Living with terror, not Living in Terror: The Impact of Chronic Terrorism on Israeli Society

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Abstract
This article discusses the impact of chronic terrorism on a targeted society by examining the case of Israeli society during the second Intifada. The Israeli case demonstrates both the extensive effects of repeated terrorist attacks and their limitations. The article argues that while Israelis were seriously affected by Palestinian terrorist attacks during the second Intifada, this did not result in major, lasting changes in Israeli behaviour. Despite being profoundly affected by terrorism, Israeli society was not demoralized by it, and in this respect Palestinian terrorism failed to achieve its aim. This is because the Israeli public grew accustomed to chronic terrorism and possessed a high level of social resilience.

Introduction
At a time when terrorist attacks and thwarted plots regularly dominate the news headlines, when long queues at airport security checks have become all-too-common, and when once innocuous items (drinks, shoes, backpacks) can become the means of deadly attacks, it is clear that the threat of terrorism hangs over us as never before. Terrorism is currently at the top of the national security agenda in the United States and in many other countries around the world. Indeed, terrorism is widely considered to be the greatest security challenge of our time. Many societies around the world are now faced with the prospect of endemic terrorism on their own soil. The September 11, 2001, terrorist attack in the United States; the March 11, 2004, terrorist attack in Spain; and the July 7, 2005, terrorist attack in Britain these are all unlikely to be one-off events. Rather, the United States and many other Western democracies can expect more terrorist attacks in the future.

What affect will such attacks have on these countries? What kinds of domestic effects are they likely to produce? It is sometimes argued that the effects of terrorism are quite minimal, and that the current concern with terrorism is well out of proportion to the threat that terrorism actually poses. Counting the number of terrorist fatalities and comparing this to the number of fatalities in conventional wars, or even traffic accidents, leads some to claim that the threat of terrorism is wildly exaggerated. But counting fatalities from terrorist attacks is the crudest and most simplistic way to measure the impact of terrorism. The consequences of terrorist attacks often go far beyond the deaths and destruction they cause. The effects of terrorism are not limited to its actual victims. They can be wide-ranging and far-reaching. They include the direct and indirect economic costs of terrorist attacks, the psychological effects of terrorism upon the population, and the social and political impact of terrorist attacks. This article will discuss these different kinds of effects with the aim of presenting a fuller picture of the impact of terrorism on
a society. In doing so, I will draw extensively upon recent research into the effects of terrorism conducted by psychologists, sociologists, economists, and political scientists. Brought together, this research into the psychological, economic, social, and political effects of terrorism enables us to develop a more comprehensive and integrated understanding of the overall impact of terrorism. This article, therefore, uses the Israeli experience during the second Palestinian Intifada as a case study to illustrate various effects of terrorism.

Most discussions of terrorism today are concerned with counter-terrorism and the objectives and tactics of terrorist groups, whereas less attention is generally paid to thinking about the impact of terrorist attacks on targeted societies. The focus on counter-terrorism is understandable given the emphasis placed by politicians and the general public on preventing terrorist attacks. We are, however, unlikely to completely eliminate terrorism—a type of political violence whose history dates back thousands of years. It is, therefore, essential that we devote more attention to considering the effects of terrorism, so that we may be better prepared to deal and cope with these effects. In so far as the effects of terrorism can be minimized, the overall effectiveness of terrorism can be reduced. Thus, studying the severity and longevity of the effects of terrorism is crucial to assessing its effectiveness.

There is a growing body of research, especially since the 9/11 attacks, on the effects of terrorist attacks. Numerous studies have now been conducted on the psychological effects of terrorism on individuals. These studies have looked at how terrorist attacks affect people’s mental health with particular attention paid to the incidence of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) following terrorist attacks. Increased rates of depression and substance abuse have also been studied as indications of the psychological effects of terrorism. Another avenue of research has been on the social psychological effects of terrorism, such as the impact of terrorism on xenophobia within a society, on group stereotypes, and on the attitudes and ideological orientation of the targeted population. There have also been some studies on the economic effects of terrorism. These studies have investigated the immediate economic damage caused by terrorism, and the effect on variables such as Gross Domestic Product (GDP), unemployment, foreign direct investment (FDI), and the tourism industry. Finally, within the field of political science there is an increasing amount of literature about the political effects of terrorism, mostly focusing on the impact of terrorist attacks on public opinion, elections, government policy, and peace processes. The big question this literature poses is whether and under what circumstances terrorism works. Terrorist attacks are deliberately designed to instil fear and intimidate a population in order to achieve a political objective. But how successful are terrorist groups in achieving their political objectives? There is no agreement among scholars on this critical issue. While some have highlighted the political gains that terrorist groups have achieved, others have argued that terrorism often backfires politically and is not an effective strategy against democratic states.

This article also addresses the question of whether terrorism works, but from a slightly different perspective—it looks at the overall impact of terrorism on the targeted population. To understand how effective terrorism as a strategy is, it is necessary to assess its impact upon the targeted society. Terrorists hope that by sowing fear and panic within the targeted public, this will pressure the government to act in ways they desire. In other words, creating public fear, panic, anxiety, distress etc. is essential to the accomplishment of terrorism’s political strategy. By
examining how terrorism affects its audience, therefore, we can gauge the effectiveness of terrorism as a strategy. I will do this by investigating the impact of Palestinian terrorism on Israeli society during the second Intifada.

In this article, I hope to contribute to the ongoing scholarly debate about the effectiveness of terrorism in a number of specific ways. First, in considering the economic, psychological, and social effects of terrorism as well as its political effects, the article provides a more complete account of the impact of terrorism than studies that narrowly look at its political effects alone. Terrorism’s political consequences cannot be properly assessed in isolation from its other effects. The political effects of terrorism should be looked at in a broader context.

Second, instead of just examining the consequences of a single terrorist attack, this article investigates the effects of repeated terrorist attacks on the targeted society. A society’s response to a single, large-scale terrorist attack such as occurred on 9/11 might be very different than its response to repeated, smaller-scale attacks. Hence, the effects of ongoing, ‘chronic terrorism’ may significantly differ from the effects of a one-off terrorist attack.[15] This article tackles the question of how societies specifically respond to chronic terrorism. It would seem logical to expect that repeated exposure—direct and indirect—to terrorist attacks and living with the constant possibility of sudden violent death, would severely affect a society. But is this really the case? Do repeated deadly terror attacks create more public fear and insecurity or do they have a progressively weaker affect on the population? Do societies become traumatized by prolonged terrorism or can they learn to live with it? I argue that a society can gradually grow accustomed to chronic terrorism, and consequently, its impact declines. In short, societies can effectively become habituated to terrorism and learn to cope with it.

