

**THE SABAN CENTER FOR MIDDLE EAST POLICY AT
THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTION**

**“PALESTINIAN REFUGEES:
PREFERENCES IN A FINAL
ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN PEACE AGREEMENT”**

A LUNCHEON DISCUSSION WITH
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SHIBLEY TELHAMI: On behalf of the Saban Center at Brookings, it's my pleasure to introduce and host Dr. Khalil Shikaki today on a very important subject. I needn't tell you who Khalil is; most of you know him very well. He is the director of the Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research in Ramallah, a leading political scientist, and someone who has been measuring Palestinian public opinion for a long time and has been a visiting fellow here at Brookings.

The subject that he's going to talk about today is going to be one of the most central subjects in the Palestinian-Israeli negotiations. What's obvious, both in terms of what has transpired over the past few years during the previous negotiations and the events, the unfortunate incident of the past week, is that this is an incredibly emotional issue. Regardless of how this issue is settled, it is a very, very deeply emotional issue to both sides, given how each side defines this central issue as part of the struggle for the past several decade. Yet no one really has done a full accounting of where the public is on this issue, both on the Israeli side or the Palestinian side for that matter, but certainly not on the Palestinian side among refugees. And Khalil has really, I would say, broken a taboo by daring to ask questions about it directly among Palestinian refugees, and that will be the subject of the presentation today.

So please join me in welcoming Dr. Khalil Shikaki.

(Applause.)

KHALIL SHIKAKI: Thank you, Shibley. Thank you very much for having me here. The issue of the future of the refugees is one of the issues that everybody thought we knew what the answers were, but very few of us wanted to go deep inside and really try to find out how the refugees would feel about all these details with regard to their own futures. We assume that we know what is best for them and what they want. So we tended to avoid asking them questions because we thought these would be sensitive questions that we shouldn't ask. And even we at the center, when we decided to do these surveys made it a condition that everybody involved in this issue will be a refugee. To the fieldworker, who would interview the refugees, we insisted that they too be refugees. We had to train a lot of people to be sensitive to the issues, and we did tons of testing attempts in order to be able to make our questions as sensitive as possible so that we could get useful and reliable data that would help us to understand what the refugees want.

We essentially wanted to do two things: one, try to understand what options are open to us—Palestinians, Israelis, and everybody involved, with the issues of negotiations; and secondly, we wanted to provide ourselves—in this case the Palestinians, particularly those working on planning for the Palestinian state, the future of the Palestinian state—we wanted to provide ourselves with enough data and information that would help us become better prepared for the process of absorbing refugees in the Palestinian state. We wanted to know the numbers and we wanted to know the profile of those who would want to come to the Palestinian state. We have done graphics on their socioeconomic conditions, their desires, wishes, needs, et cetera, because we were fearful that even as we developed a good strategy for negotiations, a strategy that would meet the basic needs of the refugees, we were concerned that once we've done that we would make a mess out of implementing whatever we agree on with the Israelis and that the process of absorption, absorbing hundreds of thousands of refugees, would represent another catastrophe in the history of the refugees.

Motivated by these two basic objectives, we have been preparing for this for three years. We started before Camp David, and we in fact wanted to finish everything before Camp David. We were not able to do that because we discovered that this would require a much greater effort than we anticipated, so we kept working at it, hoping to do it after Camp David. And then we had the Intifada and the overall environment was not conducive to rational thinking, and for at least a year after the Intifada it was not physically possible for us to carry out surveys in the West Bank and Gaza. Even the regular surveys that I usually do every quarter I was not able to do during the first year of the Intifada. Between September 2000 and July 2001, I was not able to do a single survey in the West Bank and Gaza. It wasn't until the end of 2001 that we were able to put together the team—again, all refugees—to begin to do the surveys.

I'm going to tell you a little bit about the survey before I get into the details of the finding. The survey covered the West Bank, Gaza, as one region, Jordan and Lebanon. It did not include Syria because in the efforts in 2000, in our efforts to try and look into the possibility of doing a survey in Syria we reached the conclusion—that is, the researchers of the center reached the conclusion—that the information we would be getting from Syria would not be reliable because we would not have control over the whole process of fieldwork. This was made very clear to us as we examined the options with Syrian friends, scholars and officials.

We therefore decided to drop Syria from the actual fieldwork, but we plan to go to Syria very soon to share the data that we have with the refugees themselves in the refugee camps and conduct focus groups with leaders, as well as, with regular, normal refugees inside the refugee camps. We will do the same in the West Bank and Gaza. We plan to organize tons of meetings with refugee committees all over the region to discuss our—first of all to explain our findings to them. What happened to the center when we tried to release the data makes it imperative that we do that because there was a lot of confusion out there with regard to what the surveys found. So one of the things we thought we would not be needing is to keep repeating what the findings were, because a lot of confusion has crept into the process of releasing the data that I had to spend the last three

or four days just correcting mistakes in the press, not just the Arab and Palestinian but the foreign press as well, including the Jerusalem Post. We also plan, of course, to meet with the Israelis and Americans and to try and share with them our thoughts about the significance of these findings and what could be helpful to both sides in terms of perhaps moving on, trying to get more involvement from the refugees in the process of finding a solution.

The funding for this did not come from American sources, as some people thought. The funding came mostly from the Japanese government through the United Nations Development Program, UNDP. More funding was given to help us do the work in Jordan from the Conrad Adenauer Foundation, a German foundation. And in Lebanon we received more funding, particularly in Lebanon, from the Canadian IDRC, International Development Resource Center.

We have conducted the interviews among 4,500 families. Each interview was face to face with the head of the household. We, contrary to expectations, our own expectations, didn't have more than a 1 percent rejection rate. When we started, the first test resulted in a 60 percent rejection rate. People didn't want to participate in the survey because the issues were too sensitive, and in the beginning we were a little bit too clumsy as we approached these issues. We have learned, over a period of almost a year, how to become sensitive to the issues. We briefed and debriefed the fieldworkers until we were able to master, 'the art of communication' if you wish, in this area, and we did special training for the fieldworkers to be aware of the problems.

