

## **The State and Local Bases of Zionist Power in America**

**James Petras**

### **Introduction**

Any serious effort to understand the extraordinary influence of the Zionist power configuration over US foreign policy must examine the presence of key operatives in strategic positions in the government and the activities of local Zionist organizations affiliated with mainstream Jewish organizations and religious orders.

There are at least 52 major American Jewish organizations actively engaged in promoting Israel's foreign policy, economic and technological agenda in the US (see the appendix). The grassroots membership ranges from several hundred thousand militants in the Jewish Federations of North America (JFNA) to one hundred thousand wealthy contributors, activists and power brokers in the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC). In addition scores of propaganda mills, dubbed think tanks, have been established by million dollar grants from billionaire Zionists including the Brookings Institute (Haim Saban) and the Hudson Institute among others. Scores of Zionist funded political action committees (PAC) have intervened in all national and regional elections, controlling nominations and influencing election outcomes. Publishing houses, including university presses have been literally taken over by Zionist zealots, the most egregious example being Yale University, which publishes the most unbalanced tracts parroting Zionist parodies of Jewish history (Financial Times book review section August 28/29 2010). New heavily funded Zionist projects designed to capture young Jews and turn them into instruments of Israeli foreign policy includes

“Taglit-Birthright” which has spent over \$250 million dollars over the past decade sending over a quarter-million Jews (between 18-26) to Israel for 10 days of intense brainwashing (Boston Globe August 26, 2010). Jewish billionaires and the Israeli state foot the bill. The students are subject to a heavy dose of Israeli style militarism as they are accompanied by Israeli soldiers as part of their indoctrination; at no point do they visit the West Bank, Gaza or East Jerusalem (Boston Globe August 26, 2010). They are urged to become dual citizens and even encouraged to serve in the Israeli armed forces. In summary the 52 member organizations of the Presidents of the Major American Jewish Organizations which we discuss are only the tip of the iceberg of the Zionist Power Configuration: taken together with the PACs, the propaganda mills, the commercial and University presses and mass media we have a matrix of power for understanding the tremendous influence they have on US foreign and domestic policy as it affects Israel and US Zionism.

While all their activity is dedicated first and foremost in ensuring that US Middle East policy serves Israel’s colonial expansion in Palestine and war aims in the Middle East, what B’nai B’rith euphemistically calls a “focus on Israel and its place in the world”, many groups ‘specialize’ in different spheres of activity. For example, the “Friends of the Israel Defense Force” is primarily concerned in their own words “to look after the IDF”, in other words provide financial resources and promote US volunteers for a foreign army (an illegal activity except when it involves Israel). Hillel is the student arm of the Zionist power configuration claiming a presence in 500 colleges and universities, all affiliates defending each and every human rights abuse of the Israeli state and organizing all expenses paid junkets for Jewish student recruits to travel to Israel where they are heavily propagandized and encouraged to ‘migrate’ or become ‘dual citizens’.

### **Method: Studying Zionist Power:**

There are several approaches for measuring the power of the combined Zionist organizations and influential occupants of strategic positions in government and the economy. These include (a) reputational approach (b) self claims (c) decision-making analysis (d) structural inferences. Most of these approaches provide some clues about Zionist potential power. For example, newspaper pundits and journalists frequently rely on Washington insiders, congressional staff and notables to conclude that AIPAC has the reputation for being one of the most powerful lobbies in Washington. This approach points to the need to empirically examine the operations of AIPAC in influencing Congressional votes, nomination of candidates, defeating incumbents who do not unconditionally support the Israeli line. In other words analyzing the Congressional and Executive decision- making process is one key to measuring Zionist power. But it is not the only one. Zionist power is a product of a historical context, where media ownership and wealth concentration and other institutional levers of power come into play and shape the current decision-making framework. Cumulative power over time and across institutions creates a heavy bias in the political outcomes favorable to Israel's organized agents in America. Once again the mere presence of Jews or Zionists in positions of economic, cultural and political power does not tell us how they will use their resources and whether they will have the desired effect. Structural analysis, the location of Zionists in the class structure, is necessary but not sufficient for understanding Zionist power. One has to proceed and analyze the content of decisions made and not made regarding the agenda of Israel's backers operating in the USA. The 52 major Zionists organizations are very open about their claims to power, their pursuit of Israel's agenda and their subservience to each and every Israeli regime.

