

# “Swiftboating” J Street to Smear Iran Deal as ‘Anti-Israel’

By [Robert Naiman](#)

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Theme: [Media Disinformation](#)

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Opponents of the Iran deal hope to do to the Jewish peace group J Street...

On July 23, the New York Times published an [op-ed](#) by Shmuel Rosner, political editor at the Jewish Journal and a senior fellow at the Jewish People Policy Institute, which made the following claim:

There are American organizations (such as J Street) that support goals that barely any Israeli agrees with, that nevertheless flaunt the pro-Israel label.

No explanation was given of what these goals are, nor was any evidence given that “barely any Israeli” agrees with these goals.

While New York Times editors didn’t make Shmuel Rosner specify what the alleged goals of the avowedly pro-Israel peace group [J Street](#) are that “barely any Israeli” agrees with, context suggests the most obvious explanation: J Street has backed the Obama administration’s diplomacy with Iran and is backing the Iran nuclear deal, and that’s why opponents of the Iran nuclear deal are attacking J Street and saying that J Street’s claim to be “pro-Israel” is dubious.

So let’s assume that this is about diplomacy with Iran and the Iran nuclear deal. (The New York Times should certainly clarify this; you can urge them to do so [here](#).) Should the New York Times have allowed Shmuel Rosner to assert without evidence that J Street’s backing of the Iran nuclear deal represents “barely any Israeli” and calls into question whether J Street is “pro-Israel”?

[Here](#), [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#) are examples of senior members of the Israeli national security establishment speaking in support of the Iran nuclear deal. Think about their American counterparts, and imagine that someone claimed that “barely any American” held a view that all those people held. Would the New York Times print such a claim?

Moreover, polling data indicates that the [majority of American Jews back the deal](#). So if Rosner’s standard for “pro-Israel” is opposition to the Iran nuclear deal, then according to Rosner’s standard, the majority of American Jews would not be “pro-Israel,” which proves that Rosner’s standard would be absurd. If someone claimed that the majority of American Jews are not “pro-Israel,” would the New York Times print that claim?



...what Republican operatives did to Democratic candidate John Kerry's "swift boat" war record.

It is a kind of [swiftboating](#) to claim that J Street is not "pro-Israel" because it backs the Iran nuclear deal, when senior members of the Israeli national security establishment and the majority of American Jews support the deal.

And this swiftboating concerns everyone who supports diplomacy with Iran, because for many congressional Democrats, "J Street supports this" is a marker for "it's relatively safe for congressional Democrats to stand with the Obama administration on this without too much fear of being attacked as 'anti-Israel.'" J Street is protecting Democrats who support diplomacy. The opponents of diplomacy are attacking the J Street shield.

Some people cynically dismiss concerns about the New York Times regarding war and peace: What do you expect from the New York Times? Judy Miller, blah blah blah. This response, while perhaps seeming "radical," is counterproductive to efforts to promote peace. The New York Times has too much power to promote war for people who want less war to ignore it. The New York Times has more power to promote war than most members of Congress. Most members of Congress are pretty jazzed if the New York Times reports something that they say on a single day. The New York Times is shaping debate on war and peace every single day more than most individual members of Congress are on a very good day.

If we want to prevent war in the future, we need to take a "broken windows policing" approach to any hint of warmongering at the Times, and that includes any swiftboating of advocates for diplomacy.

Perhaps you might think: Well, it's an opinion piece, that's that guy's opinion, he's entitled to his opinion.

But the New York Times claims to factcheck its op-eds; indeed, they [factcheck letters to the editor](#). According to the Times, people are not allowed to say whatever they want in the Times, even in an opinion piece.

Critics of the Iran deal are talking about the president of the United States [like this](#). There is a group of people that they are trying to organize and inflame with claims that Obama is "anti-Israel" and the Iran nuclear deal is "anti-Israel" and people who support the Iran nuclear deal are "anti-Israel." The support of J Street for the Iran deal is a big obstacle to

this story line. That's why these people are going after J Street.

*Robert Naiman is policy director at [Just Foreign Policy](#) and president of the board of [Truthout](#). A version of this article appeared on Huffington Post([7/26/15](#)).*

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