

RELEASE IN
PART B6

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From: sbwhoeop [redacted]
Sent: Sunday, March 14, 2010 11:52 PM
To: H
Subject: H; fyi. Sid

H: Assume you have seen the "Petraeus briefing story" or otherwise are familiar with its contents. In any case, here it is. It was blazoned atop the Foreign Policy website, the most widely read site on international affairs daily, owned and published by the Washington Post. Below the piece is a note by its writer about his sourcing that appeared on a small website elsewhere. Also, I've included an article by Max Blumenthal, who spends his time on this issue and plans to move to Israel for about 6-8 months to write a book. He tracks a lot of things that do not appear in the mainstream press. Sid

http://mideast.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2010/03/14/the_petraeus_briefing_biden_s_embarrassment_is_not_the_whole_story

The Petraeus briefing: Biden's embarrassment is not the whole story

Posted By Mark Perry [redacted] Saturday, March 13, 2010 -

On Jan. 16, two days after a killer earthquake hit Haiti, a team of senior military officers from the U.S. Central Command (responsible for overseeing American security interests in the Middle East), arrived at the Pentagon to brief Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Adm. Michael Mullen on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The team had been dispatched by CENTCOM commander Gen. David Petraeus to underline his growing worries at the lack of progress in resolving the issue. The 33-slide, 45-minute PowerPoint briefing stunned Mullen. The briefers reported that there was a growing perception among Arab leaders that the U.S. was incapable of standing up to Israel, that CENTCOM's mostly Arab constituency was losing faith in American promises, that Israeli intransigence on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict was jeopardizing U.S. standing in the region, and that Mitchell himself was (as a senior Pentagon officer later bluntly described it) "too old, too slow ... and too late."

The January Mullen briefing was unprecedented. No previous CENTCOM commander had ever expressed himself on what is essentially a political issue; which is why the briefers were careful to tell Mullen that their conclusions followed from a December 2009 tour of the region where, on Petraeus's instructions, they spoke to senior Arab leaders.

"Everywhere they went, the message was pretty humbling," a Pentagon officer familiar with the briefing says. "America was not only viewed as weak, but its military posture in the region was eroding." But Petraeus wasn't finished: two days after the Mullen briefing, Petraeus sent a paper to the White House requesting that the West Bank and Gaza (which, with Israel, is a part of the European Command -- or EUCOM), be made a part of his area of operations. Petraeus's reason was straightforward: with U.S. troops deployed in Iraq and Afghanistan, the U.S. military had to be perceived by Arab leaders as engaged in the region's most troublesome conflict.

[UPDATE: A senior military officer denied Sunday that Petraeus sent a paper to the White House.

"CENTCOM did have a team brief the CJCS on concerns revolving around the Palestinian issue, and CENTCOM did propose a UCP change, but to CJCS, not to the WH," the officer said via email. "GEN Petraeus was not certain what might have been conveyed to the WH (if anything) from that brief to CJCS."

(UCP means "unified combatant command," like CENTCOM; CJCS refers to Mullen; and WH is the White House.)]

The Mullen briefing and Petraeus's request hit the White House like a bombshell. While Petraeus's request that CENTCOM be expanded to include the Palestinians was denied ("it was dead on arrival," a Pentagon officer confirms), the Obama administration decided it would redouble its efforts -- pressing Israel once again on the settlements issue, sending Mitchell on a visit to a number of Arab capitals and dispatching Mullen for a carefully arranged meeting with the chief of the Israeli General Staff, Lt. General Gabi Ashkenazi. While the American press speculated that Mullen's trip focused on Iran, the JCS Chairman actually carried a blunt, and tough, message on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict: that Israel had to see its conflict with the Palestinians "in a larger, regional, context" -- as having a direct impact on America's status in the region. Certainly, it was thought, Israel would get the message.

