it likely or unlikely that...

An Israeli government headed by Benjamin Netanyahu will be capable of making peace?

(Palestinians, Lebanese)

A Palestinian government headed by Mahmoud Abbas will be capable of making peace? (Israelis)



## Israeli leaders trusted by Palestinians

- None: 87%
- Peres: 3%

## Palestinian leaders trusted by Israelis

- None: 72%
- Abbas: 10%

## Israeli leaders trusted by Lebanese

- None: 88%
- Barak: 1%

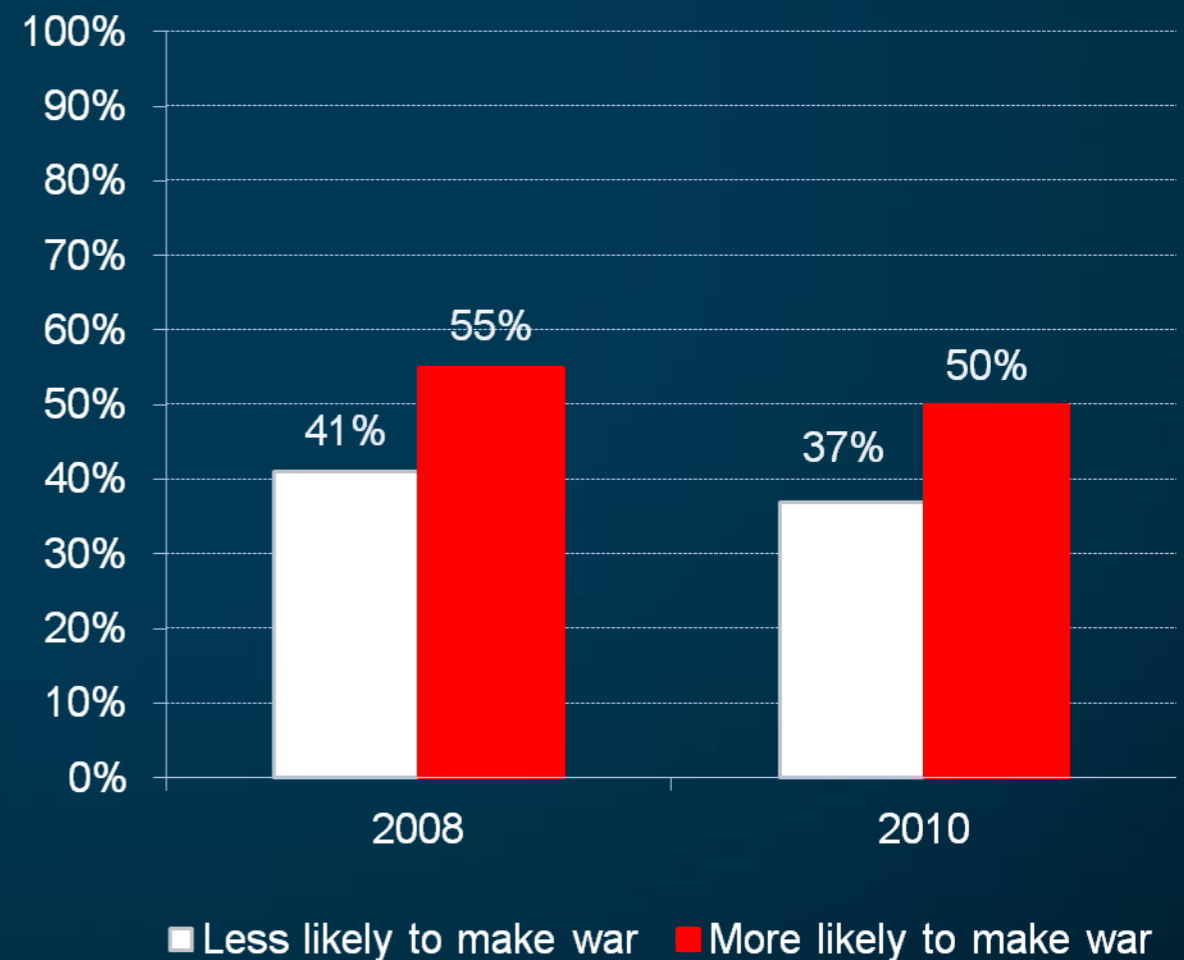
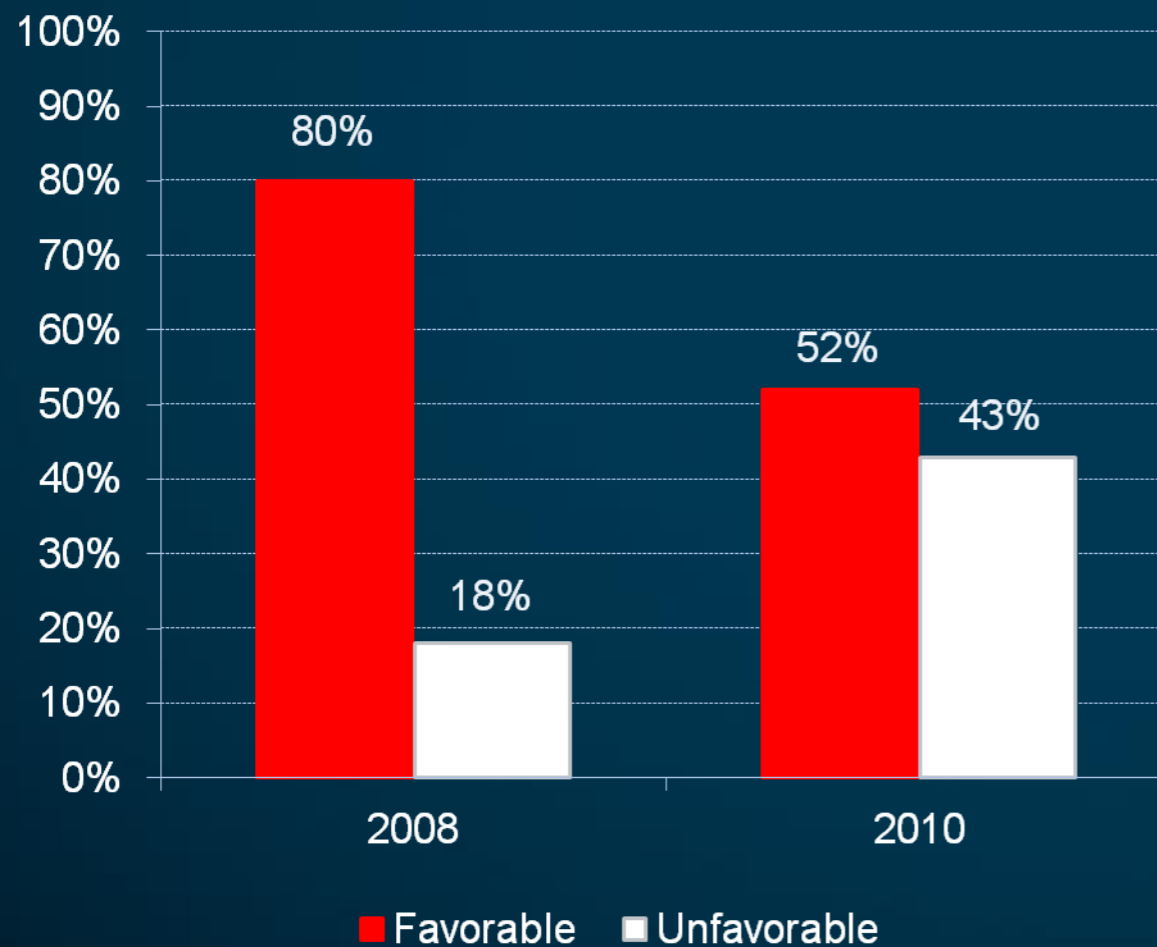
■ Likely      ■ Likely  
■ Unlikely    ■ Unlikely



