

Three US families Fund Half of Netanyahu's Re-election Bid

By [Tony Seed](#)

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On March 5, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu gave a warmongering, backward speech to an extraordinary joint session of the US Congress attacking Iran, Syria, Yemen and Lebanon.

The US Congress [interrupted](#) the Israeli's speech 39 times to applaud. Twenty three of these times were standing ovations. Over 10 minutes of the 40-minute speech consisted of applause. In other words, 27 per cent of the time Netanyahu spoke was actually the US Congress applauding and doing standing ovations.

Israel gets over \$3 billion a year in mostly U.S. military aid. More than 90 per cent of Netanyahu's election campaign money comes from the United States, according to records published by Israel's State Comptroller Office ... "Why get money from Israel when you can get it from the U.S.?" SHEERA FRENKEL in [BuzzFeed News](#)

But then Netanyahu (Nitai) also holds American citizenship. Those currently asking whether the US Congress represents the USA or Israel might ask just whom this Zionist represents.

TEL AVIV — Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu kicked off his re-election campaign Monday night with all the fanfare expected of the second longest serving PM in the country's history.

The darkened room with flashing lights and pumping techno music looked more like a club than a political event, and Likud Party activists danced with the assurance that their party leader would, once again, be prime minister.

"Thank you, rich Americans!" said Yonatan Benizri, a 27-year-old Likud activist. "The rest of the parties are still scrambling and Netanyahu has a party."

As Netanyahu kicked off his campaign, [records](#) from Israel's State Comptroller Office showed he had raised just over 1 million shekels (roughly \$250,000), with more than 90% of it coming from donors in the United States.

"It's nothing new," said Benizri, who volunteers with the Likud in the Tel Aviv area. "Why get money from Israel when you can get it from the U.S.?"

Over Netanyahu's last three elections, [publicly available records](#) show that he has

consistently received over 90% of his campaign contributions from the United States, with a majority of the money coming from just a handful of families in California and Florida.

The vastly wealthy Falic family of Florida, owners of the Duty Free Americas airport shops as well as several high-end fashion brands, have been one of the most consistent donors to Netanyahu's campaign. Four members of that family were Netanyahu's top contributors, with each giving close to the maximum of \$11,500 per donor. Closely following them were the Book family of New Jersey, owners of Jet Support Systems, with four members each contributing \$11,000 each, and the Schottenstein family, owners of the American Eagle fashion chain, whose four members donated \$10,000 each.

Altogether, those three families account for just over half of Netanyahu's campaign contributions. The families did not respond to BuzzFeed News' request for comment.

"He doesn't even have to ask and they give," said one Likud Party campaign adviser, who asked not be named as he was not approved to speak to the media. "Their pocketbooks are always open for Netanyahu."

The adviser said it freed up time for Netanyahu, who did not have to make the rounds at formal events and dinners to collect donations.

"There is a well-established network in the U.S. through the group American Friends of the Likud, which is connected to people who care about Israel and its future," said the adviser.

That group has led several trips for Israeli Likud politicians to Washington, D.C., where they can fundraise and network with pro-Israel groups. Several of the Likud's top politicians, including Danny Danon, Interior Minister Gilad Erdan, and Defense Minister Moshe Ya'alon, also rely heavily on U.S. donors.

**Sheera Frenkel is a Middle East correspondent for BuzzFeed News.*

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Fifth columnist?

Netanyahu did his first grade in Israel; second and third in the U.S.; fourth through eighth in Jerusalem; high school in suburban Philadelphia; military service in Israel; B.A. and M.A. at MIT. He held dual citizenship, which enabled him to travel freely between both countries, study in the U.S., receive federal loans to cover his education costs at MIT and work legally. Like every U.S. citizen, Netanyahu has a social security number, a credit account, and numerous other files in a variety of government offices.

In June 1973, during his studies at MIT, Netanyahu submitted a petition to the Boston court, asking to change his name from Netanyahu to Nitai; "I prefer a shorter name," he wrote on the request form. The petition was approved.

Neve Gordon, "Spook, Terrorist or Criminal? America's Mysterious Files on Netanyahu," [*Washington Report on Middle East Affairs*](#), October 1996, pg. 11

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U.S. capital drives Netanyahu

Sheldon Adelson, the casino tycoon who [has proposed nuking Iran](#), was in the gallery as Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu delivered his “State of the Union” speech to a rapt and rapturous U.S. Congress....

But Sheldon Adelson was not only sitting in the House gallery on Tuesday because of the strings he pulls here in the United States. He is also the Daddy Warbucks of Israel and Benjamin Netanyahu is yet another of his beneficiaries – not to mention an ideological soulmate.

Although campaign finance reform laws are much more strict in Israel than here in the United States, Adelson’s wealth has bought him what the historian and journalist Gershom Gorenberg calls “[uniquely pernicious](#)” influence.

[Adelson owns the daily Israel Hayom](#), a leading newspaper, as well as *Makor Roshon*, the daily newspaper of Israel’s Zionist religious right and NRG, a news website. He gives *Israel Hayom* away for free in order to promote his hardline views – the headline in the paper the day after Obama’s re-election was “The US Voted [for] Socialism.”

More important, he uses the paper to bang the drum incessantly for Netanyahu and his right-wing Likud Party, under the reign of which Israel has edged closer and closer to theocracy. [As Hebrew University economist Momi Dahan put it](#): “De facto, the existence of a newspaper like *Israel Hayom* egregiously violates the law, because [Adelson] actually is providing a candidate with nearly unlimited resources.”

Sheldon, meet Rupert.

In fact, as Israel’s March 17 election approaches, Adelson has increased the press run of [Israel Hayom’s weekend edition by 70 per cent](#). The paper says it’s to increase circulation and advertising, but rival newspaper *Ha’aretz* reports, “Political sources are convinced the extra copies are less part of a business plan and more one to help Netanyahu’s re-election bid.”

Bill Moyers and Michael Winship, “The big money behind Netanyahu,” [Consortiumnews.com](#), March 5, 2015

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