Israel didn't. When Vice President Joe Biden was embarrassed by an Israeli announcement that the Netanyahu government was building 1,600 new homes in East Jerusalem, the administration reacted. But no one was more outraged than Biden who, according to the Israeli daily *Yedioth Ahronoth*, engaged in a private, and angry, exchange with the Israeli Prime Minister. Not surprisingly, what Biden told Netanyahu reflected the importance the administration attached to Petraeus's Mullen briefing: "This is starting to get dangerous for us," Biden reportedly told Netanyahu. "What you're doing here undermines the security of our troops who are fighting in Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan. That endangers us and it endangers regional peace." *Yedioth Ahronoth* went on to report: "The vice president told his Israeli hosts that since many people in the Muslim world perceived a connection between Israel's actions and US policy, any decision about construction that undermines Palestinian rights in East Jerusalem could have an impact on the personal safety of American troops fighting against Islamic terrorism." The message couldn't be plainer: Israel's intransigence could cost American lives.

There are important and powerful lobbies in America: the NRA, the American Medical Association, the lawyers -- and the Israeli lobby. But no lobby is as important, or as powerful, as the U.S. military. While commentators and pundits might reflect that Joe Biden's trip to Israel has forever shifted America's relationship with its erstwhile ally in the region, the real break came in January, when David Petraeus sent a briefing team to the Pentagon with a stark warning: America's relationship with Israel is important, but not as important as the lives of America's soldiers. Maybe Israel gets the message now.

Mark Perry's newest book is *Talking To Terrorists*

<http://warincontext.org/2010/03/14/israel-is-putting-american-lives-at-risk/>

My piece on the briefing of Admiral Mullen by CENTCOM senior officers has occasioned a great deal of comment, as well as some skepticism: how accurate is the account? Was it told to me by direct participants in the briefing? Is there any basis for imagining that Petraeus has any kind of hidden agenda, whether that is a desire to expand CENTCOM -- or even hostility towards Israel.

I won't name my sources, even though it's clear to people in the Pentagon -- and certainly to General Petraeus -- who they are. Was I told of the briefing by the briefers themselves? I will only say that there were four people in the briefing -- the two briefers, Admiral Mullen, and Admiral Mullen's primary adviser on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. I know two of the people involved in the briefing. Whether or not they are my sources is something for the reader to determine. The account is not only accurate, it's a precis of what actually happened. There is a lot more to it. The White House, State Department and Pentagon have not denied the account, and for good reason: it's true.

Is there any basis for imagining that Petraeus has any kind of hidden agenda in ordering the briefing?

I have been reporting on the American military for thirty years. My work on the Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Four Stars*, is the authoritative account on the subject. I have deeply rooted contacts in the military that go back thirty years. I have never met a senior military officer whom I do not admire. There is no greater insult than to believe that General Petraeus or any other senior American military officer would use the lives of American soldiers as a lever to enhance their own political future. My sense is that General Petraeus neither likes nor dislikes Israel: but he loves his country and he wants to protect our soldiers. The current crisis in American relations with Israel is not a litmus test of General Petraeus's loyalty to Israel, but of his, and our, concern for those Americans in uniform in the Middle East.

It is, perhaps, a sign of the depth of "the Biden crisis" that every controversy of this type seems to get translated into whether or not America and its leaders are committed to Israel's security. This isn't about Israel's security, it's about our security.

<http://maxblumenthal.com/2010/03/pastor-hagee-and-netanyahus-lovefest-on-eve-of-bidens-arrival-in-israel/>

Netanyahu and Pastor Hagee's Lovefest on Eve of Biden's Arrival in Israel

On 03.09.10, By Max

(Videos recorded by Rachel Tabachnick; more videos coming shortly.)

Vice President Joe Biden was greeted in Jerusalem with the announcement that the Israeli Interior Ministry approved the construction of 1600 new homes in Occupied East Jerusalem contrary to U.S. wishes and complicating Biden's mission to help jump start the peace process. But Biden should have known that Prime Minister Bibi Netanyahu intended to upset his plans by Netanyahu's appearance with John Hagee.

The day after a series of talks between US Special Envoy for the Middle East George Mitchell and Netanyahu, and a day before Biden's arrival, Netanyahu appeared onstage with Pastor John Hagee in Jerusalem. The occasion was Hagee's Night To Honor Israel, an event the far-right Texas-based preacher arranged to tout his ministry's millions in donations to Israeli organizations and to level bellicose rhetoric against Israel's perceived enemies.