# Lebanese remain open to truce with Israel and still think Hezbollah's weapons make war with Israel more likely.

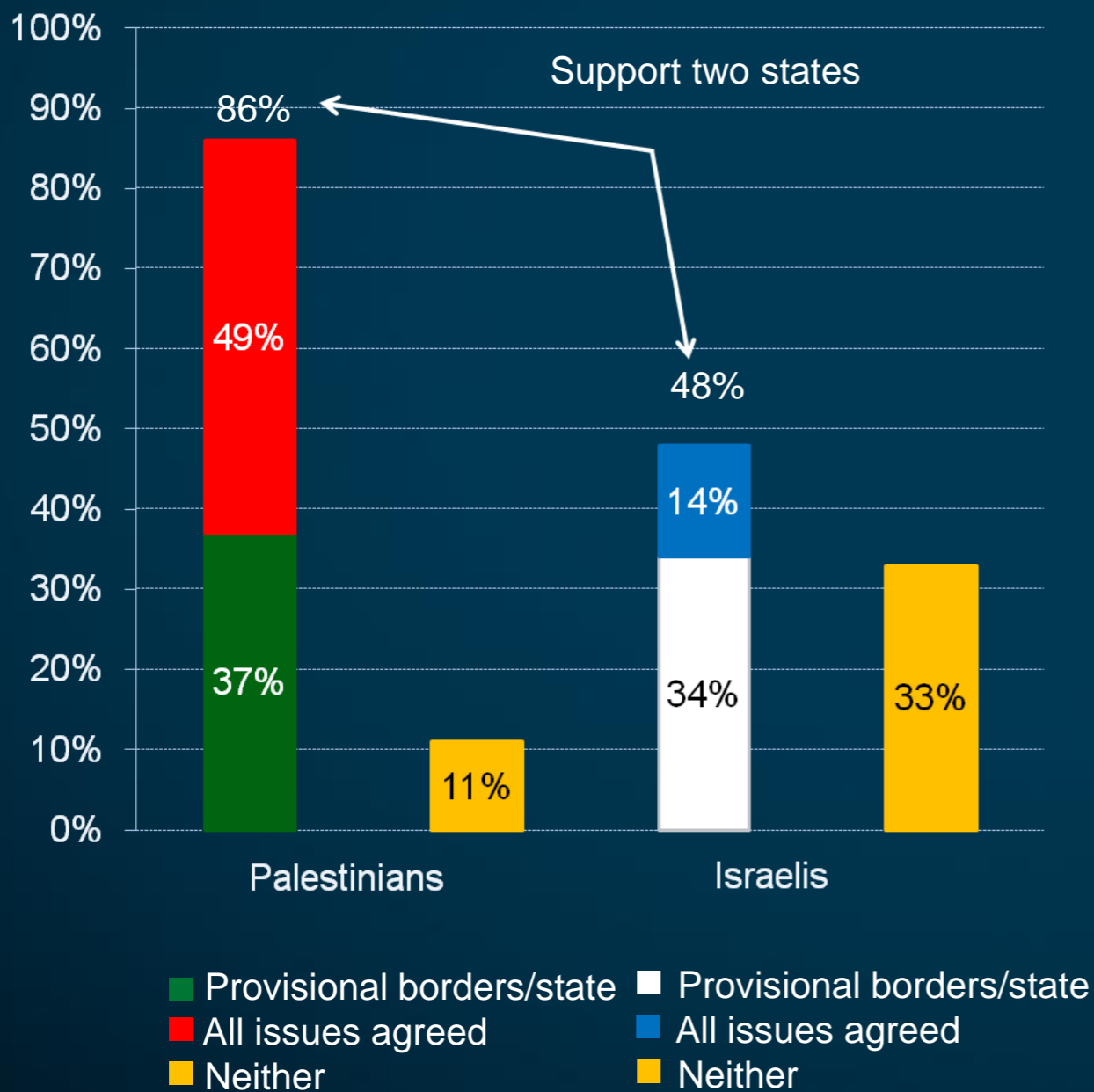
How favorable would you be to a Lebanon/ Israel agreement which includes : Return of Shabaa farms; Lebanon / Israel exchange all prisoners; disarmament of all armed groups; provide minefield maps.

