

War and Peace Index

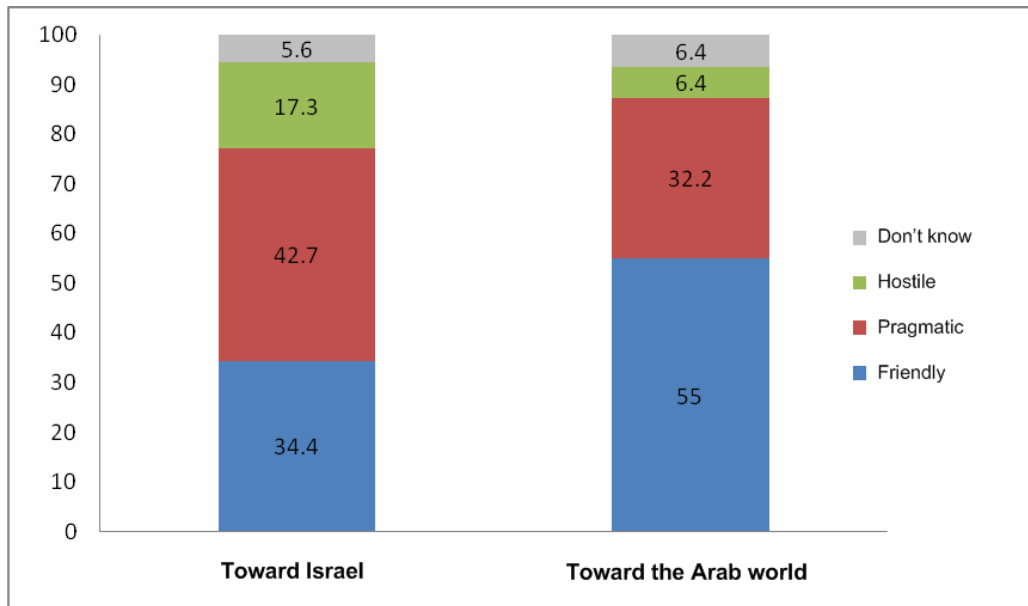
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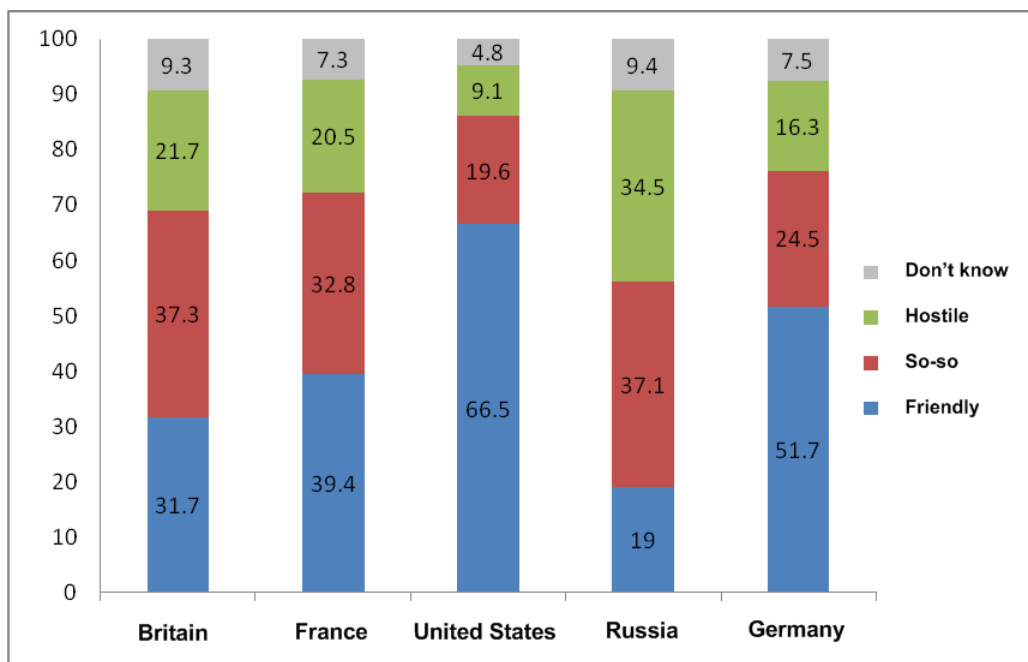
Despite the ongoing tension between Washington and Jerusalem, a clear majority – 61% – of the overall Israeli public defines the relations between the two countries as very good or good (in the Arab sector the rate of those who view these relations as good is considerably higher—79%!). At the same time, those defining the relations as “very good” (14%) are considerably fewer than those who call them “moderately good” (47%). This finding is consistent with the prevailing view – 46% – that these relations have recently deteriorated. Thirty-four percent think they have remained the same, while only 14% see them as having improved (the rest do not know).

