

U.S. Republicans hit back after leak of Sarkozy-Obama exchange on Netanyahu

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A day after Presidents Sarkozy and Obama get caught deriding PM over a 'hot mic', Republicans make very clear who they feel is no friend of Israel.

It didn't take long for Republicans to sharpen their talons a day after French President Sarkozy's embarrassing exchange with President Obama became public knowledge.

The Republicans immediately incorporated the story into a narrative of attack against President Obama, questioning his commitment to Israel.

In a formal statement, Republican presidential hopeful Mitt Romney said Wednesday that "President Obama's derisive remarks about Israel's Prime Minister confirm what any observer would have gleaned from his public statements and actions toward our longstanding ally, Israel."

"We cannot have an American president who is disdainful of our special relationship with Israel," said Romney in the statement.

Republican presidential hopeful Michele Bachmann called on President Barack Obama Tuesday to apologize to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu for the unflattering exchange.

"I call on President Obama to immediately apologize to Prime Minister Netanyahu, and I also believe that the president should demonstrate leadership and demand that the French President Sarkozy do the same," Bachmann said

It's hard to imagine that other contenders such as Texas Governor Rick Perry or Newt Gingrich will miss a chance to take a jab at Obama for his remarks during Wednesday's Republican debate, set to take place in Detroit.

But even Republicans who aren't seeking the country's highest office strongly criticized the president's comments. Illinois Congressman Joe Walsh said that Obama has a pattern of "throwing American allies under the bus."

Walsh, who demanded that Obama apologize publicly to Netanyahu and the Israel people stated that the President's comments proved "once again... that President Obama is no friend to Israel. For him Israel is only a political matter to help him get re-elected."

Obama wasn't given any mercy on the blogosphere, either. Republican Jewish Coalition's

CEO Matt Brooks wrote in his blog that the sentiments expressed by Obama over a 'hot mic' will "not exactly come as a surprise", and that only the National Jewish Democratic Council (NJDC) still "tries to pretend that there is a friendly working relationship between President Obama and Prime Minister Netanyahu."

White House Spokesperson Jay Carney confirmed the Sarkozy-Obama story on Tuesday, although he refused to comment on the controversial statements, instead choosing to reemphasize the President's position vis-à-vis peace negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians.

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