People who participated in the pilot test participated in the training of the fieldworkers so that we can ask these issues and complete—I mean, this is a very long interview. It could take anywhere between 45 minutes to two hours for a single interview. We have almost 300 variables that we wanted data on, and it was important for us that people would be willing to sit down and talk to us, particularly the head of the household, despite the length of time and despite the sensitivity of the issues.

The margin of error is less than 3 percent. The 4,500 interviews were distributed evenly in the three areas with 1,500 interviews in each place.

Now, the actual fieldwork started in January of this year with a survey among the refugees in the West Bank and Gaza, which took one month to complete. We've done a fourth survey—I don't have a great deal of information to give you from that survey today, but I will be referring to it from time to time, and I will be showing some of its results. That survey was done among non-refugees in the West Bank and Gaza. We wanted to know whether non-refugees had different ideas about some of these issues. We didn't ask non-refugees how they would behave, but rather what they thought of issues.

The three issues that we wanted to examine are the following: the issue of the right itself, the issue of where people would go once they have the right—that is, once they have the right of return we wanted to know, if they had the right to choose, what

would they choose, and thirdly, how would they behave under different conditions and circumstances of return and residency? Remember, the objective of asking these questions was meant to help us give some guidance to the negotiators and to the planners, which was very important for us at times when dealing with the issue of behavior under conditions of circumstances of return and residency, to ask some provocative questions. And we have gotten a lot of heat because we have asked these questions, and we continue to get a lot of heat for asking these questions. I do not regret that we asked these questions because the data and the information we have received because of asking is very useful to us.

I have already said a few things about the funding. These are the centers that have done the surveys, the actual fieldwork. We were in charge of everything. The centers that participated, whether it was the Center for Strategic Studies at Georgetown University, or the statistics lab in Beirut they did what we told them; we supervised the whole work from the selection of the sample to the actual monitoring of the field work itself. And of course the other two centers didn't have any say in the formulation of the questions. The formulation of the questions was done by the researchers themselves and the input for the questions came from two additional sources. We consulted very heavily with Palestinian negotiators as we planned the instrument; that is, the questionnaire. We worked with them, we asked them what questions they wanted asked, and we proposed questions to them, and the eventual final product was one that essentially tried to include as much as possible the questions that negotiators were interested in answers to.

And secondly, we asked the planners what specific questions, what data was missing for them? What data they have that is essentially speculation and what they wanted some hard, empirical evidence to substitute the speculation for? We also worked with a lot of scholars who helped us with the formulation of the questions themselves, in terms of the more scientific/practical issues and details, but we eventually changed a lot of this, based on the actual interviews. The debriefing from the field workers was the most important factor in the actual formulation of the questions and the use of the words that were used in the survey at the end. So the basic objective is both negotiations and planning.

Let me give you a little bit more information about the sample itself. If you can see this clearly, the numbers show that we have covered, in terms of the sample, people living inside and outside the camps. This was a real challenge for us to do, particularly in Lebanon, since this is the only place where no official governmental sources or, statistical sources were available. We had to work with NGOs and UN organizations to determine the sample outside the refugee camps. But, as you can see, there is also something helpful in Lebanon; that is the large number of people living inside the refugee camps. More than 50 percent—56 percent—of the refugees in Lebanon live inside camps. We estimated that, in fact, it to be a little less than that, and we decided to go 50-50, refugees inside and refugees outside. Everywhere else, we tried to select a random sample. We didn't tell the computer to give us a number of refugees from the refugee camps and how many from outside the refugee camps, because what we had was a lot more straightforward, useful data.

The Palestinian Statistical Bureau gave us maps, hundreds of maps, for every single location. This was the first time that they had made this available to us. There are approximately 3,200 maps of all the populated areas in the West Bank and Gaza. The only thing they did not give us was whether this particular house on the map had a refugee family or a non-refugee family. Instead, they told us, in this block, which would usually have an average of about 180 homes, you have this percentage of refugees. And that was very helpful because with that we could then develop a system where we would not be wasting a lot of energy and money trying to get a representative sample. And this was also true in Jordan. But as I said, the only place that did not have this was in Lebanon, where we had to use data from USCWA and from the Norwegian FAFL organization, work that they have done there, to help us determine the locations where the refugees are outside the camps.

I'm not going to go over the information with regard to the results about the refugees. I will be glad to answer the questions; this is more technical. The only thing that I want to say is that we went into this process thinking that UNRWA figures are not very accurate, thinking that they're not very accurate with regard to one issue, and that is the number or the percentage of people registered with UNRWA. There is an assumption out there among some Palestinian scholars and politicians that UNRWA does not account for all the refugees, even in countries where UNRWA operates—Lebanon, Jordan, and the West Bank and Gaza. What we have found was, in fact, UNRWA had done very well in accounting for almost all the refugees in the West Bank and Gaza. Ninety-eight percent of the refugees in the West Bank and Gaza are registered with UNRWA. In Lebanon and Jordan the percentage was close to the lower 90s: 91, 92, 93, but that's very good. I mean, the expectation is that there are a lot more people who are not registered.

I know I'm registered with UNRWA, but none of my children are, for example. I'm a refugee; none of my children are registered, and I think that probably in Jordan and in Lebanon one would expect that many people, particularly those who leave the refugee camps, do not bother to register with UNRWA. And in other places, of course, none are registered. Like in Iraq, there are an estimated 30,000 or more people who are not registered. In Egypt, none are registered. In the Gulf, except for those who are originally from Jordan, the majority are not registered.

Let me tell you what was the solution that we presented to the refugees and was the basis for the questions. We told the refugees that this is something that developed out of Taba negotiations in January—it should be 2001, I'm sorry about this mistake. And then the translation was done on my way here on the plane, so all of this you're seeing now I did on the plane. I'm sorry. Everything was in Arabic. Let me just say why we did this in Arabic. We wanted the press conference—we wanted everything in Arabic—so we decided that there would be nothing out there in English, so that we would force the Palestinian and Arab press to use our exact words and not translate stories from news agencies. So there was nothing in English. Unfortunately, there was a great deal of demand for material in English because of what happened and we were not prepared.

And I had to do this very quickly, so there might be a lot of mistakes, but not in the figures. I assure you I have checked and double-checked the figures.

