

Anti-Americanism in Israel

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"In a sign of growing concern in Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu's government over U.S. President Barack Obama's Middle East policies, Minister-without-Portfolio Yossi Peled proposed Israeli sanctions on the U.S. in a letter to cabinet ministers on Sunday.

"In the 11-page letter, obtained by the Jerusalem Post from a minister on Monday, Peled recommends steps Israel can take to compensate for the shift in American policy, which he believes has become hostile to Israel."

According to Peled, the Obama administration will eventually come to realize the error of its ways, but for now the U.S. president seems intent on exerting "intensive pressure to stop building in settlements, remove outposts, and advance the formation of a Palestinian state" – all steps previously [agreed to](#) by Israeli leaders, by the way, and now thrown [in the trash bin](#) by the far-Right nutballs who have captured the Israeli government.

"But in the interim," the *Post* reports, "the minister suggests reconsidering military and civilian purchases from the U.S., selling sensitive equipment that the Washington opposes distributing internationally, and allowing other countries that compete with the U.S. to get involved with the peace process and be given a foothold for their military forces and intelligence agencies."

The irony of someone "reconsidering military and civilian purchases" which are being made, or will be made, with [our money](#) is a real hoot – but the laughs are just starting!

There's just one conceivable answer to the suggestion that Israel should start "selling sensitive equipment that Washington opposes distributing internationally": *when did they ever stop?* The Israelis have been stealing U.S. technology and selling it to the Chinese – for [one example](#) – for years, much to Washington's chagrin. So does this mean they're going to be doing it openly, instead of sneaking around and doing it on the sly?

As for the idea of giving "other countries that compete with the U.S." a military foothold – *go for it*, Yossi! I can hardly wait until the Venezuelan army arrives to guard [the Wall of Separation](#). And no doubt the Chinese – grateful for all the high-tech weaponry you've stolen on their behalf – will be more than happy to guard the illegal settlements you're building (with our tax dollars).

And although the French would be grateful, I'm sure, if the Israelis switched from Boeing to Airbus – as Peled suggests – they probably wouldn't want to get involved militarily. The most you can expect is that they'll displace Jerry Lewis from their national pantheon of comedic culture heroes and install [this guy](#) in his place.

Oh, but we haven't even gotten to the best part of this "news from Bizarro World" item:

"In what may be his most controversial suggestion, Peled recommends intervening in American congressional races to weaken Obama and asking American Jewish donors not to contribute to Democratic congressional candidates. He predicted that this would result in Democratic candidates pressuring Obama to become more pro-Israel."

Israel intervene in U.S. politics – why, what a novel idea! If Peled hadn't suggested it, it would never – [ever](#) – have occurred to me.

Okay, now that you've stopped laughing, just consider: look at all the pro-Israel [money](#) that has flowed into the coffers of U.S. congressional candidates, and you have to wonder – is it really enough? Surely the Israelis can afford to ship a few million of those billions we give them directly back to Washington. And, when you think about it, isn't this a way for the Israelis to make up for their boycott of Boeing and other U.S. providers – by pumping extra millions into the U.S. economy, via the campaign chests of our elected officials? They don't call it a "special relationship" for nothing.

The reality, of course, is that the Israelis and their American [amen corner](#) are already buying up U.S. politicians by the dozen – no, AIPAC doesn't do it directly, they do it through a complex network of local and regional political action committees. As for the idea of Israel and its American friends exerting pressure on a U.S. official in exchange for under-the-table favors – like, say, intervening in an espionage case – well, it is [absolutely](#) [unheard](#) of...

Or is it?

You really can't make this stuff up, and, what's more, you don't have to bother. Because the [last two](#) times the Israelis went in and slaughtered a few thousands of their neighbors, the U.S. Congress voted to hail them as heroes. When it became clear that our president wouldn't be catering to the Israelis' each and every whim, AIPAC [circulated a letter](#) demanding that the White House not "pressure" Tel Aviv – and [more than three-quarters](#) of the U.S. Senate signed it, along with the vast majority of House members.

Congress is already "Israeli-occupied territory," as one wag famously put it, so Peled's suggestion is redundant, to say the least. What I suggest, however, is that they start a campaign to impeach Obama, and, once they've succeeded, they should finance and run their own candidate for the White House. After all, [look how](#) they [got rid of](#) Cynthia McKinney and filled her seat with a suitable replacement.

Yes, the laughs just keep on coming:

"Peled called for the formation of a new body intended to influence American public opinion. The groups he suggests courting include Hispanic Americans and labor unions in industries that benefit from Israeli military acquisitions."