Which idea is closer to your view? While Hezbollah has arms Israel is...  
More likely to make war.  
Less likely to make war.

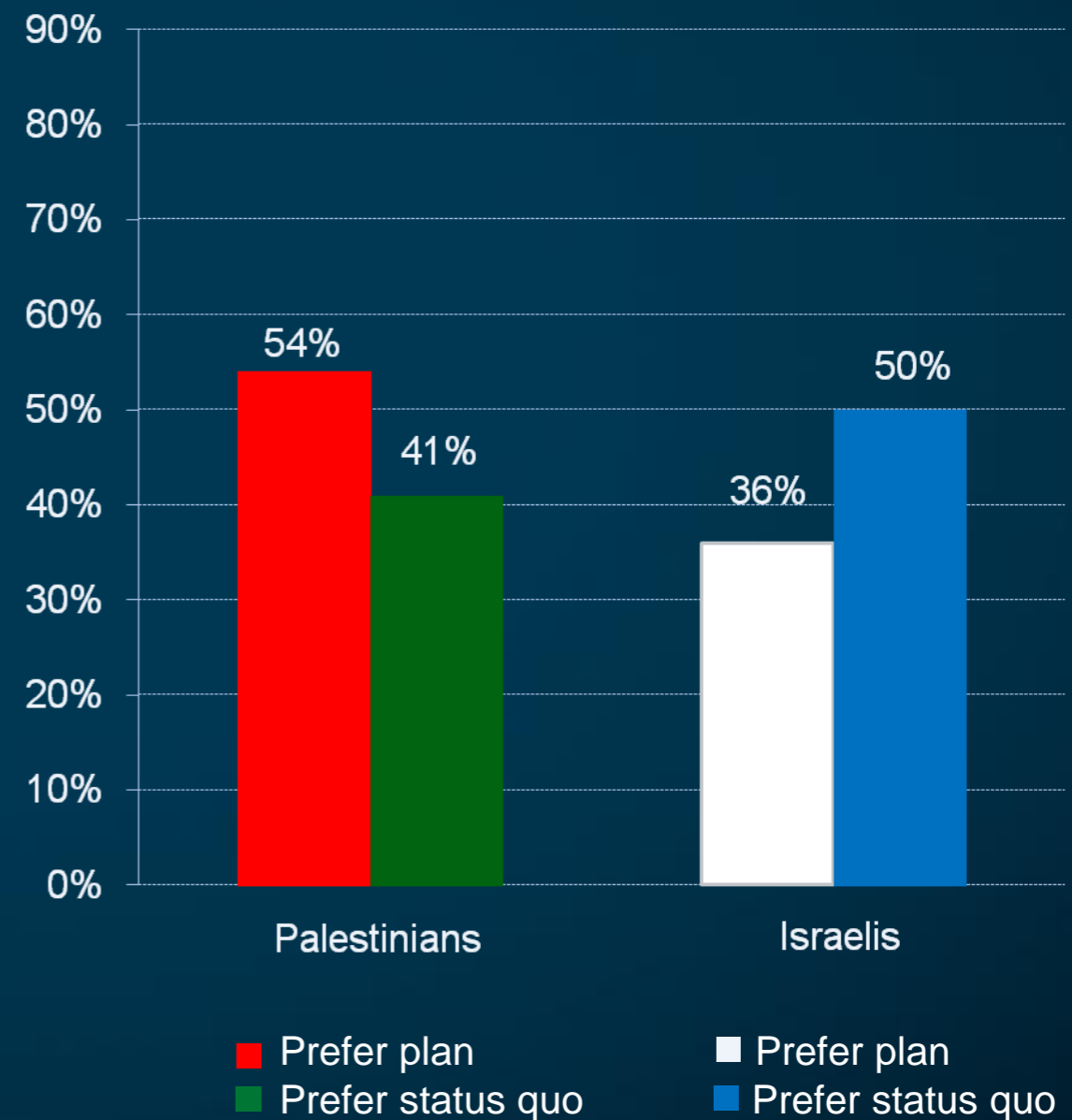


# Palestinians and Israelis are open to a phased two-state solution, but have opposing views on the Arab Peace Initiative.

