

A Foreign Leader - Netanyahu - Set Trump's Agenda in Middle East, Michael Wolff Bombshell Book Says

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With everyone talking about the Russia story again, fed by Michael Wolff's bombshell new book on the Trump White House, it must be pointed out that the book documents that a foreign leader not Vladimir Putin pushed one of the Trump administration's most grievous foreign policy moves, the decision to move the U.S. embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, as the supposed capital of the Jewish people. Benjamin Netanyahu influenced that decision, and so did Trump mega-donor Sheldon Adelson. And they are also pushing Trump to end U.S. policy of opposing the Israeli occupation.

In his new book, *Fire and Fury*, [excerpted in New York Magazine](#), Wolff reports on a meeting between Trump adviser Steve Bannon and the late Fox News boss Roger Ailes at a dinner party in Greenwich Village a year ago, during the transition after the 2016 election.

Bannon plunged on with the Trump agenda. "Day one we're moving the U.S. Embassy to Jerusalem. Netanyahu's all-in. Sheldon" — Adelson, the casino billionaire and far-right Israel defender — "is all-in. We know where we're heading on this ... Let Jordan take the West Bank, let Egypt take Gaza. Let them deal with it. Or sink trying."

"Where's Donald on this?" asked Ailes, the clear implication being that Bannon was far out ahead of his benefactor.

"He's totally onboard."

"I wouldn't give Donald too much to think about," said an amused Ailes.

Let's be clear that this is a major change in U.S. policy they were talking about (and that Ailes raised an eyebrow about). This week brings new [reports that the U.S.](#) is not going to call the occupation an occupation— well, here are the fingerprints. Benjamin Netanyahu has repeatedly [interfered in U.S. matters of state](#), without an outcry. Sheldon Adelson— who is very close to Netanyahu and a major player in Israeli politics— has been personally [pushing the unification of Jerusalem](#) under Israeli sovereignty since Camp David threatened to divide Jerusalem, in 2000, and using his wealth to do so. George W. Bush reportedly put Adelson off his agenda at that time by saying that he supported Israel but he couldn't be more Catholic than the pope.

The vision of the Middle East here is the neoconservative one supported by Israeli rightwingers: Let Jordan absorb Palestinian population areas in the West Bank, or encourage Palestinians to leave Palestine; let Palestinians vote in Jordan.



Sheldon Adelson (Source: Wikimedia Commons)

Adelson's influence reflects the fact that according to the Wolff book, he was willing to put more money on the possibility of a Trump presidency than Trump himself. Trump, a shrewd businessman, did not believe that he was going to win, and was reluctant to loan the campaign even \$10 million, Wolff says. But Adelson is a fervent ideologue, far wealthier than Trump; and [he and his wife spent upwards of \\$25 million](#) on the Trump campaign and inauguration. So no wonder the embassy decision was announced...

No one gives Adelson credit for this influence because such reports would feed the idea that a rightwing militaristic Israel lobby is influencing U.S. policy in the Middle East, a supposed anti-Semitic canard. But that just happens to be true.

Consider Rabbi Shmuley Boteach's nutty full-page ad in The Washington Post, [attacking the New Zealand singer Lorde](#) as an alleged anti-Semite for choosing not to play Israel. However loony this ad is, it feeds the malignant characterizations of the boycott Israel movement; and who is behind Shmuley Boteach? Why- Sheldon Adelson. Though again, no one reports this. Here's a shot of the Adelson Family Foundation's federal tax reporting from 2016. Over \$1 million to Rabbi Shmuley.



Sheldon Adelson's contribution to Boteach's World Values Network, of over \$1 million (Source: Mondoweiss)

Boteach praised Adelson's [wealth to his face at Yeshiva University](#) four years ago:

Boteach: There has not been a Jewish philanthropist who bestrides the Jewish world as a colossus the way you do since the Rothschild family or maybe Moses Montefiore... there hasn't been someone who has so dominated the field, becoming one of the top ten or so richest men in the world. Thank God. May you continue to prosper.

Adelson: It's better than a poke in the eye with a sharp stick.

By the way, the Wolff book also speaks of cultural tensions in the White House involving Jews. Henry Kissinger saw a “war” between Jews and non-Jews in the White House. As the Forward [notes](#):

Another big theme of the book is the bad blood between Bannon and the president’s family members, Jared Kushner and Ivanka Trump.

“It is a war between the Jews and the non-Jews,” said former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger about the White House.

But if that’s the case, we must ask, Who won? The answer is that Bannon is out, and whatever else he stood for, Bannon represented the antiwar strain in U.S. nationalist thinking. Note Bannon’s angry reference to neoconservative influence, also reported by Wolff. Bannon tells Ailes that it’s hard to find Republican advisers who are not pro-war:

“When you take out all the Never Trump guys who signed all those letters and all the neocons who got us in all these wars ... it’s not a deep bench.”

This is the great divide in U.S. foreign policy. Not over Russia; but over the extent of Israel’s influence. Realists and leftists are opposed to the Israel lobby. And realists are excommunicated by the Republicans, leftists by the Democrats.



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