

# افغانستان آزاد – آزاد افغانستان

AA-AA

چو کشور نپاشد تن من مباد بدین بوم و بر زنده یک تن مباد  
همه سر به سر تن به کشتن دهیم از آن به که کشور به دشمن دهیم

[www.afgazad.com](http://www.afgazad.com)

[afgazad@gmail.com](mailto:afgazad@gmail.com)

European Languages

زبانهای اروپایی

[Philip Weiss](#)

Sender: Farah-Notash

18.03.2019

## *Don't accept the rules for how to criticize the Israel lobby*

[US Politics](#)

A maddening element of the Ilhan Omar controversy is all the experts offering instruction on The right way and the wrong way to criticize the Israel lobby. Why must someone who sees a dreadful faction working to skew US policy-making walk on eggshells when attacking it? Do the Parkland students hold back about their target lobby? Do advocates for abortion rights issue rules of rhetorical niceness when they see the enemy gathering across the Supreme Court plaza?

Oh– but you are talking about Jewish influence.

Actually we have made that distinction: we are talking about Zionist influence.

Oh, but don't you see, 92 percent of American Jews are Zionists. The overwhelming preponderance of the community. So you are taking on *a Jewish interest*, our right to a state in our “ancestral homeland” (to quote liberal Zionist lecturers [Batya Ungar-Sargon](#) and [Tom Friedman](#)).

I don't accept the restrictions. I think the Israel lobby is a baleful influence that has helped to make the Middle East a violent neighborhood and to involve the U.S. in quagmires; and so we need to talk about it. It's too important not to. And if you accept all the rules, it means you will never really take on the lobby out of fear of saying the wrong thing about money or allegiance and being labeled an anti-Semite. Which is sort of the point, right?

Here, for the faint of heart, is my quick list of instances in which the Zionist lobby skewed US foreign policy at the highest level, going back to Israel's creation.

1. *Truman and the recognition of Israel.*

In recognizing Israel, Harry Truman reversed FDR's promise to the Saudis not to do so, and overrode his own conviction that religion and state should never be joined.

[John Judis's book](#), “*Genesis: Truman, American Jews and the Origins of the Arab/Israeli Conflict*” says that American Zionist pressure was essential to formulating Truman's approach. As I wrote in a review:

The core of his investigation is surely the moment in mid-1948 when Truman wanted Israel to stop taking more land by military force beyond the UN's Partition lines and was “disgusted” by the Israeli refugee policy, saying that Jews had turned their own narrative on its head by denying Palestinians the right to return. But Truman folded on these impulses, Judis says, in part because he needed \$100,000 from political donors

Abe Feinberg and Ed Kaufmann – a huge sum in 1948—for a whistlestop campaign trip through the midwest in September 1948 when his campaign was broke and Thomas Dewey was threatening to make him a one-termer.

Those Zionist donors got “unmatched access to the White House,” Judis writes. Israel advocates came and went in the Truman White House and, aware of the State Department’s opposition to the establishment of a Jewish state, dug in whenever it was necessary.

Many of Truman’s meetings on the issue were dominated by political considerations, something Judis says is impossible to imagine taking place in meetings over, say, the Berlin crisis. Indeed, a number of administration officials were actually part of the nascent Israel lobby, and spouting Islamophobia.

Some of these advisers are White House officials, some are members of the Jewish agency, some occupy a “gray area” in between, it hardly matters. Ben Cohen was both advising the Jewish Agency and serving as an American representative to the UN; Robert Nathan was an economist in the Roosevelt and Truman administrations and also working for Chaim Weizmann in Palestine; Max Lowenthal was “a proverbial backroom operator... a fixture at the White House, even though he had no formal position and did not have an office.” Part of Louis Brandeis’s circle of Zionists, Lowenthal drafted memos that went directly to Truman. One said that opposing partition would put the United States “in the ridiculous role of trembling before the threats of a few nomadic tribes.”

