

RELEASE IN PART
B6

From: H <hrod17@clintonemail.com>
Sent: Monday, June 8, 2009 11:48 AM
To: 'JilotyLC@state.gov'
Subject: Fw: The President's Cairo Speech: Does Israel Need Obama's Tough Love? by Lanny J. Davis

Pls print.

----- Original Message -----

From: Davis, Lanny J.
To: H
Sent: Mon Jun 08 05:35:45 2009
Subject: Fw: The President's Cairo Speech: Does Israel Need Obama's Tough Love? by Lanny J. Davis

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Hi H-

See below. Thought this one would be of particular interest. Got a head-ache trying to write it "fair and balanced."



Working with Elizabeth and Kris to help save the Shanghai Expo 2010. What a mess! You are so lucky to have them.

Best to you and President Clinton.

Lanny

PS. Your greatest fan, Josh, got two hits and threw out a man trying to steal third with a rifle shot throw as catcher, recovering from a past ball, leading to a last inning 6-5 win for his Rec Team league team, which had fallen behind 5-0. You would have been proud!

----- Original Message -----

From: Davis, Lanny J.
To: Davis, Lanny J.
Sent: Mon Jun 08 05:26:18 2009
Subject: The President's Cairo Speech: Does Israel Need Obama's Tough Love? by Lanny J. Davis

The President's Cairo Speech: Does Israel Need Obama's Tough Love?

by Lanny J. Davis

I thought President Obama's speech in Cairo, Egypt, was eloquent, historic, and could well be regarded as one of the most important foreign policy speech ever made by any U.S. president.

Some American Jews do not like Mr. Obama in his speech publicly calling out Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu for refusing to support a two-state solution and a freeze on all settlements. My answer is: Why is this? Mr. Netanyahu is breaking not only with the policies of three prior presidents but of three prior Israeli prime ministers.

On the other hand, many American Jews and Israelis feel strongly that Mr. Obama should better understand that such public scolding of Israel, which breaks with the bipartisan tradition of prior administrations, will only strengthen the hardliners of Israeli (and Arab) politics, and thus, weaken Mr. Netanyahu's ability to make peace, given his already fragile coalition government dependent on right-wing parties.

Most alarming to me were the negative perceptions of the speech that I heard over the weekend from American Jews who are the liberal Democrats, in the president's political base, and support a two-state solution and a freeze on settlements.

I don't share their concerns about Mr. Obama, as I will discuss later. But here are the key facts omitted from the president's speech that led to their anxieties:

1) In his speech the president seemed to compare the plight of the Palestinians to that of American black slaves before the Civil War. This was seen by many American Jews as both inaccurate and insulting. The president failed to note that Israel does not treat Palestinians in any way comparable to the brutality of southern slave owners and task masters.

2) When the president used the word "occupation" about Israel's presence in the West Bank and, before 2005, in Gaza, many American Jews noted that the president ALSO omitted the following facts that would put that word in its proper context:

* Between 1947-1967, Arab nations at any time could have declared a Palestinian state, as Jordan controlled all the West Bank and East Jerusalem during that time period, including the Western Wall, the Temple Mount, the Al-Aqsa Mosque and the Dome of the Rock, and Egypt controlled all of Gaza. Why didn't they?

* The West Bank and Gaza were "occupied" (as was the Golan Heights) only after Israel was attacked by Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, and Egypt in 1967, with its very existence threatened.

* In 1999, under President Clinton's leadership at Camp David, Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak offered the Palestinians an independent state comprising of all of the West Bank, Gaza, and parts of East Jerusalem, and joint control over the holy places. Clearly that would have ended the "occupation." The Palestinian leaders rejected that offer.

* In 2005, Israel unilaterally withdrew its "occupation" of Gaza and dismantled all of its settlements, including using the Israeli military to force resisting Israeli settlers out of Gaza. What followed? The terrorist organization Hamas, whose charter calls for the total destruction of Israel, launched 8,000 rockets and missiles intentionally aimed at and killing innocent Israeli civilians, women and children.

3) The president entirely and inexplicably omitted in his speech any reference to Hamas and Hezbollah, two organizations that have attacked and killed thousands of innocent Israeli civilians and that the U.S. has long declared terrorist. This was so surprising to me that I didn't believe it until I read and re-read the speech.

4) Most Jews on the liberal side of the spectrum agree with Mr. Obama that Jewish settlements on the West Bank must not continue, as they impede the peace process, although there is some debate about allowing natural population growth of current settlements. But he omitted the fact that Israel has more than one million Palestinians living within Israel as citizens -- about 20 % of the population -- with full civil and voting rights and representatives in the parliament. If there is a two-state solution, why can't Jewish settlers remain and even expand their communities as citizens of the new state of Palestine? The president never asked this question.

I found some of these omissions troubling too. But they do not lead me to doubt, even slightly, that Mr. Obama remains pro-Israel and committed to the safety and security of Israel. I believed his words, which seem to have been ignored by many of the critics I heard from:

"America's strong bonds with Israel are well known. This bond is unbreakable. It is based upon cultural and historical ties, and the recognition that the aspiration for a Jewish homeland is rooted in a tragic history that cannot be denied.... Palestinians must abandon violence. Resistance through violence and killing is wrong and it does not succeed."

My conclusion is that the president's omitted those facts because he made the tactical judgment that this was not the moment in history to reargue them. I think he saw this historic moment of his new administration as a way to "hit the re-set button" and show the Muslim world that America can serve as an honest and fair-minded broker to bring about an enduring Israel-Palestine peace -- consistent with Israel's security needs.

And he wanted to show respect and sensitivity to the Muslim world — the opposite of what many think, rightly or wrongly, the prior administration conveyed. He said:

"I'm proud to carry with me the good will of the American people and a greeting of peace from Muslim communities in my country: Assalaamu alaykum."

Such words and the avoidance of certain "hot" facts that evoke past divisive historical arguments inevitably will cause unease in Israel and in the American Jewish community. Maybe, just maybe, it is necessary at this moment in history — and unavoidable — for American Jews and Israelis to endure in the short-term some discomfort with this rhetoric and sympathetic approach to the Arab and Muslim peoples in order to achieve the longer-term and enduring objective of peace that most Israelis and Palestinians crave and need.

I may have my doubts that the president was right to go so far to please his broad Arab audiences. I fear it might embolden Arab hard-liners and extremists. I also think he must simultaneously keep pressure on Iran -- notably to try to impose global sanctions on Iran to prevent it from importing refined petroleum products on which it depends if it won't stop its nuclear weapon program.

But one thing is clear to me: Anyone who truly loves Israel, as I do, should be praying that Mr. Obama turns out to be right and the anxieties of many in the American Jewish community turn out to be without foundation and Mr. Obama's approach leads to true peace in the Middle-East.

As I have written before in this space on this subject: "Blessed be the peacemakers for they shall inherit the earth."

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Lanny J. Davis, a Washington lawyer and former special counsel to President Clinton, served as a member of President George W. Bush's Privacy and Civil Liberties Oversight Board. He is the author of "Scandal: How 'Gotcha' Politics Is Destroying America."

This article appeared in Mr. Davis' weekly column, "Purple Nation," in the Washington Times on Monday, June 8, 2009.

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