Two-State Solution

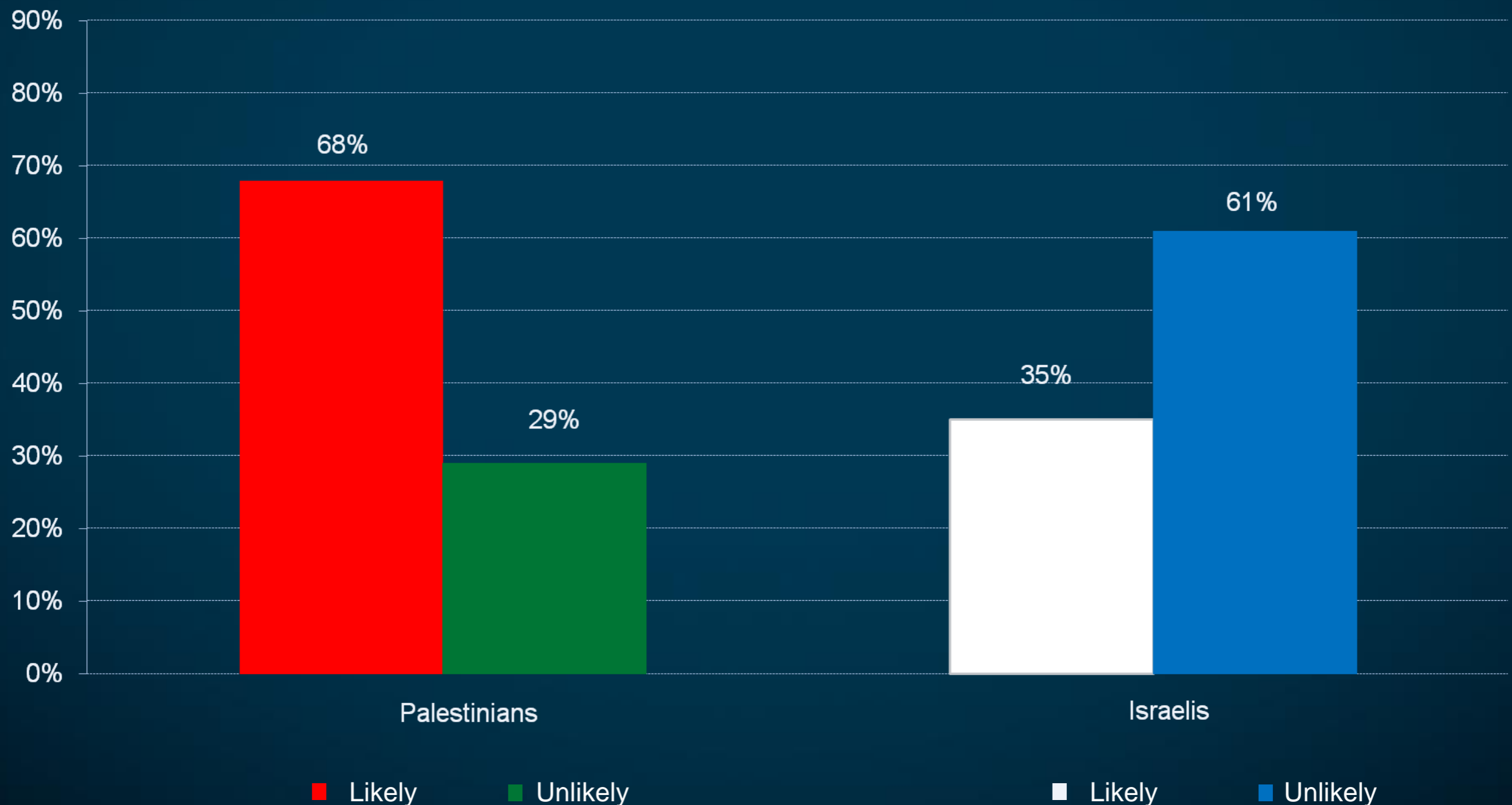


Arab Peace Initiative



# Two-thirds of Palestinians think they will be ready to establish a state in two years, but only one-third of Israelis do.