It's said basically that there would be a state established on the West Bank and the Gaza strip, Israel would recognize UN resolution 194 or the right of return. This is the question that dealt with the behavior by the way. But the two sides would agree on the return of a small number of refugees to Israel in accordance with the timetable that extends for several years. Each refugee family would be able to choose one of the following options: return to Israel in accordance with an annual quota and become an Israeli citizen; stay in the Palestinian state that will be established and receive fair compensation for property and losses and suffering; receive citizenship and return to designated areas that would be the swapped areas and become part of the Palestinian state and receive compensation; receive compensation and stay in the host country; finally, compensation and immigration to a third country in Europe, Australia, U.S., and Canada.

Now this is the solution that we presented, the scenarios, if you wish, of a solution that we presented. We told people they can choose where they would want to live. They can choose to go to Israel and become or not become an Israeli citizen. As you will see, the overwhelming majority did not want to become Israeli citizens. Or more than 90 percent did not want to become Israeli citizens. For those who decided that they want to go to the swapped areas, we were interested in finding out where they want to live. Whether in fact the return to the swapped area would be a real return or just a virtual return. For purposes of analysis, I would suggest that you consider this a virtual return, because almost nobody wanted to live in the swapped area. They wanted to return to it, but live in the cities of the West Bank and Gaza. So there shouldn't be much distinction, really, between two and three in terms of a solution.

All right. First we wanted to know whether people thought Israel would accept this. After Taba we thought a lot of people would think Israel indeed would accept it, but we were wrong. A small minority really believed that this is something that Israel can live with. As you can see, anywhere between two-thirds and three-quarters. Now what is in green: is the West Bank, Gaza, and refugees. This is where the comparison between refugees and non-refugees—some of these questions were asked to the non-refugees and there isn't a great deal of difference—some differences, but not a great deal of difference.

Then we asked them whether the PLO leadership would accept it and you can see the exact opposite happened. Almost two-thirds of the Palestinians who are non-refugees thought that the PLO would accept. Sixty-three percent of the refugees themselves in the West Bank and Gaza thought that they would accept. The Jordanians, those living in Jordan were a little bit skeptical, but they tended not to be sure about it, so they said they didn't know.

We asked them whether other refugees would accept it. How would most refugees behave in this case? And they were divided, but it seemed that the tendency was they would often say that the refugees would accept this particular issue among the non-

refugees in the West Bank and Gaza. The refugees themselves were split right in the middle, 50/50, between those who thought that they would or would not.

So then of course a natural question is, would you? Now, this is addressed to both non-refugees and refugees. We wanted to know whether non-refugees would behave differently. As you can see, non-refugees were more willing to accept it. This is where there was, indeed, some difference between refugees and non-refugees in the West Bank and Gaza, with 55 percent saying they would accept it. Of course they are not refugees, but for those who are refugees the split was again right in the middle: 50/50. So West Bank and Gaza refugees' private opinion and public opinion are the same. In other words, this is not a big issue. Refugees know what other refugees want. This is a very good sign.

There are some other questions where we found that there is a difference between private opinion and public opinion. A private opinion is when we hear somebody tell us, "I would accept something." And then when we asked them, "But how about the others?" we thought they won't, but we found that they would. In that case, there would be a gap between private attitudes and public attitudes. In this case we found there is absolutely none whatsoever.

But this is really what is more to the point; if the negotiators end up reaching an agreement on this, how would the refugees behave? Those who said they would accept it, or accept it for a lack of a better alternative, were the overwhelming majority. Of the refugees, essentially, anywhere between two-thirds to three-quarters can live with this solution. The reason why they can live with it has to do with their expected behavior.

Now actually before I deal with their expected behavior let me say a few things about their attitude. We thought that the scenario that we proposed might have more opposition than we ended up with, so we thought we should offer a permanent-minus solution. A permanent-minus solution is a solution that would resolve all the issues of the conflict except the refugee issue. We wanted to know whether refugees could live with that. They would have the right of return preserved, not discussed, not negotiated until later, but all the other issues would be resolved. And we found that the West Bank and Gaza non-refugees are split right in the middle with regard to this particular option while the refugees themselves would be more supportive. Fifty-three percent would support and 46 percent would oppose.

This is not the case in Jordan, where the support is much less and the opposition is larger, and certainly not in Lebanon, where a much greater percentage would oppose. Obviously the question being the refugees in the West Bank and Gaza would benefit from the permanent settlement, but not those in Lebanon and in Jordan. So the incentive for those in Lebanon and Jordan, particularly in Lebanon where in a great deal of distress, they have no incentive to support a permanent settlement that does not solve their problem. Those in the West Bank and Gaza, on the other hand, would benefit from the settlement even though it would not directly address their primary concerns, but nonetheless it would be a step forward for them and that's why they were split; there was

more support for it than opposition. But it seems that non-refugees think that this is unfair to the refugees and that's where the support is less than among the refugees, but the differences are not great.

Now we wanted to take this even a step further. We thought the refugees would oppose a solution that does not do anything about them, so we thought what if we were to take the camp residents and do something helpful for them; that is, get them out of the camps, and put them in housing projects outside the camp. Improve their living conditions in a big way. We have found that if we do this we get a much higher percentage of support in the West Bank and Gaza—only in the West Bank and Gaza. A little bit more in Jordan; as you can see in Jordan there was only 36 percent support, but now we will have 45 percent in Jordan. We have 57 percent support among refugees in the West Bank and Gaza.

Now we proposed a third option for those living in the West Bank and Gaza. We realized that this third option won't be applicable to those living in Jordan and Lebanon; and that is simply to renovate the camps: to improve living conditions in a big way inside the camps but without removing them outside the camps. This is where we got a much larger percentage of people supporting it. What this tells us is that the refugees are really not happy with the way their conditions are, and they would like to see their conditions improved even if this is done before the refugee issue is resolved. But this was asked to those who lived outside. The refugees who lived outside were asked, "Okay, assume that a permanent minus solution was signed. Would you want to stay where you are in Lebanon or Jordan, or would you like to come to the Palestinian state just waiting for the permanent resolution of the issues?" As you can see, the overwhelming majority—not an overwhelming majority, but a significant majority—almost two-thirds in Lebanon and Jordan want to stay where they are. But you still have almost a little bit over a quarter of the refugees in Lebanon and Jordan wanting to come to the Palestinian state, even when there is no solution. In other words, if the Palestinian Authority is to have a state today and then say we have an open door policy, refugees who want to come from Jordan and Lebanon now, before a permanent status negotiation starts, want to come and live in the West Bank and Gaza. One would expect that about a quarter of the refugees would come to live in the Palestinian state.