At the gathering, Hagee called Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad "the Hitler of the Middle East" and denounced the Goldstone Report as "character assassination by an unbiased and uninformed committee."

Netanyahu welcomed the crowd of 1000 American evangelicals to Jerusalem, a city he described as "the undivided, eternal capitol of the Jewish people. Then, he told them, "I salute you! The Jewish people salute you!" He used the rest of his speech to call for "tough, biting sanctions" against Iran that "bite deep into its energy sector."

Hagee and Netanyahu appear together on stage:

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In the audience were top-level members of the Israeli government, from Ambassador Michael Oren to Jerusalem Mayor Nir Barkat to Deputy Foreign Minister Danny Ayalon. Also present was Rabbi Shlomo Riskin, the chief rabbi of the illegal West Bank settlement of Efrat who gained notoriety for lobbying President Bill Clinton to pardon his friend, fugitive billionaire Marc Rich. Ayalon had stirred controversy days before when he refused to meet with a US congressional delegation brought to Israel by the progressive Jewish group J Street.

Part One of Hagee's speech:

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Part Two:

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Pastor Hagee in Jerusalem 3/8/10 (Part II) from Max J Blumenthal on Vimeo.

Hagee's ceremony featured a 15-minute film highlighting the recipients of donations from John Hagee Ministries that totaled \$58 million since 2001. The recipients included Jewish settlements from the West Bank like Gush Etzion and Shomron, which was involved in promoting an "Obama Hilltop project" that promoted more settlement building and compared Obama to Pharaoh. Hagee also announced funding for a pressure group run by the settlers evacuated from Gush Katif in Gaza in 2005. During Israel's assault on Gaza in 2009, a group of Gush Katif residents lobbied the Israel government to allow them to resettle the Palestinian coastal region.

Who is Hagee funding in Israel?

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Who Is Hagee Funding In Israel? from Max Blumenthal on Vimeo.

The most notable of Hagee's funding recipients was an organization called Im Tirtzu. A student representative of this group appeared in the film to thank Hagee for "help[ing] us to ensure that students in Israel are on the right path, the path of Zionism, the love of Israel, the path of solidarity." Another student called for "the second revolution in Israel."

In February, Im Tirtzu funding a smear campaign against former Knesset member and New Israel Fund Director Naomi Chazan that included posters caricaturing her with a horn on her head. The group misleadingly accused the New Israel Fund of bankrolling 16 human rights organizations that contributed documentation to the Goldstone Report.

The smear campaign led to unsuccessful legislation in the Knesset designed to further cripple already marginalized Israeli human rights groups. Meanwhile, the Jerusalem Post fired Chazan as a columnist without explanation. Gideon Levy, a columnist for Ha'aretz, called Im Tirtzu "a McCarthyite movement" for its attacks on Chazan.

Although CUFI attempted to distance itself from Im Tirtzu's campaign, the organization's appearance during CUFI's Jerusalem ceremony suggested that Hagee would continue to provide it with funding well into the future.

Republican Senator John McCain repudiated the endorsement of Hagee during his 2008 presidential campaign after Hagee's statements describing the Holocaust as a fulfillment of divine prophecy came to light. Hagee has also said that

he believed the anti-Christ was "partially Jewish, as was Adolph Hitler." However, none of Hagee's comments have deterred Israeli government officials from embracing him or accepting his millions in annual charity.

During Hagee's speech, he made no secret of his support for the illegal settlement enterprise that has been the source of difficulties between the US and Israel. "The settlements are not the problem," he boomed from the podium. "The problem is the refusal of Arab leaders to respect the right of Jewish people to live anywhere in the Middle East."

Hagee received a rousing ovation from the crowd and the Israeli government officials seated beside the podium when he proclaimed, "World leaders do not have the authority to tell Israel and the Jewish people what they can and cannot do in the city of Jerusalem. They don't have the authority to tell them what they can and cannot build, who can and cannot live there."

The following day, on March 9, Vice President Joseph Biden arrived in Israel to meet with Netanyahu and officials from the Palestinian Authority. He told reporters after touching down that he saw "a moment of real opportunity."