Those who deny Zionist power over US Mid East foreign policy are left-Zionists namely Noam Chomsky and his acolytes. They never analyze the legislative process, executive decision-making, the structures and activity of the million member Zionist grassroots and the appointments and background of key policy makers deciding strategic policies in the Middle East. Instead they resort to superficial generalizations and political demagoguery, imputing policy to “Big Oil” and the “military-industrial complex” or “US imperialism”. Categories devoid of empirical content and historical context about real existing policy making regarding the Middle East.

### **The Making of Zionist Power in the US Government**

To understand US submission to Israeli war policies in the Middle East one has to look beyond the role of lobbies pressuring Congress and the role of political action committees and wealthy Zionist campaign contributions. A much neglected but absolutely essential building block of Zionist power over US foreign economic, diplomatic and military policy is the Zionist presence in key policy positions, including the Departments of Treasury and State, the Pentagon, the National Security Council and the White House.

Operating within the top policymaking positions, Zionist officials have consistently pursued policies in line with Israel’s militarist policies, aimed at undermining and eliminating any country critical of the Jewish States’ colonial occupation of Palestine, its regional nuclear monopoly, its expansion of Jews only settlements and above all its strident efforts to remain the dominant power in the Arab East. The Zionist policymakers in Government are in constant consultation with the Israeli state, ensuring coordination with the Israeli military (IDF) command, its Foreign Office and secret police (MOSSAD) and compliance with the Jewish State’s political

line. Over the past 24 months not a single Zionist policymaker has voiced any criticism of Israel's most heinous crimes, ranging from the savaging of Gaza to the massacre of the humanitarian flotilla and the expansion of new settlements in Jerusalem and the West Bank. A record of loyalty to a foreign power which even exceeds the subservience of the Stalinist and Nazi fellow travelers in Washington during the 1930's and 1940's.

Zionist policymakers in strategic positions depend on the political backing and work closely with their counterparts in the "lobbies" (AIPAC) in Congress and in the national and local Jewish Zionist organizations. Many of the leading Zionist policymakers rose to power through a deliberate strategy of infiltrating the government to shape policy promoting Israel's interest over and above the interests of the US populace. While a degree of cohesion resulting from a common allegiance to Tel Aviv can account for suspected nepotism and selection, it is also the case that the powerful Jewish lobbies can play a role in creating key positions in Government and ensuring that one of their own will occupy that position and pursue Israel's agenda.

### **Stuart Levey: Israel's Foremost Operative in the US Government**

In 2004, AIPAC successfully pressured the Bush Administration to create the office of Undersecretary for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence (UTFI) and to name its protégé Princeton graduate Stuart Levey to that position. Before, but especially after his appointment, Levey was in close collaboration with the Israeli state and was known as an over the top Zionist zealot with unbounded energy and blind worship of the Israeli state.

Within the confines of his Zionist ideological blinders, Levey applied his intelligence to the singular task of turning his office into the major foreign policy venue for setting US policy toward Iran. Levey more than any other appointed official in government or elected legislator, formulates and implements policies which profoundly

influence US, European Union and UN economic relations with Iran. Levey elaborated the sanctions policies, which Washington imposed on the EU and the Security Council. Levey, organizes the entire staff under his control at Treasury to investigate trade and investment policies of all the world's major manufacturing, banking, shipping, petroleum and trading corporations. He then criss-crosses the US and successfully pressures pension funds, investment houses, oil companies and economic institutions to disinvest from any companies dealing with Iran's civilian economy. He has gone global, threatening sanctions and blackballing dissident companies in Europe, Asia, the Middle East and North America which refuse to surrender economic opportunities. They all understood Levey operated at the behest of Israel, services Levey has proudly performed.

