

Will Obama Lose the Jewish Vote?

By Samuel L. Blumenfeld

The recent creation of a new political group, Jewish Americans for Sarah Palin, is a bell-weather indication that many, and perhaps most, American Jewish voters may not give Obama the support he will need for his re-election in 2012. The reason, of course, is his strong bias in favor of the Muslim states against Israel and his cool, rude treatment of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Also, disturbing to many American Jewish leaders is Obama's lack of movement against Iran which still threatens to destroy Israel with a nuclear weapon once it has one. Nothing was done in the 1930s by the Allies to prevent Adolf Hitler from arming Germany in preparation for World War II in which millions were killed. Nothing was done in the League of Nations to stop Mussolini from invading Ethiopia or stopping the Nazis from their aggression against Czechoslovakia. And today, the United Nations gives the Iranian president Admendingjad a world platform from which to spew his threats of genocide against a fellow member of the U.N. Since when is it permitted for one member of the United Nations to threaten another member with annihilation? Apparently, when it comes to hating and destroying Jews, anything goes.

Benjamin Korn, the founder of the new group, has recognized that Sarah Palin is an outspoken defender of Israel. She told Barbara Walters, "I don't think that the Obama administration has any right to tell Israel what the Jewish settlements cannot expand." Those words were music to the ears of all of those Christians and Jews who defend Israel's right to build housing in its own capital city, Jerusalem.

Korn describes his organization as "an independent group of academic, religious, and political leaders, dedicated to promoting consideration of Sarah Palin's political positions in the wider Jewish community." Indeed, in March, Norman Podhoretz, former editor of Commentary magazine, wrote in an op-ed piece in the Wall Street Journal that he "would rather have Sarah Palin in the Oval Office than Barack Obama."

To what extent American Jews will abandon the Democrat party and its presidential head in favor of a pro-Israel conservative Republican is to be seen. Obama will probably tone down his negative rhetoric against Israel, but his visceral pro-Islamic tendencies will be difficult to hide. In his speech in Cairo, he kept referring to the "Holy Koran" as the source of religious tolerance and beneficence. He seemed to downplay the Jewish biblical and spiritual attachment to the Holy Land, and he considers East Jerusalem as occupied territory belonging to the Palestinians. But vast majority of Israelis consider Jerusalem to be their undivided capital.

Obama has done nothing to get the Arab states to remove their 62-year boycott of Israel. He has done nothing to get Iraq and its new democratic government to end its state of war against Israel and enter into a peace treaty with the Jewish state. Indeed, Iraq still forbids its citizens to travel to Israel, and has never paid restitution to the Jews who were forced to abandon their property and leave Iraq after the war in 1948.

With the sacrifice of 5,000 American lives to help Iraq achieve its freedom, is it too much to ask the new democratic Iraqi government to end its state of war against Israel? It should be recalled that it was Iraq that sent scud missiles into Israel during the Gulf War even though Israel was not a participant. Where is the American initiative to persuade Iraq to establish peace with Israel? One word from pro-Islamic Obama could go a long way to change this situation.

Korn has also launched a website, JewsforSarah.com. According to the site, “Jewish Americans for Sarah Palin is an independent group of academic, religious, and political leaders, dedicated to promoting consideration of Sarah Palin’s political positions in the wider Jewish community.”

The site went live in mid-April, shortly after Obama suggested the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian dispute was endangering American troops in the Middle East. Jewish support for Palin is gaining traction. Shortly before the 2008 election, Republican vice presidential candidate Palin garnered an approval rating of just 37 percent among Jewish voters in one poll. But *Forward* observes: “Even though American Jews have repeatedly disapproved of her in large numbers in poll after poll, giving her abysmally low approval ratings, her recent high-profile jabs at the president have earned her support from some of the most prominent Jewish conservatives today.”

One of those conservatives, Norman Podhoretz — former editor of *Commentary* — went so far as to say in a March Op-Ed piece for *The Wall Street Journal* that he would “rather have Sarah Palin sitting in the Oval Office than Barack Obama.”

Korn faces a tough challenge in gathering support for Palin among American Jews, considering that she has referred to the United States as a “Christian nation” and questioned the separation of church and state.

But *Forward* notes that “with an increasing number of American Jews anxious about what they see as the undue pressure that Obama is applying to Israel, Korn thinks that more of them will come to see Palin’s value.”