Again we are still on the attitudes; we asked people, and this we also asked to non-refugees, whether there should be sort of a large return, hundreds of thousands returning a year, or a gradual return with tens of thousands returning. You can see except for those refugees in Lebanon, where again the difficulties are greater than anywhere else, refugees prefer the gradual return. They don't want to rush it. And this is true among non-refugees as well. It is a realistic assessment of what the Palestinian Authority or the Palestinian state can or cannot do, which is good. It is good that they realize the limitations, except for those in Lebanon who certainly must be a priority in the absorption process. The others can live with a gradual process of absorption.

Now we asked them whether they think absorption is possible. Can the West Bank and Gaza absorb refugees? Now except again for those from Lebanon almost

everybody else think yes, a Palestinian state can. Those who said it cannot, and this would be the fourth group here, who said it cannot absorb any, were only 20 percent of non-refugees. In other words 80 percent of non-refugees in the West Bank and Gaza believe that the process of absorption can take place and that the West Bank and Gaza—the Palestinian state—can take in all these hundreds of thousands of refugees, even millions of refugees—at least half a million refugees. The only group that did not feel that the West Bank and Gaza would be able to absorb so many people was in Lebanon. I do not have an explanation for this, but what we have seen there is a larger number of refugees in Lebanon who want to go elsewhere and emigrate to third countries. And also the largest group of people who want to go to Israel come from Lebanon.

We asked them whether they wanted UNRWA to continue to function. For those who said yes, we asked them what role UNRWA would be doing. Those who said yes, saw a need for a continued role for UNRWA and were mostly in the West Bank and Gaza. And for the most part these people didn't want UNRWA to keep just giving them services. They were thinking of a role for UNRWA in the process of absorption. That's a vote of confidence in UNRWA by the way, but this is not true in other places where people were more willing to UNRWA should go. The reason, of course, for the larger percentage in the West Bank is that the process of absorption will most likely be in the West Bank and Gaza, where you can have a role for UNRWA. And that's where the larger percentage comes from.

We asked them whether they want to live in new cities or expand to new ones. We didn't find a great deal of difference there. The refugees can live either in new cities or in both, although it is clear that only a quarter or less of the non-refugees would want the refugee settlement to be in new cities only. It's clear that they want a combination of both.

There were many questions that we asked in an attempt to try and understand the issue of national identity, the commitment to national identity. We wanted to know whether people would want to continue to have some sort of link with the Palestinian state and play a role in building the state. And as you can see, the West Bank/Gaza, was obviously number one. Lebanon and Jordan, with Jordan having less—that's the extent to which the identity of being Jordanians of Palestinian origin is really strong. We found that there is large number of people who do not want to give up Jordanian citizenship. I don't know whether I will show you this, but one of the findings was that there is indeed a strong, not a majority, but there is a strong feeling when people have to choose between Palestinian identity or Jordanian of Palestinian origin identity. There is a large percentage that said they, not a majority, but a large percentage that said as Jordanians they'd prefer to be Jordanians of Palestinian origin.

This was another issue that dealt with the issue of identity: who would represent you? And the PLO, again in the Jordanian case, and this is again where the identity in Jordan is being tested. West Bank. Tell you the truth we didn't expect to see so much support in Lebanon. We thought the refugees in Lebanon feel betrayed by the PLO. One of our hypotheses was indeed that they feel betrayed and that they won't say that the PLO

represents them or that they want to come to the Palestinian state. We were wrong on both counts. Those in Lebanon certainly were number one in terms of wanting the PLO to continue to represent them.

Now the government of Jordan, this is 28 percent for the government of Jordan, was again close. Showed that almost all those who thought of themselves as being Jordanians or Palestinian origin wanted Jordan to represent them.

This is the question about identity. This is a direct question. We tried to avoid asking that question. This was not, by the way, a direct question. What you see in this chart is a compilation of about three or four questions. We put them together and we got this. Again Lebanon, surprisingly, was the place where when the direct question was asked national identity was the strongest. The objective here was not in fact to see whether there is an alternative identity, but whether in fact the identity of being a refugee was more important to the refugees than other identities. We particularly thought that in Lebanon the idea of being refugees would in fact be strong, but this was the exact opposite—again, we were wrong with regard to Lebanon with regard to the national idea all the way. None of our hypotheses about national identity in Lebanon proved to be accurate, and that in fact only shows the extent to which we in the West Bank and Gaza—we the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza are so ignorant about Palestinians living in Lebanon.

Again, I'm still on attitudes keeping the issue of behavior to the end. When a state is established, settlements evacuated, what do you propose we do with the settlements? The most important finding is that very few people want to demolish the settlements. Everybody else thinks the settlements can be useful. People don't want them to be sold, they want them to be given away. As you see in the third and fourth groups, this is the overwhelming majority, whether given to the poor who are refugees and non-refugees. Giving them away to refugees only received the highest level of support as an option.

There is a reference in the roadmap to the refugee issue that states it should be a "just, fair, and realistic solution." Agreed upon is dropped from here, but not from the actual question. The support, as you see, is highest among non-refugees in the West Bank and Gaza. It's a significant difference between refugees and non-refugees there, but still you still have two-thirds support for that reference. Now I must say that the reference to the refugee issue in the roadmap is sort of vague. It says agreed upon, fair, and realistic. Can you make sense of that? How could it be agreed upon, fair, and realistic? That depends on how you see it of course. We decided to ask the question despite the concern over its ambiguity because this is the exact wording, and the field workers knew from the tests that people will come back to us and say, "Come on, what does this mean?" So we decided not to interfere. We decided that the task of the field worker is simply to say, "This is the exact wording in the roadmap. Tell us whether you would support or oppose it." And we, as you can see, those in Lebanon and Jordan were not at all that enthusiastic about it. But, I mean, the split, particularly with regard to Jordan, was not with more

opposition, but rather with more support. In Lebanon the split was more even. Almost half/half.