## 2. Kennedy and the refugees.

In 1960 Senator John F. Kennedy overcame Zionist apprehensions about his approach to the Middle East— because of his father’s alleged anti-Semitism and because Hubert Humphrey was far better known and liked — by courting US Jewish leaders. Though Kennedy was privately offended by their demands.

The “key incident in the Kennedy wooing,” per Melvin Urofsky’s Zionist book, “We Are One!” was a [meeting](#) in New York after the Democratic convention in July 1960 led by the man who had helped finance Truman’s whistlestop tour. Seymour Hersh tells the story in “The Samson Option”:

“[Governor Abraham Ribicoff of Connecticut said] ‘I told Kennedy I was going to get in touch with Abe Feinberg, who I thought was a key Jew. I arranged a meeting [with Kennedy] in Feinberg’s apartment in the Hotel Pierre and we invited all the leading Jews.’ About twenty prominent businessmen and financiers showed up.

“... The group agreed on an initial contribution of \$500,000 to the presidential campaign, with more to come.

“Kennedy was anything but grateful the next morning in describing the session to Charles L. Bartlett, a newspaper columnist and close friend. He had driven to Bartlett’s home in northwest Washington and dragged his friend on a walk, where he recounted ... the meeting the night before. ‘As an American citizen he was outraged,’ Bartlett recalled, ‘to have a Zionist group come to him and say: “We know your campaign is in trouble. We’re willing to pay your bills if you’ll let us have control of your Middle East policy.”’ Kennedy, as a presidential candidate, also resented the crudity with which he’d been approached. ‘They wanted control,’ he angrily told Bartlett.

“Bartlett further recalled Kennedy promising to himself that if he ever did get to be President, he was going to do something about it”—a candidate’s perennial need for money and resulting vulnerability to the demands of those who contributed...”

Urofsky says that Kennedy reversed the policy of the Eisenhower administration and quietly abandoned Palestinian refugees without saying so.

[As president, Kennedy] recognized that in such areas as refugee repatriation, Arab-Israel negotiations, and plans to divert Jordan River waters for large-scale agriculture and power projects, all of which had become extremely sensitive matters thanks to Eisenhower and [former Secretary of State John Foster] Dulles, no government in Israel could survive which conceded as much as some of the State and Defense departments analysts demanded. What Kennedy did, much of it through [Kennedy lawyer Myer] Feldman, was to signal Israel on how to distinguish between rhetoric and action....

[A]lthough the American government publicly called on Israel to settle the refugee problem and joined in the United Nations censure of Israel after the 1962 retaliatory raids on Syria, the Administration also increased foreign aid, quietly buried a number of potentially dangerous anti-Israel proposals, and entered for the first time into a long-term military-assistance program.

BTW, Kennedy also sought to have the American Zionist Council register as foreign agents with the Department of Justice. Justice and AZC [battled for years over this demand. In 1962 the AZC lost](#), and was required to register – and the AZC vanished, and AIPAC took its place! So the Kennedy administration was questioning the lobby’s allegiance, something Ilhan Omar would be slammed for more than 50 years on.

### 3. Lyndon Johnson and Israeli nukes.

Kennedy had angrily [demanded inspections of Israeli nuclear facilities](#) to make sure Israel wasn’t making a bomb. Lyndon Johnson let the Israelis slide. Israel got the bomb. And it is reasonable to conclude that Johnson gave in on the matter because of his dependence on the Israel lobby.

Johnson came to understand that nuclear nonproliferation “made for bad politics,” Seymour [Hersh wrote](#), because it alienated the Jewish community. “By 1968, the President had no intention of doing anything to stop the Israeli bomb,” Hersh says. So Johnson ultimately suppressed intelligence reports that Israel was becoming a nuclear power.