Third, by using the example of Israeli society during the second Intifada to illustrate this argument, this article offers an in-depth case study of the effectiveness of terrorism—or its lack thereof—and thus complements the more quantitative, statistically based studies that characterize a lot of political science work on this topic. Unfortunately for Israelis, Israel represents an excellent case study for analyzing the effects of chronic terrorism. Although it is not the only country to have experienced endemic terrorism—Sri Lanka and Northern Ireland are two other examples—no country has endured more acts of terrorism over a prolonged period than Israel. From before the state was established in 1948 and ever since then, Israelis have been the targets of terrorist attacks, both within Israel and around the world. Indeed, the history of modern terrorism is linked to the history of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, as Arab militant groups have pioneered new terrorist tactics (notably, airplane hijackings and suicide bombings) and carried out some of the best known terrorist attacks in history (such as the hostage-taking of Israeli athletes at the 1972 Munich Olympic games). The threat of terrorism has long been a fact of life for Israelis. Thus, Israeli society’s experience with terrorism can potentially offer many insights into the impact of chronic terrorism on societies.

Finally, the conclusion of this article emphasizes the importance of social resilience in coping with terrorism. I argue that Israeli society was able to cope with relentless terrorism during the second Intifada and quickly recover from it because it possessed a high level of social resilience. It is therefore essential to recognize the importance of social resilience and understand what
contributes to it in order to better manage the threat of terrorism and maybe even to one day conquer it.

The Toll of Terrorism: Israel during the Second Intifada

In this article, I will focus on the impact of Palestinian terrorism on Israeli society during the second Intifada (sometimes called the “al-Aqsa Intifada”), specifically during the period from the end of September 2000 until the beginning of 2005 (when the second Intifada effectively ended). During this time, more than one thousand Israelis were killed, the overwhelming majority of them civilians (70 percent were civilians, 30 percent members of the security forces). This figure was more than the number of Israelis killed in all terrorist attacks in the thirty-five years prior to the second Intifada. Thus, the second Intifada inflicted a heavy death toll upon Israelis, especially civilians. In all, according to casualty figures calculated by the Israeli human rights group B’Tselem, from 29 September 2000 to 15 January 2005, a total of 431 Israeli civilians were killed inside Israel by Palestinians (including 78 aged under the age of 18), and an additional 218 Israeli civilians were killed in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. In just over four years of the second Intifada, therefore, a total of 649 Israeli civilians were killed. By way of comparison, throughout more than thirty years of the “Troubles” in Northern Ireland (1969-2001), 1857 civilians of all sides were killed. The impact of Palestinian terrorist attacks upon Israeli society during the second Intifada, however, cannot simply be measured in terms of the number of Israeli fatalities. It was much more far-reaching and profound, as this article will show.

Suicide terrorist attacks were a prominent feature of the second Intifada. Although Palestinians began carrying out these attacks years before the second Intifada (the very first took place in 1989), suicide attacks skyrocketed after its outbreak in September 2000, peaking in the years 2001 to 2003 (4 suicide attacks occurred in 2000, increasing to 35 in 2001, up to 53 in 2002, then dropping to 26 in 2003, and down to 12 in 2004). These suicide terror attacks were responsible for a large proportion of Israeli casualties. For instance, although less than one percent of all Palestinian attacks against Israelis between September 2000 and August 2002 were suicide terrorist attacks, almost 44 percent of Israeli fatalities from Palestinian attacks were killed in these attacks. Thus, suicide terrorism became the deadliest weapon in the arsenal of Palestinian militant groups (and was widely supported and extolled by Palestinian society during this time). As Hamas leader Abdel Aziz al-Rantisi declared, suicide attacks were “one of our most effective means, which can rival the impact of their F-16s.” In addition to Hamas, many other Palestinian groups (notably, Palestinian Islamic Jihad, Fatah and its offshoots Tanzim and the al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade, and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine) conducted suicide terrorist attacks in Israel during the second Intifada. Most of these attacks were directed against Israeli civilians (‘soft targets’) and sought to inflict the maximum number of civilian casualties by being carried out in locations where many civilians congregate such as cafes, restaurants, outdoor markets, shopping malls, and public buses. Among the most notorious suicide attacks were the bombing at the Dolphinarium disco in Tel Aviv on 1 June 2001 that killed twenty-one people (most of them teenagers); the bombing at the Sbarro pizza restaurant in
Jerusalem on 9 August 2001 that killed fifteen; and the bombing of the Park Hotel in Netanya on the Jewish Passover holiday on 27 March 2002 that killed thirty.

Apart from the many deaths and injuries resulting from these terrorist attacks, what other effects did they have? In the following sections of this article, I will try to answer this question by discussing the psychological, economic, social, and political effects of terrorism, and describing how these effects manifested themselves in Israel during the period of the second Intifada.

Psychological Effects

The first and most immediate effects of terrorism are psychological. Terrorist campaigns can be expected to psychologically affect a sizeable portion of the population of a targeted society, either directly, by harming a person or their family, or indirectly, through the extensive media coverage of terrorist attacks. The greater the number of attacks and the more lethal those attacks are, the more people that will be psychologically affected by them. Terrorism is a form of psychological warfare against a society. It is designed to strike fear into the heart of the targeted society, and it generally succeeds in doing so. Suicide terrorism can be particularly effective in terrifying people because it projects an aura of fanaticism, which makes the threat of future attacks seem more likely. Peoples’ fear of terrorism is both rational and irrational; rational in that there is an ever-present threat of a terrorist attack being repeated, but irrational in the probability assigned to that potential event. Since people tend to overestimate their chances of being a victim to terrorism, the fear of terrorism is widespread in a society. It does not, however, affect everyone to an equal degree. Research has shown that there is a negative correlation between a person’s education and their fear of being a victim of terrorism. This suggests that the more educated a person is, the less likely they are to succumb to the irrational fear evoked by terrorism.

In the case of Israel, a large majority of Israeli civilians have long feared terrorism. Israelis’ personal fear of terrorism has been recorded in public opinion surveys over many years. In a 1979 survey, 73 percent of respondents reported being “afraid” or “very afraid” that they, or their close family members, would be hurt in a terrorist attack. Similarly, 85 percent of Israelis expressed this fear in a poll conducted in 1995, and 78 percent in a 1996 poll. Israeli’s fear of terrorism reached new heights during the second Intifada. In the spring of 2002—when Palestinian suicide bombings inside Israel were most frequent—92 percent of Israelis reported fear that they or a member of their family would fall victim to a terrorist attack. Hence, at this time, almost every member of Israeli society feared for the safety of their family members and themselves. While this fear certainly had some basis, it was not grounded entirely in the facts, since the probability of themselves or a member of their family being killed or wounded in a terrorist attack was actually far smaller than what the Israeli public believed.