Which of the two leaders – Bibi Netanyahu or Barack Obama – does the public hold responsible for the worsening in the two states’ relations? There are indirect indications in the answers to a question on how these two leaders are managing U.S.-Israeli relations. Assessments of how Prime Minister Netanyahu is doing so are relatively favorable: the majority – 56% – give him a good or very good grade for managing these relations (33% give him a poor or very poor one while 11% do not know). President Obama, in comparison, gets a good or very good grade from only 43% of the respondents, while 48% give him a poor or very poor grade on managing his relations with Israel (9% do not know).

Is President Obama perceived, then, as hostile to Israel? The findings show that this is not the case; the prevailing view is that he is pragmatic toward Israel, and friendly toward the Arab world. To the question: “In your impression, what is President Obama’s attitude toward Israel?” 43% replied that it is pragmatic-neutral, 34% that it is very friendly or friendly, while 17% defined his attitude as hostile or very hostile toward Israel (6% did not know). Regarding the Arab world, though, the distribution of the answers to the same question for the overall public was: 55%, very friendly or friendly; 32%, pragmatic-neutral; while only 6% saw Obama’s attitude as hostile or very hostile (7% did not know). Note that in the Arab public the picture is the opposite: 64% think President Obama is friendly or very friendly toward Israel while only 44% say the same about his attitude toward the Arab world.



This time we again checked the Israeli public's estimation of a number of countries' degree of friendliness or hostility toward Israel. A clear ranking emerges: as in the past, the United States tops the friendly countries (66.5%), after it comes Germany (about 52%), much lower are France (about 39%) and, after it, Britain (about 32%), which in the past was second to the United States in perceived degree of friendship toward Israel, and far behind comes Russia with only 19% viewing it as friendly.



An interesting though not surprising finding is that the overwhelming majority of the Israeli public sees no connection between Israel's conduct and the criticism of Israel in the world. Indeed, 73% (!) say that no matter what Israel does or how far it goes toward resolving the conflict with the Palestinians, the world will keep being very critical of it.

Interestingly, among the voters for each and every party we found a majority (the smallest, as expected, was for Meretz voters at 55%) that holds this view! Nevertheless, as in the past, this time too we found that a clear majority of the overall public – 64% – thinks it is very urgent or urgent for Israel that the talks with the Palestinians resume. Here a segmentation by parties showed especially large majorities among voters for Kadima, Meretz, and Labor – 87%, 80%, and 77%, respectively. A smaller majority was found for Likud voters – 61%, while for the rest of the parties only a minority sees resuming the talks as urgent.

As for whether Binyamin Netanyahu genuinely wants and is taking real measures to reach an agreement with the Palestinians, the public is divided. The rate that agrees with this (45.5%) is only slightly higher than the rate that does not (43%). In the Arab sector, a sweeping majority of 72% goes to the naysayers. A segmentation by voting in the 2009 elections shows that those most sure of Netanyahu's intentions are Shas voters – 83%, followed by National Religious Party (Mafdal) voters at 75% and Likud voters at 72.5%. Among Labor voters the rate is 51%, and the most non-believing are Meretz voters at 15%.

Negotiation Indices:

Whole Sample: 57.6; Jewish sample: 56.1

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