Johnson was surely way too close to two Israel lobbyists: Arthur Krim, the chair of the Democratic National Finance Committee, and Krim’s wife Mathilde, a scientist and socialite who had lived in Israel and who, like many other members of the Zionist lobby, was not Jewish. The Krims [held Johnson so tight he couldn’t even wriggle](#). They had a room in the White House and built a house on Lake Lyndon B. Johnson in the Texas hill country so as to be near the LBJ ranch. Johnson stayed at the Krims’ house in New York, and in the runup to the ’67 war, Mathilde– was a “key channel” for the Israelis to signal their plans to Johnson and to get signals in return, Helena Cobban writes:

The huge role that Mrs. Krim played in 1967 is well-known to everyone who has seriously studied US-Israeli relations at that time. After all, she was an integral part of a well-oiled pro-Israeli influence movement at the heart of the US political system, and the DC-Tel Aviv signaling process that she was part of worked strongly in Israel’s favor to transform not just the Middle East but the whole shape of global politics.

In his book on the 1967 war, former Time correspondent Donald Neff said that the Krims’ influence swayed American policy: Johnson “left himself more open to a passionately partisan voice than was prudent or even healthy during the accelerating crisis.”

For instance, the Saturday before the war began, the Krims were Johnson’s company at a fundraiser at the Waldorf Astoria in New York, intended in part to shore up his support in the Jewish community. Arthur Krim hosted the fundraiser; and Johnson sat between Mathilde Krim and Mary Lasker, another huge contributor to the party. The legendary fundraiser Abe Feinberg was there, and served as a conduit for the Israeli war plans, reports William Quandt in his book *Peace Process*.

And yes: LBJ looked the other way over the Israeli attack on the USS Liberty on June 8, 1967.

#### 4. *Jimmy Carter versus American Jewish groups that sided with a rightwing Israeli PM*

Carter repeatedly put pressure on Israeli leaders to freeze or stop settlements so as to allow the possibility of Palestinian political autonomy in the West Bank and Jerusalem. Those leaders refused to budge, and American Jewish organizations stood by the rightwing government of Menachem Begin. In his recent book on Carter, former aide Stu Eizenstat, who would later serve as Hillary Clinton's liaison to Netanyahu, describes the special role of the lobby in language that makes Ilhan Omar's "allegiance" statement look very reasonable indeed.

[There is a] special triangular relationship among Israel, the American Jewish leadership and the Congress... effectively applying pressure on the presidency to modify U.S. policy to Israel's benefit. This is unique in the annals of diplomacy. There are other countries, such as Britain, that have a favored relationship with the United States but exert their influence through traditional diplomacy rather than relying heavily on a domestic American constituency and lobbying Congress. For a vulnerable, small country like Israel, surrounded by enemies, perfecting this unusual brand of political diplomacy was essential. While it existed to a limited degree before the Carter administration, it was honed to much greater use during our term in office. Since then it has only grown in dimension and intensity to be one of Washington's most effective lobbies.

Carter was to discover this through painful experience.

When Carter announced a summit on the Middle East with the Soviet Union without consulting US Jewish groups, a political firestorm occurred, "orchestrated" by Israeli Foreign Minister Moshe Dayan, Eizenstat says. "The American Jewish leadership went into open war against the president in ways rarely seen before or since."

In October 77 Dayan told Carter, "I think you have a problem on your hands, Mr. President. And I can perhaps help you out with it." Eizenstat says Dayan could only have been so brazen because he had the lobby on his side.

This was an amazing intrusion into domestic politics by a foreign minister, even from a friendly country. But it had clearly been based on Israel's assiduous cultivation of American Jewish groups and Congress, and left no doubt how closely Middle East policy is intertwined with domestic politics...

It is difficult to imagine the foreign minister of any country being as blunt to the leader of its major benefactor...

Carter continued to insist on opposing settlements, and when he did so at the U.N. in spring 1980, the move revived Ted Kennedy's primary challenge, thanks to the lobby. That challenge helped damage Carter, who lost to Reagan in the fall.