Nevertheless, Palestinian terrorist attacks during the second Intifada affected a large number of Israelis. Nineteen months into the second Intifada, 16.4 percent of Israeli adults said they were the victims of a terrorist attack, 22.1 percent had friends or relatives who were victims, and a further 15.3 percent knew someone who survived a terrorist attack without injury. In total, a staggering 44.4 percent of the Israeli population was exposed to a terrorist attack. With terrorist attacks affecting so many people, it is not surprising that they resulted in widespread
psychological problems. More than a third of Israelis who participated in a major psychological study reported at least one traumatic stress-related symptom (TSR), with an average of four symptoms reported per person.[40]

The number and intensity of TSR symptoms reported by the Israeli sample during the second Intifada was similar to the number and intensity reported by Americans following the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, even though far fewer Americans were directly exposed to the 9/11 attacks.[41] This suggests that terrorism can psychologically affect people who have no direct connection to a terrorist attack. Indeed, there is no statistically significant association between psychosocial responses to traumatic events and the level of exposure.[42] Being an actual victim of terrorism has little affect on the prevalence of stress-related psychological disorders, while gender and age have a far more acute affect. Hence, a person who is injured in a terrorist attack is no more likely to suffer from psychological disorders than a person whose only connection to the attack was seeing it on television. The extensive media coverage of terrorist attacks can therefore seriously harm people’s psychological well-being.

The psychological effect of terrorism that is easiest to quantify is the prevalence of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).[43] PTSD is a potentially socially crippling psychological disorder. One of the major symptoms of PTSD is avoiding people or situations that remind one of the traumatic experience. PTSD can change the way people behave at home and at work; hence neither the private nor public sphere is immune from the harm caused by terror attacks.[44] In the middle of the second Intifada, 9.4 percent of Israelis suffered from PTSD. But the occurrence of PTSD varied considerably between men, women, and children, with 40 percent of Israeli children suffering from this disorder.[45] Women are also more likely to have PTSD than men, and also have a significantly higher chance of having TSRs and depression.[46] Hence, the psychological effects of terrorism are by no means uniform. Different people are affected to different degrees.

The psychological effects of terrorism are not limited to PTSD. For example, those who witness terrorist attacks but are not directly harmed are generally the last to be evacuated from the scene of the attack, since medics typically focus their attention on the casualties.[47] These people typically replay the scenes of carnage endlessly in their heads, and many end up with “hypertension, accelerated pulse, disassociation, and a desire to flee from the slightest noise, such as a car exhaust pipe backfiring or even a slamming door.”[48] In the wake of terrorist attacks, people can become incapable of concentrating on their typical daily tasks. For example, following the 9/11 attacks, 52 percent of Americans polled said that they could not concentrate on their work as a result of those attacks.[49] Terrorism, therefore, has a significant impact on people’s everyday lives, whether or not they are directly exposed to it.

The psychological effects of terrorism are by now well-documented. What is less clear, however, is the psychological impact of repeated terrorist attacks. Do more terrorist attacks result in more psychological damage to the population or does their psychological impact diminish over time? One might think that a wave of suicide attacks would have an increasingly negative psychological impact on the targeted population. After all, it stands to reason that repeated exposure to traumatic events will make the affected public more fearful and more prone to stress-related disorders. In Israel’s case, however, this does not appear to be the case. Despite
experiencing numerous traumatic events during the second Intifada, which should logically cause progressively more psychological damage, the rate of PTSD symptoms among the Israeli population remained at a fairly low level.[50] This was the case despite the fact that 60 percent of Israelis believed that their lives were in danger, and 68 percent believed the same about the lives of their family and friends.[51]

The explanation for this lies in what is known as the accommodation effect.[52] The accommodation effect means that the amount of stress created by recurring traumatic events actually decreases.[53] Hence, as terrorism becomes a regular occurrence, a process of habituation and de-sensitization may occur, and people become able to maintain a semblance of a normal life.[54] This suggests that people can learn to live with terrorism and psychologically cope with it. Further evidence of the ability of the Israeli population to cope with repeated exposure to terrorism is provided in a study of the effect of terrorism on the life satisfaction (happiness) of Israelis between 2002-2004.[55] This study revealed that Palestinian terrorist attacks had a very limited effect upon the overall happiness of Israelis, and that despite living with a high level of terrorism “Israelis were not particularly unsatisfied with their lives when compared to citizens of other, mostly terrorism-free, countries.”[56]

The negligible impact that the campaign of terrorism from 2002-2004 had upon the happiness of Israelis suggests that the psychological effects of terrorism should not be overstated. While they can be severe, they are generally short-lived. Despite experiencing fear, anxiety and stress in the aftermath of a terrorist attack, and even suffering from PTSD, over time most people recover well and are soon able to function normally again (at least within a matter of months).[57] Even repeated exposure to terrorism, as Israelis experienced during the second Intifada, does not have devastating psychological consequences upon a population. To be sure, there is some evidence to suggest that chronic exposure to terrorism is more psychologically harmful than the experience of a single terrorist attack (such as 9/11),[58] but even in this extreme case people demonstrate a great deal of psychological resilience.

**Economic Effects**

The economic effects of terrorism can be broken down into its direct costs, associated with the destruction caused by an act of terrorism, and its indirect costs, which affect nearly every aspect of a targeted state’s economy. The most direct economic effect of a terrorist attack is the damage caused to life and property at the site of the attack. As an example, a suicide attack in a supermarket would cause direct economic damage in four different ways. First, it would damage the infrastructure of the building and destroy products. While the costs of rebuilding or repairing the building and restocking goods might be significant to the store in question, they do not have any affect on the economy at large. Second, the supermarket would probably have to shut down, at least temporarily. With no income generated by the store, national economic output would fall. This would also have no major impact upon the national economy. Even in a small country like Israel there are 470 supermarkets controlled by the main three supermarket chains, hence the damage to one of them is not going to affect Israel’s economy.[59] Third, if the terrorist attack killed people, one must also take into account the lost lifetime earnings of each individual killed. Since the numbers of people killed in individual terrorist attacks are relatively few (compared
with the amount of deaths in civil wars or inter-state conflicts) this is also an insignificant cost for the national economy. Fourth, if the terrorist attack results in many casualties, then the wounded both lose earnings and need to pay for medical procedures (the cost to an economy does not change if the cost of medical procedures is borne by the wounded themselves or by their government), but this too has no real impact on the national economy. Thus, the direct economic impact of a terrorist attack is minimal. Even 9/11, the most devastating terrorist attack in modern history, had a direct cost of roughly $27 billion.[60] In comparison, World War II cost the U.S. government over $15 trillion, when adjusted for inflation.[61]