What a great idea: they can call the "new body" the "Elders of Zion" and put out a manifesto entitled – what else? – [The Protocols](#). Then they can translate it into Spanish and pass it out at taco joints and factory gates (those that aren't closed on account of the recession and the Israeli boycott of U.S. goods and services). Now *there's* a winning strategy if ever I saw one!

Seriously, though, what gets me are the disingenuous responses to the Peled sanctions campaign from our pro-Israel lobbyists. “He’s right,” said Shoshana Bryen, senior director for security policy at the Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs, but maybe he shouldn’t talk so loud: “She warned that such expressions could ‘take on a life of their own,’” the *Post* reports, “and that some of Peled’s policy prescriptions could be less than helpful for the Jewish state.”

Well, yes, Bryen does have a point: what if the U.S. suddenly stopped the [\\$3 billion-plus](#) in annual aid to the Jewish state? That might prove less than helpful, to be sure. And, even worse, the idea that our Israeli “allies” are faithless, spoiled, and have an unjustifiable sense of entitlement might take on a life of its own, so to speak – and help ensure that the aid cutoff is total, and permanent.

Not that this will ever happen, you understand, not even if the Israelis bombed Washington with those U.S.-bought-and-paid-for [fighter jets](#). Smarties like Ira Forman are way ahead of Peled on this:

“Democratic political activists in Washington dismissed out of hand Peled’s suggestions, saying that such an approach would have little chance of influencing Congress’ posture on Israel. ‘It shows Yossi Peled is terribly uninformed about U.S. politics,’ said National Jewish Democratic Council Executive Director Ira Forman. ‘He doesn’t understand the politics of the American Jewish community. He doesn’t understand the politics of the Democratic Party.’”

In short, Peled doesn’t understand that the U.S. Congress has already been bought and sold by pro-Israel money – and that any more cash would be redundant. Peled also doesn’t understand that no one is supposed to talk about this, unless they’re an unsuccessful Democratic candidate for president who never had much of a chance anyway. Nothing is ever said, yet the quid pro quo is all-too-well understood. The *Post* reports Forman’s comment that “such efforts, if attempted, would neither shift congressional support away from Obama nor boomerang to hurt Israel’s backing on Capitol Hill,” and I’d lay odds on it. Before any “boomerang effect” sets in, at least in the hallowed halls of Congress, the Israelis would have to set off a couple of nukes in major American cities – and even then, there would probably be a congressional resolution expressing undying support for the “special relationship” in spite of all that bothersome radioactivity.

Okay, we’ve all had our laugh for the day, a light moment that enables us to rise above the depressing everyday reality, but before we return to the mundane world of the distinctly non-amusing, let’s consider just who [Yossi Peled](#) is, and his place in the Israeli political landscape. Surely he’s some fire-breathing extremist, a Kahanist or a supporter of Avigdor Lieberman’s neo-fascist party – right? Wrong. According to the *Jerusalem Post*, he’s a “moderate,” a relative “dove” who’s a Likudnik, albeit on the “left” flank of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s party. In which case, can you imagine what the real extremists are wont to do in response to Obama’s new policy?

For years, we’ve heard about how “pro-American” the Israelis are: why, they’re just like us – a democratic and inherently Western state that is embedded in an anti-American sea. Well, [not anymore](#). Today, the Foreign Ministry of Israel is run by a man who could be compared, with [much justification](#), to the failed painter from Vienna, or at least a Bizarro World Jewish version of the same. Israelis want to deport their Arabs, seize their land, and construct a

“Greater Israel.” What’s more, anti-Americanism is on the rise in Israel – as Peled’s comments suggest – and the most anti-American of them all appear to be those Israeli-American dual citizens who vote in U.S. elections and go to Israel regularly, where Max Blumenthal recently [captured](#) their rabid anti-American sentiments on video.

What I want to know is this: when, oh, when will the American people wake up to the basic absurdity of the “special relationship” – and put an end to it, forever? Their president, it seems, is aware that our national interests are not served by this condition of mutual resentment and dependency. Now that Israel’s true face is showing, how long before all the public relations efforts in the world fail to mask the ugly reality? And the reality is this: Israel has been a [burden](#), not a benefit, to the U.S. and its national interests abroad. By giving the Jewish state our unconditional support, we have, ironically, set ourselves up for some “blowback” from Israel’s direction – and it isn’t pretty, is it?

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