Okay. Here is the behavior. This is the question where we asked people, “Okay, you have seen the solution. Tell us: Would you go to Israel with citizenship; go to Israel without citizenship; stay in the Palestinian state or go to the Palestinian state; stay in the host country; emigrate to a third country; et cetera?” Again I must remind you that this is based on the assumption that they have received the right of return. This is not in lieu of the right of return. This is not an alternative to the right of return. They get the right of return in their pocket and then they move on to the right to choose. Thirteen percent said they want to live in Israel. Thirty-seven percent said they want to remain in the Palestinian state. Thirty-seven percent said they wanted to go to the swapped area. I must again say that those 37 percent who said they want to go to the swapped area were ended up being seeing in Ramallah and Jerusalem and elsewhere. None of them wanted to live in the swapped area. Of course we understand why, they don’t know where the swapped area is going to be and we couldn’t provide information about them, so it’s understandable that they would select cities that they know and where they know there is work is. But it’s a very good, useful, psychological satisfaction because they can exercise the right of return virtually, while sitting in the luxury of their own living room, and that indicates that the idea of a swapped area as part of the solution, I believe, is a brilliant idea. It provides many people with that psychological satisfaction that they feel they need.

Emigration to a third country didn’t receive much enthusiasm. Now let me explain why. This is true in the other places as well. Remember, these interviews—before I say this—in other surveys that have nothing to do with the refugee issue, surveys that I’ve been doing during the last 10 years, from time to time we’ve asked people about permanent emigration. Whether the living conditions in the West Bank and Gaza and other issues compel them to emigrate permanently to a third country. We have found that even among the refugees there is a large percentage, anywhere between 20 to 40 percent depending on the age, wanting to emigrate for good. So having said this, how could we get 1 percent here? We get one percent here because this is essentially the old folks. These are the head of the household, and the head of the household are usually older, over 50, and they don’t want to emigrate to a third country. Their children want to emigrate, but not they. One of the options was to refuse all options: that’s nine percent. They can say, “I don’t like any of them,” but if they said that they had to tell us why. And when we went over all the whys, the answer was crystal clear. These 9 percent, in this case as in other cases and other countries, essentially said, “We will return when there is nothing called the state of Israel and we will go to the state of Palestine in all of historic Palestine.” That’s refusal. It means they want to go to Palestine 1948 not only in terms of place, but also in terms of time, before the establishment of the state of Israel.

As for Jordan: going to Israel is only 5 percent; to the Palestinian state, 27 percent; to the swapped areas, 10 percent. Why 10 percent in the swapped area compared to 37 percent in the West Bank? Because if you are on the West Bank, you can go to the swapped area while you are still in your living room. But if you are in Lebanon or

Jordan and coming to the swapped area, you have to make an effort to go to the swapped area. You have to move and come to the Palestinian areas. And that means you really won't say that you want to go there, unless you intend to really go there. So you have 10 percent wanting to go to the swapped areas. Just 3 percent want to stay in Jordan, 2 percent immigration, 16 percent refuse all choices.

As you'll see, the percentage of those who would refuse all choices will be larger in Lebanon and Jordan because these people perhaps can stay where they are, or that the level of rejection of the peace process, as a whole, is much higher in these places. The peace process in the West Bank and Gaza has become more acceptable. People in the West Bank and Gaza, two-thirds supported the Oslo process when it started. In Lebanon, and to a lesser degree in Jordan, there is a lot more opposition to the peace process. And there we will continue to be more rejection of political settlements coming from refugees in Jordan and Lebanon.

This is Lebanon. The largest percentage who wanted to go to Israel came from Lebanon. I'll explain why. This has to do with the fact that in Lebanon there is also a large percentage who have relatives who live in Israel. As I have come to the explanation why we had these figures, I'll say a few more words about it. Nineteen percent wanted to go to the Palestinian state, 21 to the swapped area. Eleven percent wanted to stay in Lebanon, 9 percent immigration. This is the highest level of immigration. Again, the reason for it in Lebanon is the high percentage of refugees in Lebanon who already have relatives who immigrated to third countries. More than 60 percent of refugees in Lebanon have relatives who have immigrated for good out of Lebanon, and mostly to Europe, and mostly to Germany. And this is where the greatest majority of them, 9 percent, want to go—Germany.

This chart shows all the places we have covered, and it shows clearly the percentage of those, of course, who want to go to the Palestinian state are 37-38 percent being from the West Bank and Gaza. It shows that refusal is mostly in Jordan and Lebanon; emigration mostly in Lebanon; host country mostly in Jordan. Swapped area mostly in . . . And going to Israel is mostly in Lebanon, but this of course is not going to affect the numbers too much, because the number of refugees in Lebanon is only 10 percent of the total refugee number.

Now translating this into figures gives us this: those who want to go to Israel of the total number, and these are UNRWA's December, 2000 figures. These figures indicate that the total number of refugees today is approximately 4 million. We covered all of them except the 400,000 or so in Syria, so our figures are dealing with the remaining 3.6 million. Of those, 373,000 want to go to Israel. The rest want to stay or go to the Palestinian state. We have approximately a little over a half a million who want to remain in host countries and we have about 84,000 who want to emigrate to a third country. A little less than a half a million refuse all choices. And 16,000 had no opinion.

Now to summarize all of this—let me before we do this say that the hypotheses we started with were to a large extent accurate, although, depending on the area, more accurate in one area than another.

National identity was the most important predictor: if you are committed to it you didn't want to go to Israel to live in Israel. In this case you wanted to live in your own country, exercise self-determination in your own country. That's why people wanted to go to Palestine.

Relationship with the state: Lebanon they didn't expect to see equality, so they didn't want to stay in Lebanon. They didn't feel Israel would give them that equality. Jordan is much better positioned. The state of Palestine would be total equality.

Relatives living abroad: if you have relatives in the West Bank and Gaza you want to go there. If you have relatives in Israel you want to go there. And if you have relatives in third countries you want to go there then.

Socio-economic conditions: if you own land we found, and this is not the most important finding, but a significant insight. If you owned a plot of land in Jordan or in Lebanon, and in Lebanon only 1 percent owned the plot of land so don't feel excited about it. But in Jordan there were a lot more people who owned land. You don't want to leave it. You want to stay where your land is.