The indirect economic costs of terrorist attacks, however, are potentially more significant. The indirect economic effects of terrorism are many and varied, yet they are very difficult to accurately gauge. Terrorism can affect an economy in numerous ways. A long-running terrorist campaign can definitely impact a state’s GDP, as happened to Israel during the second Intifada. Israel’s GDP growth dropped sharply following the outbreak of the second Intifada. Israel’s GDP growth slowed from an average of 5 percent in the two years prior to the Intifada to -0.8 percent in the first two years of the Intifada.[63] Only by the fourth year of the Intifada, did Israel’s GDP growth rebound.[64] A terrorist campaign can make an economy more unstable, which in turn increases risk in the economy. With a higher risk and the same or slightly lower potential return, foreign direct investment in the targeted country’s economy can decline. Since foreign investors have a large choice of countries to invest in, any kind of uncertainty, even one resulting from minor terrorist acts, can lead to a drop in the inflow of foreign funds.[65] In Israel, FDI dropped sharply from $5.01 billion in 2000 to $1.72 billion in 2002, before recovering to $3.7 billion in 2003.[66] Finally, the perceived risk of future terrorist attacks can lower confidence in the economy, which in turn affects consumer spending, an integral part of an economy.[67]

A country’s tourism industry is particularly hard hit by terrorism since tourist destinations can be easily substituted, and dangerous ones usually become instantly unattractive to foreign tourists. Even a small risk of terrorism leads potential tourists to travel elsewhere. Thus, the more reliant a country’s economy is on tourism, the more it will be affected by terrorism. In Israel’s case, terrorism in the second Intifada had a significant impact on the country’s tourist industry. The amount of foreign tourists in Israel declined from 2.7 million in 2000 to 718,000 in 2002, before recovering slightly to 1.25 million in 2004.[69] Yet since tourism is only responsible for about 1.5 percent of Israel’s GDP, a decline in foreign tourists (who comprise roughly 30-35 percent of tourists in Israel) does not have a great effect on the overall health of the Israeli economy.

Ultimately, the economic effects of terrorism depend upon many factors. Significant economic costs are unlikely to be incurred as a result of a single terrorist attack, but a prolonged campaign of terrorism can negatively impact a country’s GDP, especially in the case of a small country in which tourism is a large sector of the national economy.[70] Of course, relatively wealthy countries are more able to absorb the economist costs of terrorism than poorer countries, where any loss of national income can have immediate repercussions on the population’s living standards. In Israel’s case, while terrorism definitely hurt the Israeli economy during the second Intifada, it soon recovered and Israel’s economic development continued.
Social Effects
Whereas the economic impact of terrorism ranges from minimal to moderate, the same is not necessarily the case with the social impact of terrorism. The social effects of terrorism can be pronounced and far-reaching, influencing many different aspects of a society. The starting point for the impact of terrorism on a society is the affect that terrorist attacks have upon people’s beliefs and attitudes. Major events influence people’s beliefs and attitudes.[71] Shavrit et al. explain that: “terror attacks are negative, threatening events. Considerable evidence from psychological studies has shown that negative information tends to be more closely attended, better remembered, and have a stronger impact on evaluations and judgments than positive information.”[72] Thus, since terrorist attacks are events of a highly negative nature, they can lead to changes in people’s beliefs and attitudes. One such belief concerns how people view other societies, especially the society which the terrorists belong to. In a situation of inter-group conflict, terrorist attacks increase negative beliefs about and hostile attitudes toward the opposing group the terrorists claim to represent.[73]

A sense of victimhood is common to a society experiencing terrorism.[74] Civilians are not expected to be victims of political violence (whereas military casualties are expected); hence, a public feels victimized when it is the target of political violence (i.e. when it experiences terrorist attacks).[75] The more the civilian population is targeted, the more this sense of victimhood increases. This sense of victimization in turn leads to a de-legitimization of the terrorists and the people they claim to represent. Consequently, the targeted society becomes unwilling or unable to consider the other side’s grievances and objectives.[76] No longer is the opposing group believed to have rational objectives and/or justifiable grievances; instead, the worst views become ‘common sense,’ especially those concerning its propensity towards violence. Thus, while 39 percent of Israeli Jewish respondents perceived Palestinians as violent in a 1997 survey, by the end of 2000 after the onset of the second Intifada, this figure had risen to 68 percent of Israeli Jews.[77]

The threat of terrorism increases a group’s reliance on stereotypes,[78] leading to more negative stereotyping by members of the targeted society.[79] There have been numerous instances of this such as the rise of “Islamophobia” in the United States following the 9/11 attacks,[80] and the increase in anti-Arab sentiments in Spain in the wake of the 2004 Madrid train bombings.[81] Likewise, in Israel during the second Intifada, Israelis held extremely negative stereotypes of Palestinians, viewing them as dishonest, violent, and having little regard for human life.[82]

Another major social effect of terrorism is a rise in ethnocentrism and xenophobia as a group increases its solidarity in the face of violence.[83] Hence, identification with, and support for, the in-group rises as a result of terrorism, while identification with, and support for, any out-group decreases. This was apparent in Russia in the wake of terrorist attacks carried out by Chechen militants, when ethnic Russian identity became more salient, while xenophobia rose.[84] This also took place in the United States in the aftermath of 9/11, when there was a surge of patriotic sentiment (evident, for instance, in the numerous American flags that adorned windows in New York City—a place where such overt displays of American patriotism are generally less common than elsewhere in the country). So too, in Israel during the second Intifada repeated Palestinian
terrorist attacks led to a renewed sense of national unity among Israeli Jews. A public opinion survey taken in March 2002, for example, posed the question: “In your opinion have recent events, including terrorist attacks and operation ‘Defensive Shield,’ strengthened or weakened the sense of national unity in the Israeli-Jewish public?” Eighty-six percent of Israeli Jewish respondents answered that the events strengthened national unity.[85] As one Israeli commentator put it: “Israeli (Jewish) society in Israel has returned to a state of cohesiveness.”[86]

While Israeli Jews experienced a renewed sense of solidarity in the face of the wave of Palestinian terrorism unleashed in the second Intifada, Arab citizens of Israel became the object of intensified suspicion and hostility.[87] Israeli Arabs were increasingly perceived as a security threat and a potential ‘fifth column’ in Israel’s conflict with the Palestinians.[88] As more and more Israeli Jews came to view Israeli Arabs as the enemy (because of their general identification with, and support for, Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza), popular support increased for policies that would promote their voluntary emigration or even force them to leave Israel. In one survey in 2003, for example, 57 percent of Israeli Jews expressed support for the government encouraging the emigration of Arabs from Israel, and 33 percent favored their expulsion.[89] Growing intolerance of Israeli Arabs was evident not only in social attitudes, but also in government legislation aimed at them. For example, the Knesset (the Israeli parliament) passed a bill in 2002 that curtailed the freedom of expression of Arab political parties and Knesset members by allowing the Central Elections Committee to ban parties and individuals that supported (in action or speech) “the armed struggle of enemy states or terror organizations” against the State of Israel.[90] Another law passed on July 22, 2002, lifted the parliamentary immunity of Knesset members who violated this restriction, thereby allowing them to be legally prosecuted.