#### 5. *George H.W. Bush calls out the lobby.*

The late President Bush opposed settlements ferociously, and a political legend has developed that the opposition caused him to lose the '92 election. Even Tom [Friedman has espoused that view](#):

[A]s you know, President Bush the first stood outside the White House one day and said I'm one lonely man standing up against the Israel lobby. What happened as a result of that... is that Republicans post Bush I, and manifested most in his son Bush 2, took a strategic decision, they will never be out pro-Israel'd again. That they believe cost them electorally a lot.

David Steiner, the former president of AIPAC, recalls making Bush pay for his stance, in a [secretly recorded phone call](#) in October 1992, as Bush ran for reelection.

Steiner: I met with [U.S. Secretary of State] Jim Baker and I cut a deal with him. I got, besides the \$3 billion, you know they're looking for the Jewish votes, and I'll tell him whatever he wants to hear. . . Besides the \$10 billion in loan guarantees which was a fabulous thing, \$3 billion in foreign, in military aid, and I got almost a billion dollars in other goodies that people don't even know about. Do you think I could ever forgive Bush for what he did September 12th a year ago? What he said about the Jews for lobbying in Washington?

#### 6. *Bill Clinton and Israel's lawyers.*

AIPAC's Steiner said he had "full confidence" that Clinton loved Jews more than Bush and would extend the loan guarantees despite the Israeli settlements.

We gave two employees from AIPAC leave of absences to work on the campaign. I mean, we have a dozen people in that campaign, in the headquarters... In Little Rock, and they're all going to get big jobs. We have friends. I also work with a think tank, the Washington Institute. I have Michael Mandelbaum and Martin Indyk being foreign policy advisers. Steve Spiegel—we've got friends—this is my business... [I have] full confidence that we're going to have a much better situation. He's got Jewish friends. A girl who worked for me at AIPAC stood up for them at their wedding. Hillary lived with her. I mean we have those relationships. We have never had that with Bush. Susan Thomases, who's in there, worked with me on the Bradley campaign. We worked together for 13 years. She's In there with the family. They stay with her when they come to New York. One of my officers, Monte Friedkin, is one of the biggest fund-raisers for them. I mean, I have people like that all over the country...

He's going to be with us.... he said he's going to help us. He's got something in his heart for the Jews, he has Jewish friends. Bush has no Jewish friends.

Clinton allowed settlements to continue and though he tried to bring off a peace agreement between Israelis and Palestinians, he ultimately blamed the talks' failure on the Palestinians. And Aaron David Miller would admit later that the U.S. was biased. "For far too long, many American officials involved in Arab-Israeli peacemaking, myself included, have acted as Israel's attorney, catering and coordinating with the Israelis at the expense of successful peace negotiations." In fact, the lead negotiator for the White House, Dennis Ross, has embraced that role: he told a synagogue audience [three years ago that American Jews](#) "need to be advocates for Israel," not Palestine.

#### 7. *George W. Bush and the neoconservatives.*

Bush determined never to be out-Israel'd again, per Tom Friedman; and he appointed many neoconservatives to his Cabinet including several signatories of letters by the Project for a New American Century, which said that Israel's war is our war, and which pushed for war with Iraq. Bush [bragged that the neoconservative American Enterprise Institute](#) was his brain trust— 20 appointments!

Three Bush appointees, Douglas Feith, David Wurmser and Richard Perle, had collaborated in 1996 [on a plan for Benjamin Netanyahu titled \*A Clean Break\*](#), which called for putting the Palestinian issue on ice and helping to end Saddam Hussein's regime.

Feith — a Pentagon official who later earned the appellation "the dumbest fucking guy on the planet" — had also helped found One Jerusalem, which sought to stave off the peace process in the wake of Clinton's Camp David initiative. The group was [supported](#) by Sheldon Adelson, who along with his wife Miriam backed Israeli settlements and promoted Islamophobia. As Connie Bruck [reported for The New Yorker](#), Adelson tried to foil the peace process inside the administration at every turn.

Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice was organizing a major conference in the United States, in an effort to re-start the Israeli-Palestinian peace process, and her initiative

had provoked consternation among many rightward-leaning American Jews and their Christian evangelical allies. ... A short, rotund man, with sparse reddish hair and a pale countenance that colors when he is angered, Adelson protested to Bush that Rice was thinking of her legacy, not the President's, and that she would ruin him if she continued to pursue this disastrous course. Then, as Adelson later told an acquaintance, Bush put one arm around his shoulder and another around that of his wife, Miriam, who was born in Israel, and said to her, "You tell your Prime Minister that I need to know what's right for your people—because at the end of the day it's going to be my policy, not Condi's. But I can't be more Catholic than the Pope."

The neocons pushed for the Iraq war with a storm of books, [Netanyahu pushed for the Iraq war](#) in Congress. And AIPAC [pushed for war, writing](#):

As long as Saddam Hussein is in power, any containment of Iraq will only be temporary until the next crisis or act of aggression.

The book *The Israel Lobby* of 2006 and Tom Friedman agree, the war would not have happened without that pressure. Here's Friedman's analysis, paraphrased by Ari Shavit in Haaretz:

Is the Iraq war the great neoconservative war? It's the war the neoconservatives wanted, Friedman says. It's the war the neoconservatives marketed. Those people had an idea to sell when September 11 came, and they sold it. Oh boy, did they sell it. So this is not a war that the masses demanded. This is a war of an elite. Friedman laughs: I could give you the names of 25 people (all of whom are at this moment within a five-block radius of this office) who, if you had exiled them to a desert island a year and a half ago, the Iraq war would not have happened.

Friedman— who has countered Ilhan Omar by saying, "I am devoted to Israel as a Jewish democracy" — himself supported the Iraq war and said that the [purpose of the war was to smash up](#) something in the Arab world because of suicide bombers in Tel Aviv:

The real reason for this war—which was never stated—was to burst what I would call the "terrorism bubble," which had built up during the 1990s.

This bubble was a dangerous fantasy, believed by way too many people in the Middle East. This bubble said that it was OK to plow airplanes into the World Trade Center, commit suicide in Israeli pizza parlors, praise people who do these things as "martyrs," and donate money to them through religious charities. This bubble had to be burst, and the only way to do it was to go right into the heart of the Arab world and smash something—to let everyone know that we, too, are ready to fight and die to preserve our open society.

#### 8. *Obama caves on the settlements.*

Barack Obama took Jimmy Carter's line at the beginning of his presidency: The settlements must stop. But in the end [settlements thrived](#) under Obama— literally [thousands of settlements were](#) added. Indeed, as he started his run for reelection in 2011, Obama reversed himself on settlements, vetoing a U.N. Security Council resolution opposing them. And when he dared to suggest that the '67 lines should be the basis of partition, he was lectured by Benjamin Netanyahu in the White House in ways reminiscent of Dayan humbling Jimmy Carter.

Indeed, at almost every turn in his foreign policy, Barack Obama was painted into a corner by Netanyahu with the engaged support of the organized Jewish community, his former top [foreign policy aide documented](#).

To be sure, Obama managed to get the Iran Deal despite the opposition by the conservative Israel lobby and Netanyahu. But a, he depended on crucial support from wealthy liberal Zionists— whom he [once characterized jokingly as his "cabal"](#)— and b, party leaders opposed him on the deal and Hillary Clinton would need to distance herself from Obama.

At crucial points, in a foreshadowing of the attacks on Ilhan Omar, Obama [was attacked as an anti-Semite](#) for knocking the influence of “donors” on the Senate, and for impugning the loyalty of Israel advocates when [he said it would be](#) an “abrogation of my constitutional duty” to side with Israel rather than the U.S.