We have found that on issues of citizenship, and let me just give you examples of this. This is an example of the impact of national identity. Eighty-two percent of those in Lebanon, 60 percent of those in Jordan, and almost 90 percent of those in the West Bank and Gaza whose first choice is to go to Israel would want to be Palestinian citizens only. They don't want to become Israeli citizens. In other words, the 10 percent we talked about, only 10 percent of them, that is, 1 percent of the total number of refugees want Israeli citizenship. The rest do not want Israeli citizenship or Israeli passport. And the majority the reason why only 30 percent of those coming from Jordan and going to Israel want Palestinian citizenship is because the other 30 percent, or 30 percent, want Jordanian citizenship, not Israeli, not Palestinian-Jordanian citizenship. When we said, "Well, suppose they said you have to have Israeli citizenship; what would you do?" Only 23 percent of those coming, we're now talking about the 10 percent who said they want to go to Israel, only 23 percent of those coming from Lebanon, 32 percent coming from Jordan, 29 percent of those coming from the West bank and Gaza, would still go to Israel if they were told that they must have Israeli citizenship. Seventy percent of those who want to go to Israel from the West Bank and Gaza, 54 percent from Lebanon, 38 percent, are willing to live in peace and respect Israeli law when they return.

When they were told, "Well suppose you go home and you discover —" actually we asked them already about this and when we got information we asked them whether they knew that their homes were destroyed or not destroyed, in general we have found that there is a strong correlation between homes destroyed and decision where to live. The 10 percent who selected to go to Israel when told, "Well suppose you decided to go,

but discovered your home is destroyed. Would you be willing to go to a different location in Israel? If that location turned out to be the swapped area, which would then be next to Israel, would you still go?" And as you can see, almost half of the 10 percent said, "Yes," if their homes are destroyed they are willing to go to the swapped area, which is in other words to the Palestinian state.

One of the options that we thought was those who said, "We didn't want Israeli citizenship," we asked about repossessing their property in Israel and living in the Palestinian state, and we have found that 18 percent of those in Lebanon, 39 percent of those in Jordan, 34 percent of those in the West bank and Gaza would actually do that. Would want to regain ownership of their land or home inside Israel, but live in the Palestinian state. So these are examples of the impact of the national identity.

You see this one is not even completed. I forgot to complete it. We found this is about relationship with the state and of course it shows that the largest percentage wanting to live in the Palestinian state are those who feel that they would be equal, have full equality. Jordan's refugees would have almost full equality, that's why you have largest percentage among them wanting to remain in Jordan. And in Lebanon no equality and that's why only 10 percent want to remain in Lebanon.

Relatives' place of residence. Here are some examples to show the impact of that. Twenty-nine percent of those, and this is particularly true as I said, in Lebanon. We didn't find this to be very useful in terms of predicting the decisions of those in the West Bank and Gaza or in Jordan, but it turned out to be very important for those living in Lebanon.

And finally the socio-economic conditions. We have found that your economic status was important. If you have income that is in the high brackets you would not want to go to the Palestinian state, but stay where you are. The state of Palestine, therefore, should expect to see fewer percentages of those with the highest level of income. The same is true with regard to land ownership. Those living in the cities in Jordan and Lebanon would want, more of them, would want to remain in the host country, but if you are living in a refugee camp it is more likely that you would want to come to the Palestinian state.

I think, yes, this is about it. What I have neglected to go over I will go over very quickly. This is, for example, when your home is destroyed would you go to the swapped area? And as you can see, in the first group of columns you have almost half of them wanting to go.

This is about citizenship. As you can see the overwhelming majority of people didn't want Israeli citizenship. One, two, three percent wanted Israeli citizenship. The rest certainly didn't want it.

And this is if Israeli citizenship was obligatory. The first group of columns the people would accept. The rest would not accept.

This is about compensation. We wanted to know whether there was a gap between expectations and demand. And there is indeed one, as you can see. This is what they think they will be paid per family, in the thousands of dollars. The first column, those who said it would be less than \$100,000 is the largest with the largest percentages, but I'll show you now the next slide where you can see that the first group of columns is not the largest. It's still large, but not the largest. And we get more even distribution here in this column which deals with demand and what they think they will be receiving. Go back to this one, as you can see again the percentages in the 100,202, to 500 and more than 500 are small percentages, but here as you can see are much higher percentages.

We wanted to know whether they would take homes and land in settlements, evacuated settlements, and we can see here—this is part of the compensation package—you can see in the West Bank and Gaza that they are willing to accept it. But those coming from Jordan and Lebanon tend to not want to do that, but still you have a significant number: 34 percent from those coming from Jordan and 36 percent coming from Lebanon, would be willing to take homes as compensation even if those homes were in settlements.

Emigration to third country. Again, this is behavior. As you can see, those in Lebanon, 60 percent of those in Lebanon want to go to European countries, and that's again mostly to Germany. The United States is more popular among those who are in Jordan. You have the highest percentage wanting to go there. Those on the West Bank and Gaza tend not to have a preferred place. By the way, we're not talking about a large number of people. Again, this is just 1 percent, so it's not a significant number to look at, but there doesn't seem to be a country of real interest. For those in Lebanon and Jordan it seems there is, but not in the West Bank and Gaza.

This is it. Thank you very much. (Applause.)

MR. TELHAMI: Thanks very much. This is really interesting and I think some of it is really quite surprising. I know that this was announced to end at 1:30, and those of you who must go, feel free to go. But we will take a few more minutes for questions and answers for those of you who will stay.

Allow me to ask the first question, though, and that is actually about Syria because I know there are 400,000 refugees in Syria. Obviously you weren't able to do that survey and it's always a problem trying to, you know, presuppose what their opinions are going to be as you found out in Lebanon. You assumed it to be one thing; you found it to be another. But still, if you had been given what you have found now, if you look at the results in Lebanon, would you expect the results from Syria to be closer to Lebanon than any other or would you have some just thoughts on what the Syrian policy on refugees would be like.