Just as Muslims in the United States and Europe have complained about suffering from intolerance, harassment, and discrimination in the aftermath of recent terrorist attacks (most notably 9/11),[91] Arabs in Israel during the second Intifada made similar complaints. Although official and unofficial discrimination against Israeli Arabs long predates the second Intifada and cannot simply be attributed to Palestinian terrorism, there is evidence that Palestinian terrorism during the second Intifada did increase discrimination against Arabs in the Israeli labor market.[92] More generally, Palestinian terrorist attacks increased anti-Arab attitudes within Israeli-Jewish society[93]—the most blatant expressions of which were the calls of “Death to Arabs” in soccer stadiums and at the sites of terrorist attacks, and in slogans like “No Arabs – No Terror Attacks” appearing in graffiti and on car bumper stickers.[94] Hence, Palestinian terrorism undoubtedly exacerbated the already tense relationship between the Jewish and Arab communities in Israel.

Beyond these specific effects of Palestinian terrorism on Israeli society are the less obvious, but no less real, social repercussions of persistent political violence. In Israel’s case, it has been argued that the stress that terrorism creates manifests itself in a rise in violent crimes (homicide and robbery), and a general “brutalization of Israeli society.”[95] The fact that criminal homicide in Israel increased by 28 percent from 2000-2001 (i.e., from the year before to the year after the beginning of second Intifada) and robberies increased by 11 percent offers some evidence—though by no means conclusive—to support this argument.[96] Although it is difficult, if not
impossible, to prove a causal connection exists between terrorist attacks and societal violence, further support for this linkage comes from the discovery by scientists of a positive relationship between stress and aggression.[97] Aggressive social behavior in Israel may, therefore, be linked to the high threat of terrorism Israelis face.[98]

Political Effects

The extensive social effects of terrorism described above often have political implications. The unifying effect that terrorism had upon Israeli-Jewish society during the second Intifada is typical of what is known as the “rally around the flag” syndrome, which is common to societies experiencing terrorism.[99] The “rally around the flag” syndrome generally leads to a muting of public criticism of the government and its policies. This public reaction to terrorism is also in line with “system justification theory,” according to which threats increase social conservatism (the desire to defend and maintain the status quo).[100] The role that terrorism can play in strengthening conservatism was demonstrated in a study that compared Spanish attitudes before and after the Madrid train bombings, which found that the bombings increased adherence to conservative values.[101]

In some cases, the political effects of terrorism are clear-cut and pronounced, but often they can be difficult to accurately assess because specific political outcomes cannot be casually linked to terrorism due to the multiplicity of potential causes. A government’s policy or a particular political decision may be the result of any number of factors, and can therefore rarely be definitively attributed only to a terrorist attack or series of attacks. Take the case of the Sharon government’s adoption of the policy of disengagement, which brought about the complete withdrawal of Israeli settlers and soldiers from the Gaza Strip in September 2005. Was this policy the result of Palestinian terrorist attacks, as many Palestinians at the time believed?[102] Even if Palestinian terrorism was a factor, it was certainly only one of a number of reasons behind the Sharon’s government decision to unilaterally withdraw from Gaza.[103]

While the political impact of terrorism is often hard to pinpoint, nevertheless it can hardly be doubted that terrorism has political effects and influences the political process, at least in democratic and partially democratic states. The most obvious way in which terrorism can influence the political process is by bringing about changes in public opinion, which governments then tend to take into account when formulating their policies.[104] It can be very hard for governments to resist the pressure from public opinion for a strong reaction in the wake of a terrorist attack. For an elected policymaker, the political costs of under-reacting to a terrorist attack are always higher than the political costs of overreacting. The failure to prevent future attacks due to inaction can be fatal to a politician’s career, while failing to prevent them after having taken strong measures can be justified as having done everything possible.[105]

The impact of terrorism on public opinion, however, is not as straightforward or predictable as one might imagine. There is no uniform public response to a terrorist attack. Numerous factors affect how a public responds to a terrorist attack, such as the nature and scale of the terrorist attack, and the context in which it occurs. Moreover, different groups within the general public respond in different ways to a terrorist attack. People with different political orientations are likely to have different responses since existing political orientations serve as a mechanism
through which new information is received and processed.[106] Nor do terrorist attacks necessarily change people’s political opinions. The greater a person’s confidence in their views, the less likely they are to change as a result of a major event, like a terrorist attack.[107] Finally, people’s views are more likely to be influenced by a terrorist attack when it receives a lot of media coverage since this serves to increase its perceived importance.[108]

In Israel’s case during the second Intifada, Palestinian terrorism definitely had an impact on Israeli public opinion concerning the conflict with the Palestinians and the prospects for peace with them (although, of course, it was not the only factor affecting Israeli public opinion).[109] Prior to the second Intifada while the Oslo peace process was ongoing, a large majority of the Israeli public was optimistic about the possibility of achieving peace with the Palestinians (according to one survey in 1999, 68 percent of Israeli Jews believed that peace between Israel and the Palestinians would be achieved within three years).[110] Israeli hopes for peace were dashed by the collapse of the peace process and especially the outbreak of the second Intifada. [111] The surge of Palestinian terrorist attacks between the years 2001-2004 contributed to a significant change in Israeli Jewish beliefs about Palestinian intentions and the prospects for peace.[112] Whereas in 1999 less than 50 percent of Israeli Jews thought that the Arabs wanted to conquer the State of Israel, in 2002 this number had risen to 68 percent, and by 2004 it reached 74 percent.[113]

Palestinian terrorism helped convince Israeli Jews that, in the oft-repeated phrase first used by their Prime Minister Ehud Barak, they had “no partner for peace.”[114] Although a majority consistently continued to support a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, there was little hope that such a solution could be reached in the foreseeable future. In a March 2001 survey, for instance, 72 percent of Israeli Jews thought that the Palestinian Authority (PA) was not interested in a peace treaty with Israel.[115] Similarly, in a 2002 survey, 68 percent of Israelis thought that it was impossible to reach a peace agreement with the Palestinians, and only 26 percent thought that signing peace treaties would mean an end to the Arab-Israeli conflict (compared to 30 percent in 2001, 45 percent in 2000, and 67 percent in 1999).[116]