How likely is it that the Palestinians will be ready to establish a state in two years?



# Israeli attitudes reflect fear based on past conflicts and ignorance of Arab politics and Arab Peace Initiative.

## Israeli Focus Group Results

- Past conflicts, especially those since Oslo began, left scars.
- Only 1 of 58 focus group members recognized the content of the Arab Peace Initiative.
- Initial reactions when told it was the API anxious but curious.
- Israeli focus group members unaware of the “three nos” of 1967 (no negotiations, no recognition, no peace).
- Do not know Saudi Arabia has had no relations with Israel since 1948 or the extent of the Arab trade boycott.

**To Israelis, the best argument for two states is that a state will make the Palestinians take responsibility for their affairs.**

## **Israeli Focus Group Results**

- If they have a state, Palestinians will act to protect it.
- Ending conflict would eliminate perceived special moral status of the Palestinians.
- Israel's right to self-defense against another state would be accepted.
- Hope that state will give Palestinians reason to act responsibly prevails over mistrust by 3 to 1.

**Details of two states produce more reluctance than the principle among Israelis, who find compromise difficult on security, refugees, and Jerusalem.**

## **Israeli Focus Group Results**

- 37/58 support two states for two people in principle, but only 15/58 accept a detailed plan based on Geneva and Taba.
- Key on security is demilitarization.
- Refugee returns to Israel led to anxiety.
- Dividing Jerusalem provoked concern.
- Israeli leaders will need to prepare their public for painful compromises on these issues.

**For Israelis, benefits of peace – security, prosperity, and recognition – are reason to compromise with Palestinians. They also trust King Abdullah and President Mubarak.**

## **Israeli Focus Group Results**

- Security is the key benefit.
- Economy would also gain.
- Peace would bring Israel international contact and legitimacy.
- Jordan's King Abdullah and Egypt's President Mubarak the two Arab leaders trusted by many Israelis.

# Israelis voiced a wish list of measures that would encourage them to accept two states.

## Israeli Focus Group Results

### Palestinians

- PA clampdown on violence and incitement.
- Reunifying West Bank and Gaza under President Abbas and PM Fayyad.
- Ratifying 2-state accord by referendum.
- Demilitarized Palestinians State.
- Right of return primarily to Palestine.

### Arab States

- Pledge to cease military aid to Hamas, Hezbollah if API implemented.
- Israeli PM invited to Arab capital to discuss API.
- End trade boycotts, send trade missions if Israel accepts API.

### West

- Announce that it will pay for compensating Palestine refugees and Israeli settlement withdrawal.
- Accept API but require negotiation to apply.
- Condition aid to independent Palestine on non-violence.



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# Methodology

## Israel:

- With the Dahaf Institute, we conducted 1020 telephone interviews in Israel between August 30 and September 2, 2010. The error margin is 3%.
- Respondents were a representative sample of the Israeli adult population. The results are weighted to match Israel's demographics.
- Eight focus groups (6 in Tel Aviv and 2 in Jerusalem) were conducted between September 13 and 16, 2010 with Brandman Research.
- Participants included Ashkenazi and Sephardic Jews (both secular and religious), Ultra-Orthodox, Russian Jews, and Israeli Arabs.

## Palestinian Territories:

- With the Palestinian Center for Public Opinion, we conducted 1019 in-person interviews in the Palestinian Territories between August 16 and 22, 2010. The error margin is 3%.
- Respondents were a representative sample of the Palestinian adult population. The results are weighted to match the demographics of the Palestinian Territories.
- Tracking data is from a national poll taken in 2009 by Charney Research.

## Lebanon:

- With Information International, we conducted 1000 in-person interviews in Lebanon between August 16 and 20, 2010. The error margin is 3%.
- Respondents were a representative sample of the Lebanese adult population. The results are weighted to match the demographics of Lebanon.
- Tracking data is from a national poll taken in 2008 by Charney Research.