Levey coordinates his campaign with Zionist leaders in Congress. He secures sanctions legislation in line with his campaigns. His policies clearly violate international law and national sovereignty, pressing the limits of extra territorial enforcement of his administrative fiats against a civilian economy. His violation of economic sovereignty parallels Obama's announcement that US Special Forces would operate in violation of political sovereignty on four continents. For all intents and purposes, Levey makes US policy toward Iran. At each point he designs the escalation of sanctions, and then passes it on to the White House, which shoves it down the throats of the Security Council. Once new sanctions approved by Levey and staff are in place they are there to enforce them: identifying violators and implementing penalties. Treasury has become an outpost of Tel Aviv. Not a single leftist, liberal or social democratic publication highlights the role of Levey or even the terrible economic pain this Old Testament fanatic is inflicting on 75 million Iranian civilian workers and consumers. Indeed like Israel's Judeo-fascist rabbis who preach a "final solution" for Israel's enemies, Levey announces new and harsher

“punishment” against the Iranian people (Stuart Levey, “Iran’s New Deceptions at Sea Must be Punished” FT 8/16/2010, p. 9). Perhaps at the appropriate moment the Jewish State will name a major avenue through the West Bank for his extraordinary services to this most unholy racist state.

### **The Strategic Role of Local Power**

The Israel Lobby Archive recently released declassified documents of the American Zionist Council (AZC) subpoenaed during a US Senate investigation between 1962-63. The documents reveal how the Israeli state through its American Jewish conduits – the mainstream Zionist organizations – penetrated the US mass media and propagated its political line, unbeknownst to the American public. Stories written by a host of Jewish Zionist journalists and academics were solicited and planted in national media such as The Readers Digest, The Atlantic Monthly, Washington Post among others, including regional and local newspapers and radio stations (Israel Lobby Archive, August 18, 2010). While the national Zionist organizations procured the journalists and academic writers and editors, it was the local affiliates who carried the message and implemented the line. The level of infiltration the Senate subpoenaed Zionist documents in the 1960’s reveal has multiplied a hundred fold over the past 50 years in terms of financing, paid functionaries and committed militants and above all in structural power and coercive capability.

While the national leaders in close consultation with Israeli officials receive instructions on which issues are of high priority, the implementation follows a vertical route to regional and local leaders, politicians, and notables who in turn target the local media and religious, academic and other opinion leaders. When national leaders ensure publication of pro Israeli propaganda, the locals reproduce and circulate it to local media

and non-Zionist influentials on their “periphery”. Letter campaigns orchestrated at the top are implemented by thousands of militant Zionist doctors, lawyers and businesspeople. They praise pro-Israel scribes and attack critics; they pressure newspapers, publishing houses and magazines not to publish dissidents. The national and local leaders promote hostile reviews of books not promoting the Israeli line, influence library decisions to pack their shelves with pro Israeli books and censor and exclude more balanced or critical histories. Local militants in co-ordination with Israeli consuls saturate the public with thousands of public meetings and speakers targeting Christian churches, academic audiences and civic groups; at the same time local Zionist militants and, especially millionaire influentials, pressure local venues (university administrators, church authorities and civic associations) to disinvite any critic of Israel and their supporters from speaking. In the last resort, local Zionists demand that a pro-Israel propagandist be given equal time, something unheard of when an Israel apologist is scheduled to speak.

Local Zionist organizations make yeoman efforts to recruit mayors, governors, local celebrities, publishers, church people and promising young ethnic and minority leaders by offering them all expenses paid propaganda junkets to Israel and then to write or give interviews parroting what they were fed by Israeli officials. Local leaders mobilize thousands of militant activist Zionists to attack anti-Zionist Jews in public and private. They demand they be excluded from any media roundtables on the Middle East.

Local Zionist functionaries form rapid response committees to visit and threaten any local publisher and editorial staff publishing editorials or articles questioning the Israeli party line. Local leaders police (“monitor”) all local meetings, speaker invitations, as well as the speeches of public commentators, religious leaders and academics to detect

any “anti-Zionist overtones’ (which they label “covert anti-Semitism”). Most of the major Jewish religious orders are lined up as the clerical backbone of local Israeli fundraising, including the financing of new “Jews only” settlements in the Palestinian West Bank.