MR. SHIKAKI: It won't be the same as Lebanon. The most important factor, I think, and this was our working hypothesis and I think given our findings it would

probably be accurate in Syria. The equality of the civil level in Syria means they have more ownership, that their relationship with the state is a positive relationship, and that unless this is to change I would expect a large number—much larger than we have seen in Lebanon—to want to stay in Syria. And I think I would be very careful about how many would come to the Palestinian state motivated by national identity. Having dealt with the issue of Lebanon unsuccessfully, I don't want to predict what would happen there.

MR. TELHAMI: Great. Mr. Arikat.

SAID ARIKAT: Khalil, let me understand what you're saying correctly. Now this whole thing was premised on the fact that the right of return is accomplished, it's guaranteed exactly as worded in the UN resolution. So that is after accomplishing the right of return. That's one. Second –

MR. SHIKAKI: More than that. Based on our findings that overwhelming majority – more than 95 percent insist on having it.

MR. ARIKAT: Okay. So the one common denominator that they all agree on is that the right of return is unquestionable on this issue.

MR. SHIKAKI: Yes.

MR. ARIKAT: Second, did you conduct the survey among the refugees in the state of Israel? There –

MR. SHIKAKI: No.

MR. ARIKAT: There are 250-300,000 Palestinian refugees from (unintelligible). Those who were moved on the basis of security and were never allowed back to their homes and so on, and how will that impact it? And third, where can we find the exact questionnaire in Arabic? Word-for-word. Thank you.

MR. SHIKAKI: The exact questions will be posted on our website. We have now something on the website which is a summary of all the findings. I hope within a week we will have everything else and you will be able to read all the questions, the exact wording of the questions.

But let me just comment on your first question. This is all based on the assumption that the right of return is indeed guaranteed. Our basic conclusion from all of this is that this is very significant because given these figures the issue is negotiable. Israel does not take a great deal of risk by recognizing the right of return. The Palestinians cannot afford not to have the right of return guaranteed at the negotiating table, because now more than 95 percent want it. Palestinian Authority is not in a position to give it up. Israel is in a position to take that risk and the Palestinians are in a position to be very flexible when it comes to the practical issue of how many people

might want to go to Israel under what conditions. For example, the issue of citizenship. The Palestinian state can say, "We will accept anybody going to Israel and becoming Israeli-Palestinian citizen. This is only 1 percent of those refugees want to become Israeli citizens, so there is a great deal of flexibility on the part of the Palestinian authority with regard to the practical issues.

One thing is certain. The risks to Israel at the negotiating table, accepting the right of return at the negotiating table, is minimal.

MR. : -- The question that I think is missing and I'd like to know if -- I mean, there was one indication I think in the answers you gave that may indicate that, but there is a very basic attitudinal question, so to speak, which is would refugees view a pragmatic, let's call it, solution such as moving to the Palestinian state as an end of conflict, end of claims solution? And why wasn't that question asked as such?

MR. SHIKAKI: There was no direct question that dealt with that. One of the reasons why we wanted to ask about the UNRWA had to do with that, and why this was an open-ended question? Because we wanted to get an answer an indirect answer to that question. We wanted to know whether there were other questions about whether refugee camps should remain or not remain. Our purpose was to try and get an answer -- an indirect answer to your question. Except for those who wanted, who didn't want anything to do with these options, those who were willing to choose an option viewed this as end of conflict, as end of all claims. I can't say it with certainty, because I did not have a direct question there, but the indirect answers indicate that they thought as end of all claims.

MR. TELHAMI: George.

GEORGE HISHMEH: I have a point and then a question. The first is -- George Hishmeh. The refugees, the UNRWA refugees are the only people who receive rations. Isn't that the case? People registered with UNRWA?

MR. SHIKAKI: For the most part most do not receive rations anymore. Some still do, but UNRWA no longer gives rations to every refugee.

MR. HISHMEH: Do you have a figure for how many Palestinians are registered with UNRWA versus Palestinians.

MR. SHIKAKI: Yes. Based on the results, yes, but only in the countries that we have --

MR. HISHMEH: What's the percentage?

MR. SHIKAKI: Ninety-eight percent in the West bank; 91 in Jordan -- 91 in Lebanon, 92 in Jordan. Percentage.

MR. HISHMEH: My question is: are you going to be holding these similar events in Lebanon and Jordan about this?

MR. SHIKAKI: Yes. Absolutely. We would –

MR. HISHMEH: And could you explain what is the significance of the incident you had in Ramallah, if anything?

MR. SHIKAKI: On that I'd have to spend a lot more time explaining the results now rather than explaining the significance of the results to people. That's essentially what it has done, because a lot of people in the West Bank and Gaza, and in the Arab world in general today, have a very confused idea of what the results are and we need to go out time and time again and explain what the results are. Because there are people who whether deliberately or not deliberately are trying to confuse the issue and just put out stories that are completely untrue.

MR. TELHAMI: Alan.

ALAN MAKOVSKY: Khalil, you had a couple at the end – on the last slide you distinguished between camp residents and other refugees and among those who chose returning to Israel; but I wondered, could you speak more broadly about differences between camp-refugees and camp residents and non-camp residents in the survey?

MR. SHIKAKI: One of our basic hypotheses was based on all the surveys that I has done in the 10 years. I was arguing all the time that the refugee identity is very weak. There is no such clear, distinct identity that the refugees feel that makes them different from the rest of the society. I was arguing this all the time because I just couldn't find much differences between refugees and non-refugees except for those differences that are based on socio-economic conditions.

MR. MAKOVSKY: Are you talking about between refugees and non-refugees or camp residents and non-camp residents.

MR. SHIKAKI: The differences between camp residents and non-camp residents have also to do with the same thing. That is, the differences are based on socio-economic conditions. Those who live in the camps do so for the most part because they cannot get out of the camps. Those who move out of the camps do so because they have the ability to do so, so they are socially and economically better off than those who remain in the camps. There might still be some people who stay in the camps because they feel that it's very important to send a political message of some sort, but for the most part I would say this is a small minority. And so any differences that we have found with regard to the political issues have more to do with the socio-economic conditions of the refugees, whether inside or outside the camps, only.

MR. TELHAMI: Yes.

KHALED ABDEL KAREEM: Hi. Khalid Abdel Kareem with the Egyptian News Agency. I just want to know if you expected that kind of negative reaction which followed the findings. Is it just moved spontaneously? Is it moved by some people back in the Palestinian areas? That's one thing.