9. *Trump has been Adelson’s puppet.*

Donald Trump [said back in 2015 that Marco Rubio would be](#) Sheldon Adelson’s “perfect little puppet” if Rubio won the Adelson primary— the battle to get the casino mogul’s money— but after Trump won the nomination and the Adelson primary, gaining over \$100 million in backing, he became that perfect puppet himself, abandoning the isolationist policies he had mouthed during his campaign.

The tilt began before he assumed office, when Trump’s transition team approached the [Russians about supporting Israel in defiance of President Obama’s last-minute opposition to settlements at the U.N.](#) Former national security adviser Mike Flynn may soon go to jail for lying about that call.

In due course, Trump would destroy the Iran deal and move the U.S. embassy to Jerusalem, and appoint Adelson favorite John Bolton as national security adviser.

To be clear, Sheldon Adelson and [his wife Miriam have said their “biggest mission”](#) is to protect Israel. Adelson has also said that he wished he had served in the Israeli army, not the U.S. one. Adelson [called on Obama to nuke Iran](#), not cut a deal.

New York Times columnist Timothy Egan [says that Adelson is more powerful than the secretary of state](#), “controlling” U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East. Eli Clifton asserted that [three](#) pro-Israel billionaires influenced Trump to trash the Iran deal.

[T]oday’s unpopular announcement may have been exactly what two of Trump’s biggest donors, [Sheldon Adelson](#) and [Bernard Marcus](#), and what one of his biggest inaugural supporters, [Paul Singer](#), paid for when they threw their financial weight behind Trump. Marcus and Adelson, who are also board members of the Likudist [Republican Jewish Coalition](#), have already received substantial returns on their investment: total alignment by the U.S. behind Israel, next week’s move of the U.S. embassy in Israel to Jerusalem, and the official dropping of “occupied territories” to describe the West Bank and East Jerusalem.

10. *Nancy Pelosi’s allegiance to the lobby.*

The Speaker of the House has been one of Ilhan Omar’s leading critics following Omar’s criticisms of the lobby.

Nancy Pelosi has repeatedly said that Israel’s creation was the greatest achievement of the 20th century, and she [told an Israel lobby group](#) that the Capitol will crumble before the Congress falls out with Israel. Maybe, [just maybe this](#) is about the Democratic Party’s dependence on Jewish Zionist donors? Today AIPAC announced that Pelosi will be groveling later this month.

CONFIRMED ✓: Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi will speak at [#AIPAC2019](#).

[pic.twitter.com/MpbfRRELpO](#)

— AIPAC (@AIPAC) [March 14, 2019](#)

\*\*\*\*

Every one of my allegations of influence is an interpretation based on facts: I’m connecting dots. Others may well connect the dots differently (and leftwingers will say that Israel reflects U.S. global interests). I’d argue that the sum and substance of this record is that the Israel lobby is essentially the foreign ministry of Israel in the capital of the most powerful country in the world and it exists, as it has stated itself, to make sure that there is no daylight between the US government and Israel. And if you think that has ever meant changing Israeli policy, I have a bridge to sell you.

It means shifting U.S. policy.

If you believe this is the pattern, as I do, then why wouldn't you throw yourself into opposing it? And why would you ever fight with one hand behind your back? That's what the lobby wants.

**About Philip Weiss**

Philip Weiss is Founder and Co-Editor of Mondoweiss.net.  
on March 15, 2019

[https://mondoweiss.net/2019/03/accept-criticize-israel/?utm\\_source=Mondoweiss+List&utm\\_campaign=baee70e09d-RSS\\_EMAIL\\_CAMPAIGN&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_b86bace129-baee70e09d-398518125&mc\\_cid=baee70e09d&mc\\_eid=65a7d6fc77](https://mondoweiss.net/2019/03/accept-criticize-israel/?utm_source=Mondoweiss+List&utm_campaign=baee70e09d-RSS_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_b86bace129-baee70e09d-398518125&mc_cid=baee70e09d&mc_eid=65a7d6fc77)