Accompanying the change in Israeli views of the Palestinians and the possibility of achieving peace with them, was greater public support for the use of more aggressive military measures against the Palestinians and less support for continuing peace negotiations. Prime Minister Barak’s premiership became a casualty of this change in Israeli public opinion. He was attacked by his political opponents on the right for not responding to the Intifada with the force necessary to quell it (slogans like “Let the IDF win” and “Barak is humiliating Israel” became popular). Whilst Barak was accused abroad (and by some in Israel) of excessive use of force against the Palestinians, he was assailed by the right for insufficient use of force. Increasingly unpopular with the Israeli public, Barak eventually suffered a massive defeat in the February 2001 election for prime minister at the hands of right-wing Likud party leader Ariel Sharon.[117]

Disillusioned with the Oslo peace process and convinced of the futility of further negotiations with the Palestinians (at least with its current leadership), the Israeli public elected a strong, hard-line leader who they hoped could bring them greater security (by implementing a policy of severe military retaliation for Palestinian terrorist attacks).

Palestinian terrorism during the second Intifada clearly affected the political preferences of the
Israeli electorate. Sharon’s resounding victory in the 2001 election was one indication of this effect. Another was the Likud’s party decisive win in the 2003 Knesset elections, doubling the number of its seats in parliament (from 19 to 38), while the rival center-left Labor party lost seven seats (dropping from 26 to 19 seats). Not only did Palestinian terrorism boost the electoral appeal of the political right in Israel, it also helped to bring about a rightward shift in the political positions of the Israeli public. In general, more Israelis identified themselves as right-wing and fewer as left-wing. On the specific issue of ‘land for peace’ (that is, the idea of returning territories in exchange for peace), Israeli-Jewish support for it dropped from 50 percent in 2000 to only 37 percent in 2002. This shift to the right was also evident in the increased number of Israeli Jews who were opposed to removing any Jewish settlements in the event of a peace agreement—a ten percent increase in just one year from 2000-2001 (from 26 percent to 36 percent of Israeli Jews).

Nevertheless, these changes in Israeli-Jewish public opinion were not lasting—support for the principle of ‘land for peace’ gradually rose after 2002 as the level of violence decreased, reaching 48 percent in 2005 at the end of the second Intifada. Likewise, opposition to the removal of Jewish settlements also declined after 2002. This suggests that Palestinian terrorism only had a temporary impact on the political views of Israeli Jews. It initially had a pronounced affect on Israeli-Jewish public opinion, but gradually this affect lessened over time.

Although Palestinian terrorism only had a short-term impact on Israeli-Jewish political opinion (concerning things like their willingness to compromise for the sake of peace, and their positions regarding a permanent solution to the conflict with the Palestinians), it had a major impact on their attitudes towards the use of force against Palestinians. Israeli Jews became much more militant and ‘hawkish.’ Terrorist attacks increased Israeli public support for strong military actions. The militancy of Israelis rose during periods when there was an upsurge in terrorism, and declined in periods of relative quiet. The rise in militant attitudes among Israelis was clearly apparent during the early years of Sharon’s tenure as prime minister at the height of the second Intifada. Angry and embittered by the seemingly endless series of gruesome Palestinian suicide bombings inside Israel, the vast majority of the Israeli public staunchly supported the Sharon government’s offensive military measures against the Palestinians. In 2001, for instance, 89 percent of Israeli Jews supported the Sharon government’s policy of “targeted assassinations” of Palestinian militants involved in terrorism against Israel; the following year the number was 90 percent; and in 2003 it had risen to 92 percent. The overwhelming public support for Prime Minister Sharon’s tough policies towards the Palestinians revealed the emergence of a new national consensus in Israel. According to Ephraim Yuchtman-Yaar: “This consensus is reflected in widespread mistrust of the Palestinians’ commitment to make peace with Israel, and in the common conviction that so long as Palestinian terror continues, Israel must resort to arms in order to protect the lives of its citizens.” Palestinian terrorism undoubtedly played a role in creating this new national consensus in Israel.

The powerful influence that Palestinian terrorist attacks could have upon Israeli public opinion and consequently Israeli government policy toward the conflict with the Palestinians during the second Intifada was most evident in the spring of 2002. March 2002 was the bloodiest month of the second Intifada for Israelis. During that month, Palestinian suicide bombing attacks killed at least eighty Israeli civilians and wounded or maimed some 420 people. In one week alone,
Palestinian suicide bombers struck at a restaurant in Haifa, a Jerusalem supermarket, a café in Tel Aviv, and a hotel in Netanya, the latter during a meal for the Jewish holiday of Passover (this last attack killed thirty people and wounded over 140). This devastating series of suicide bombings unleashed a wave of public shock, fear, and anger. The militancy of the Israeli public reached new heights. In a poll taken in April 2002, 71 percent of Israeli Jews agreed with the statement “every military action that Israel initiates is justified,” and 80 percent believed that “all means are justified in Israel’s war against terror.”[130] It was in this climate of opinion that the Sharon government initiated two large-scale military operations in the West Bank (Operations “Defensive Shield” and “Determined Path”). These military offensives into the West Bank—in which Israel’s military reoccupied large parts of the territory—received overwhelming support from the Israeli public.[131]

The massive Israeli public support for the construction of a security barrier between the West Bank and Israel was also a direct result of Palestinian terrorism during the second Intifada, as Israelis became desperate to find a way to stem the relentless tide of Palestinian suicide bombing attacks.[132] The idea of building a wall or fence to separate Israel from the Palestinian territories was not new, but it was Palestinian terrorist attacks that propelled the idea to the top of the political agenda. In October 2001, a new political movement called “Fence for Life” emerged with the aim of increasing public support for a security barrier.[133] The Israeli public enthusiastically embraced the idea of a security barrier between the West Bank and Israel. Faced with a steadily mounting civilian death toll from suicide bombing attacks, Israelis fervently hoped that such a barrier would at least greatly reduce the chances of successful suicide attacks by making it much harder for suicide bombers to enter Israel (not only would there be a high concrete wall or electrified fence for them to surmount, but also ditches, razor wire, electronic motion sensors and armed guard posts).[134] Growing public support for a security barrier eventually led the Sharon government in June 2002 to adopt the idea and announce its plans to begin building the barrier,[135] despite Prime Minister Sharon’s initial opposition.[136]