The other thing is: what would you say about people who have this idea that the findings are playing into the hands of people who just say that the Palestinians should not expect to have this right of return outright? Especially that the findings were twisted in a way, or misread in a way, as, you know, the Palestinians do not want the right of return.

And that's it. Thank you.

MR. SHIKAKI: With regard to the first question, I don't have clear evidence as to who was behind the riot that took place. We know that part of the reason for it was the misinformation that was spread by some groups. Why they have done that remains unclear to me. I still don't know the identity of those who have been spreading the false information about the results, but certainly the riot was motivated by the fear that these results were counter to the intuition of the greatest number of people. That is, when somebody says, "Ninety-five percent of the refugees are willing to renounce the right of return," this was one of the leaflets that were distributed, that indicates, of course that's the exact opposite of what we have found. That is probably a deliberate attempt to misinform the public and to create that kind of riot. And maybe the purpose was simply to send a political message about the issue of the refugees. There is a feeling that within the Palestinian political environment there is now a growing softness on the issue of refugees, and I think these groups perhaps wanted to send a signal that that softness should stop. There shouldn't be any softness with regard to this issue.

With regard to your second question, my objective is to get out the desires and wishes of the refugees to the open, so that those negotiators, those planners, and everybody else would get to now what the attitudes, needs, and desires of the refugees are. Regardless of the consequences of what happens after, we have known the facts. As a person who deals with the political analysis as well, I see the results as strengthening the position of the refugees, or those refugees who would want the Palestinian Authority to insist on the right of return on two counts. One, because the overwhelming majority wants and insists on the right of return, and that means the Palestinian Authority cannot ignore that. A second is the fact that Israel can afford to do it. This is the – perhaps the most important outcome and is the surprising fact that only a small minority want Israeli citizenship or want to return to Israel. And that means the risk to Israel is much less than Israel have told us or is told itself. I hope that there will be more surveys done, because the Israelis might not have confidence in these results and might want to see more surveys done before they would begin to have a second thought about their position with regard to the right of return. But what the results indicate to the Israelis is that they can afford to recognize the right, so I would say from a negotiating position I – if I was a negotiator I would feel this is very useful for me because I – knowing that I cannot give up the right of return at the negotiating table, I now can tell the Israelis, "Look guys, we can't do it. You can. You can give the right of return and the risks you are taking are not

tremendous. This is not a suicide at all. By no means will this in any way, shape, or form affect the demographic balance in Israel.”

MR. TELHAMI: Yes. Please identify yourself.

MR. : I’m Antoine. Your survey was fascinating. I have two quick questions. As a social scientist would you be willing to speculate, and I’d really like you to speculate on two things. One is if the survey was not with the head of household, but was with the wife of the head of household, would that be materially different? Second, on the question of first choice and refusal of all options: if you would have taken the next generation would that number in your opinion have been significantly higher or lower?

MR. SHIKAKI: It’s not easy to speculate. If this was with the wife of the household, I think wives in general tend to, in traditional societies, tend to defer to the head of the household, to the husband. And if they know what the husband’s position is, they would tend to in fact tell us what they think he would tell us. So this would be my view: if they were aware of the position of the husband, and I would imagine they would be, then they would be telling us the same thing as the head of the household would be telling us.

For the younger people it might –

MR. : Even if the interviews with the refugee women would be done separately?

MR. SHIKAKI: I would say with the wives, yes. But now women is different, because it could be younger women. That’s a different issue. Age is very important I think, but not wife or husband. Wife and husband – again this is a traditional society; we have found that women in general tend to defer to men and to leaders and a head of household is a leader in this case and they would tend to defer to him.

For the age, I think this is more difficult to speculate on the question of age, and I would say that it probably – we would probably have found a much larger percentage wanted to emigrate to a third country if they had the choice. And I would also say we would have a much larger percentage who would say none of the above. In general we have tended to find that the younger people tend to be much more opposed to the peace process than the older people.

MR. TELHAMI: Khaled Dawould.

KHALED DAWOUD: Khaled Dawould from Al-Ahram newspaper. I just wanted to confirm the figure of the number of Palestinian refugees that you expect to return to inside Israel for the aid itself. This is just a small question.

The second thing: how do you think we can solve this problem of Israel's refusal to admit the right of return as a basic premise? I mean, could this be by presenting assurances – certain assurances, or how could this be solved?

MR. SHIKAKI: The figures for those wanting to live in Israel after they have the right of return overall is 10 percent in all the countries based on the numbers. Distributed 13 percent on the West Bank/Gaza, 5 in Jordan, and 23 in Lebanon.

How do we deal with this at the negotiating table? As I said, the basic – I believe the basic distribution of responsibility here would be the following: Israel with the recognition of the right, the Palestinians with the flexibility on the application of the right. This, I believe, is a fair distribution of responsibility based on the results of this survey.

MR. TELHAMI: Marvin will be the last question.

MARVIN FEUER: Thank you Shibley. As you know very well, human opinion is malleable and hopefully in a situation of peace if people were turned back to Israel they will find a very successful return. And as you've indicated as well, where relatives are successful in moving to America or to Europe, other relatives would like to follow. Is your concept that as you structure a process that people will have one choice one time and then would be able to emigrate elsewhere only on the basis of the acceptance of the host governments, so that this is structured, as it were, in one moment of time? That the Palestinian government would offer the community one opportunity to make a choice and based on your survey, which of course is a snapshot of current opinion, that this would be the determination at that juncture?

MR. SHIKAKI: This is one of the issues that I think, I would imagine there would be flexibility on the Palestinian side. Depending on whose concerns are higher, I think in this case if Israel is concerned that people may change their mind and more wanting to go to Israel, that's the assumption. I would make the other assumption: people going to Israel feeling the discrimination and not wanting. But assuming that this was the balance of interests or stakes here, I would say the Palestinians are in a position to be more flexible on it based on the results. The results indicate a greater flexibility on the practicality of this – the application, but a solid determination on the issue of the moral principle matter. And so I would consider this to be one of those issues that are more practical rather than principle.

MR. TELHAMI: Well, on behalf of the Saban Center it's been a great pleasure to host you, and I also want to thank you for all the invaluable work you've been doing for all of us. Thanks very much. (Applause.)

(END)