**Conclusion: Social Resilience and Coping with Terror**

This article has discussed the different effects of terrorism and described how many of these effects occurred in Israel as a result of Palestinian terrorist attacks during the second Intifada. In doing so, it has sought to emphasize the many effects of terrorism—psychological, economic, social, and political. To varying degrees, terrorism can affect the psychological health and well-being of a country’s population, its economy, its societal beliefs and attitudes, and its politics. These effects can range from minimal to severe, depending on a host of other factors. In the case of Israel discussed here, Palestinian terrorism during the second Intifada had a profound and far-reaching impact upon Israeli society. The frequency of terrorist attacks, especially at the height of the second Intifada in 2002-2003, spread fear and anxiety among Israelis, hurt the Israeli economy, affected social attitudes and intra-societal relations, influenced Israeli public opinion and domestic politics, and the actions and policies of Israeli governments. Life in Israel was conducted under the shadow of terror during the years of the second Intifada—the most visible sign of this was the ubiquitous presence of armed security guards at the entrances of malls, retail...
stores, restaurants and cafes, who inspected people’s bags and if necessary tried to prevent potential suicide bombers from entering these public spaces.

Given the many effects that Palestinian terrorism had on Israeli society during this period, one might conclude that it was highly effective. This is true in so far as it exacted a heavy toll on Israelis. But the purpose of terrorism is not just to kill people, inflict material damage, or frighten an audience. Terrorism seeks to alter the social and political dynamics of the societies it targets. In the words of one scholar, terrorism is “a form of psychological warfare against the public morale, whereby terrorist organizations, through indiscriminate attacks, attempt to change the political agenda of the targeted population.”[137] One of the key objectives of terrorism, then, is to demoralize the targeted society—to induce a widespread sense of helplessness and hopelessness and feeling of despair among members of the society. If the targeted society does not become demoralized, terrorism fails in this respect.

By this criterion, Palestinian terrorism during the second Intifada was ineffective because it did not succeed in demoralizing the Israeli-Jewish public. While Israelis were certainly fearful of terrorist attacks, they did become despondent and dispirited.[138] Rather, Israelis demonstrated resolve and steadfastness in the face of relentless terrorism. Indeed, any visitor to Israel during the second Intifada could not help but be struck by the seemingly nonchalant manner with which Israelis lived with the constant threat of terrorism. Instead of panic and public hysteria, there was stoicism and fortitude.[139] Israelis did not allow the threat of terrorism to dominate their lives. Although they experienced high levels of stress and fear, they went on with their lives. They did not retreat into their homes, nor did they significantly alter their daily routines.[140] Instead of allowing their lives to be seriously disrupted by terrorism, Israelis only made minor changes in their behaviour. They continued to go out to cafes, for example, but made sure that they sat far from the entrances where suicide bombers might blow themselves up if stopped by a security guard from entering. Those Israelis who regularly used public buses continued to do so,[141] others avoided buses that had been repeatedly targeted by terrorists, while some chose to take taxis instead. Although less people would go to restaurants and cafes or travel on public buses in the immediate aftermath of a terrorist attack (within the first few days), as time passed these activities would resume to normal levels.[142]

When one considers the huge toll in Israeli lives that Palestinian terrorism during the second Intifada took—from September 2000 until May 2004, 1030 people had been killed, and 5788 injured in more than 13,000 terrorist attacks, which means that approximately 0.1 percent of Israel’s population was injured or killed (the same percentage in the United States would equate to a staggering 295,000 people being injured or killed)[143]—the ability of Israeli society to cope with this terrorism is quite remarkable.[144] How did Israelis cope with ongoing terrorism despite suffering enormously from it? There are no doubt many factors that are responsible for this, but three are particularly worth noting here. First, acclimatisation to chronic terrorism. In other words, Israeli society basically became accustomed to terrorism and adapted accordingly. [145] The threat of chronic terrorism simply became part of normal life in Israel during the second Intifada. Second, media attention to terrorist attacks declines during chronic terror—repeated terrorist attacks receive less television coverage and less television viewing. This occurred in Israel during the second Intifada.[146] Thus, since exposure to media coverage of terrorist attacks has been shown to generate symptoms of anxiety and distress,[147] as the media...
pays less attention to terrorism, this helps the society to become less affected by it. Finally, and most importantly, social resilience got stronger. Resilience is a characteristic of both individuals and societies. Like individual resilience, social resilience involves the “ability to withstand adversity and cope effectively with change.”[148] Thus, with regards to terrorism, social resilience prevents terrorism from seriously disrupting the normal functioning of a society. It means that a targeted population is able to cope with the threat of terrorism and not be intimidated or demoralized by it.

The concept of social resilience, therefore, helps explains why Israeli society was not demoralized by repeated terrorist attacks, despite the serious affects these attacks had on Israelis. Israeli-Jewish society demonstrated a high level of social resilience during the second Intifada. [149] One factor that contributes to social resilience is social cohesion.[150] Israeli-Jewish society is still very cohesive, notwithstanding its serious political, cultural, and social divisions. There is a strong sense of social solidarity among Israeli Jews. Although this sense of solidarity has declined over the years, it rises during times of external conflict (as mentioned earlier, this occurred during the second Intifada). Hence, war and terrorism bolster social cohesion in Israel, which helps it to cope with these violent episodes. Social trust is another factor behind social resilience.[151] In Israel’s case, the high level of trust that Israeli Jews have in the country’s army and security services boosts their social resilience. During the second Intifada, the Israeli-Jewish public had confidence in the Israeli military and believed that quick and effective actions were being taken against Palestinian militant groups that were carrying out terrorist attacks (at least during the tenure of the Sharon government). In this respect, Israel’s counter-terror actions helped prevent Israeli society from becoming demoralized. Finally, Israelis Jews are very patriotic[152]—this is most apparent in their high level of willingness to perform military service—which also contributes to their social resilience.[153]

In sum, the case of Israel during the second Intifada suggests that societies can become inured to prolonged terrorism and that the more resilient a society is, the less it will be demoralized by terrorism. Although terrorist attacks do succeed in causing mass fear and anxiety, they do not necessarily undermine a society’s morale and willpower. Terrorism tests a society’s unity and resolve. Israeli society essentially passed that test in the second Intifada due to its social resilience. As such, it offers a useful example that other societies faced with the threat of terrorism can potentially learn from. Whether the case of Israel is typical or exceptional of societies living with chronic terrorism should be the subject of further study. Future research should also be devoted to exploring the causes of social resilience and ways of strengthening it. [154] Understanding social resilience has important implications for how we think about terrorism and how we deal with it. It may even ultimately help us to win the ‘war on terror’ that we are currently engaged in—not because we stop all terrorist attacks (perhaps an impossibility), but because we are not greatly affected by them.

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Notes

[1] This article adopts the U.S. State Department’s definition of terrorism as “premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against noncombatant targets by subnational groups or clandestine agents, usually intended to influence an audience,” see <http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/crt/2000/2419.htm>. This definition is consistent with that used by many scholars of terrorism. See, for example, Bruce Hoffman, Inside Terrorism (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006); Walter Reich (ed.), Origins of Terrorism (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990).


[17] Although the second Intifada had no clear, definitive end, many analysts consider it to have ended in early 2005 after Mahmoud Abbas was elected President of the Palestinian Authority in January of that year (after Yasser Arafat’s death) and he then made a truce with Israel at a summit meeting in February 2005.
[21] It is worth noting that in this same period, more than 3,000 Palestinians (combatants and non-combatants) were killed by Israeli security forces in the West Bank and Gaza. See, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/3694350.stm>. Accessed on 17 March 2008.
[23] For an analysis of the Palestinians’ use of suicide terror attacks during the second Intifada and Israel’s efforts to stop them see, Yoram Schweitzer, “The Rise and Fall of Suicide Bombings in the Second Intifada,” Strategic Assessment 13, no. 3 (October 2010): 39-48.
[29] Psychological effects are limited to those that affect individuals, not society as a whole. For example, stress is a psychological effect, while xenophobia belongs in the social category.
[34] Part of the reason has to do with the disproportionate coverage terrorism receives in the media. See Hoffman 2006, 189.
[38] Bar-Tal and Shavrit 2004, 15.
[40] Ibid. 9.
[41] Ibid. 10.
[42] Ibid. 10.
[43] According to the Anxiety Disorders Association of America, PTSD is “a condition that results from experiencing or witnessing an unusually distressing event; symptoms range from repeatedly reliving the trauma, such as in dreams or flashbacks, to general emotional numbness, which often causes sufferers to withdraw from family and friends.” Anxiety Disorders Association of America <http://www.adaa.org/gettinghelp/glossary.asp>. Accessed on March 4, 2008.
[46] Bleich et al. 2003, 11. It is also possible that there is a gender bias in the reporting of these disorders.
[48] Ibid.
[51] Ibid. 9.
[53] Bleich et al. 2003, 10.
[54] Strong social support networks may also have been responsible for the relatively low level of PTSD among Israelis. Peter Roy-Byrne, “Effects of Terror and Violence Vary by Culture,” *Journal Watch Psychiatry* (October 8, 2003).
[56] Ibid, 3.
[61] Ibid.
[63] Morag 2006. - Although the slowdown of the Israeli economy in the first two years of the Intifada coincided with the weakening of the economies of Israel’s main trading partners, the United States and the European Union (EU), the economic slowdown of the Israeli economy was much greater than America’s or the EU’s, suggesting that the Israeli economy experienced a shock from the onset of the second Intifada.
It must be noted that during the same time period, global FDI fell from $1.388 trillion to $560 billion. The second Intifada was therefore certainly not the only reason for the sharp decline in FDI flowing into Israel.

Ibid. 499.

Frey et al. 2004, 6.

Morag 2006. It must be noted that during the same time period, global FDI fell from $1.388 trillion to $560 billion. The second Intifada was therefore certainly not the only reason for the sharp decline in FDI flowing into Israel.

Ibid. 499.

Frey et al. 2004, 6.

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Ibid. 499.

Frey et al. 2004, 6.

Morag 2006.


[108] Ibid. 4.

[109] The collapse of the Oslo peace process, especially the failure of the July 2000 Camp David summit meeting between Barak and Arafat, and the way this failure was publicly interpreted and ‘framed’ by Prime Minister Barak also had very important influences on Israeli public opinion. Eran Halperin and Daniel Bar-Tal, “The fall of the peace camp in Israel,” Conflict and Communication Online 6, no. 2 (2007).


[111] A public opinion poll carried out by the School of Education at Tel Aviv University showed that it was the violence that broke out in September 2000 far more than the failure at Camp David that eroded Israeli faith in the peace process. Akiva Eldar, “The revolutionary road to 194,” Ha’aretz, July 22, 2002.

[112] In a poll taken at the end of January 2001, 54 percent of Israeli Jews responded that they did not believe that the Oslo peace process would bring about peace between Israel and the Palestinians in the coming years. Yaar and Hermann, “Peace Index – January 2001.”


[115] The Peace Index survey from March 2001 conducted by the Tami Steinmetz Center at Tel Aviv University. Reported in Ha’aretz, April 4, 2001.


[117] Sharon received 62.4 percent of the vote to Barak’s 37.6 percent. This margin of victory—almost 25 points—was the largest in any Israeli election.


[119] Berrebi and Klor have shown that terrorist attacks influenced Israelis to vote for right-wing parties, see Berrebi and Klor, “Are Voters Sensitive to Terrorism?”
[122] Ibid, 77.
[123] Ibid, 74-75.
[124] Ibid, 77.
[125] Ibid, 83.
[134] Some 63 percent of Israelis Jews believed that the barrier could significantly reduce the number of Palestinian terrorist attacks against Israel, and another 19 percent believed that it could stop terrorism altogether. Yaar and Hermann, “Peace Index – October 2003.”
[137] Ganor, 2.
[138] Zussman et al., “Does Terrorism Demoralize?”
[139] Nothing expresses this popular attitude better than the inscription on a memorial outside the site of one of the worst terrorist atrocities during the second Intifada (the Tel Aviv disco where 21 young people were killed)—“We won’t stop dancing.”
[140] The only time that daily life in Israel was seriously disrupted by terrorism was during the first few months of 2002 when suicide bombings were taking place in Israeli towns and cities every few days—there were five attacks within just ten days in March 2002 killing a total of 51 Israelis. During this period of unrelenting terrorist attacks, people avoided crowded places and stopped going out to cafes and restaurants. They didn’t take buses or go shopping in malls. They stayed indoors. Palestinian terrorism was succeeding in terrorizing Israelis and disrupting their normal lives. However, this was short-lived. When the volume of terrorist attacks declined, life in Israel returned to normal.
[142] Ibid.


[149] For a detailed examination of the resilience of Israeli society during the second Intifada see, Meir Elran, “Israel’s National Resilience: The Influence of the Second Intifada on Israeli Society,” (Tel Aviv University Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies, Working Paper No. 81, January 2006) [Hebrew]. See also the “National Resilience Project” conducted by the Center for the Study of National Security at the University of Haifa, which uses regular surveys of the Israeli public to measure its national resilience over time.


[151] Ibid.


[153] Ben-Dor et al.