Local functionaries are in the forefront of campaigns to deny independent Middle East specialists and public policy academics, appointments, tenure or promotion, independently of the quality of their scholarship. On the other hand, academic hacks who toe the pro-Israel line, by publishing books with blanket attacks on Israeli critics among Christians and Muslims and countries like Turkey, Iran or whoever is a target of Israeli policy, are promoted, lauded and put on the best seller list. Any book or writer critical of Zionist Power or Israel is put on a local and national ‘index’ and subject to an inquisition by slander from a stable of Jewish Torquemadas.

### **Conclusion**

The power of Israel in the US does not reside only in the influence and leadership of powerful Washington based “pro-Israel lobbies”, like AIPAC. Without the hundreds of thousands of militant locally based dentists, podiatrists, stockbrokers, real estate brokers, profesors and others, the “lobby” would be unable to sustain and implement its policy among hundreds of millions of Americans outside the major metropolises. As we have seen from the Senate declassified documents, over a half-century ago, local Zionist organizations began a systematic campaign of penetration, control and intimidation that has reached its pinnacle in the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It is no accident or mere coincidence that University officials in Northern Minnesota or upstate New York are targeted to exclude speakers or fire faculty members critical of Israel. Local Zionists

have computerized databanks operating with an index of prohibited speakers, as the Zionists themselves admit and flaunt in contrast to “liberal” Zionists who are prone to label as “anti-Semitic” or “conspiracy theorists” writers who cite official Zionist documents demonstrating their systematic perversion of our democratic freedoms.

Over the decades, the distinction between Zionist power exercised by a “lobby” outside the government and operatives “inside” the government has virtually vanished. As we have seen, in our case study, AIPAC secured the undersecretary position in Treasury, dictated the appointment of a key Zionist operative (Stuart Levey) and accompanies his global crusade to sanction Iran into starvation and destitution. The planting of operatives within key Middle East positions in government is not the simple result of individual career choices. The ascent of so many pro-Israel Zionist to government posts is part of their mission to serve Israel’s interest at least for a few years of their careers. Their presence in government precludes any Senate or Congressional investigations of Zionists organizations acting as agents of a foreign power as took place in the 1960’s.

As the major Zionist organizations and influentials have accumulated power and abused the exercise of power on behalf of an increasingly bloody racist state, which flaunts its dominance over US institutions, public opposition is growing. The Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions campaign is gaining strength even in the US (see Harvard divestment in Israeli companies). US public support for Israel, by all measures, has dropped below 50%, while polls in Western Europe show a marked increase in hostility to Israel’s ultra-rightist regime. Anti-Zionist Jews are growing in influence especially among young Jews who are appalled by the Israeli slaughter in Gaza and assault on the humanitarian flotilla. Equally important the presence of anti-Zionist Jews on panels and

forums has given courage to many otherwise intimidated non-Jews who heretofore were fearful of being labeled “anti-Semitic”.

The Zionist power configuration rests on a declining population base: most young Jews marry outside the confines of the ethno-religious Jewish-Israeli nexus and many of them are not likely to form the bases for rabid campaigns on behalf of a racist state. The Zionist leadership’s high intensity and heavily endowed effort to fence in young people of Jewish ancestry via private schools, subsidized “summer programs” in Israel etc. are as much out of fear and recognition of the drift away from clerical chauvinism as it is an attempt to recruit a new generation of Israel First militants.

The danger is that the US Zionist support for the ultra-rightist and racist regime in Israel is leading them to join forces with the far right in the US. Today Jewish and Christian Manhattan rednecks are fermenting mass Islamic hatred (the so called “Mosque controversy”) as a distraction from the economic crises and rising unemployment. Zionist promotion of mass Islamofobia, so near to Wall Street, where many of their fat cats who profit from plundering the assets of America operate, is a dangerous game. If the same enraged masses turn their eyes upward toward the wealthy and powerful instead of downward to blacks and Muslims, some unpleasant and unanticipated surprises might rebound against, not only Israel’s operatives, but all those wrongly identified as related to a misconstrued Jewish Motherland.

## Appendix

### Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations

#### **Member Organizations**

1. Ameinu
2. American Friends of Likud
3. American Gathering/Federation of Jewish Holocaust Survivors
4. America-Israel Friendship League
5. American Israel Public Affairs Committee
6. American Jewish Committee
7. American Jewish Congress
8. American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee
9. American Sephardi Federation
10. American Zionist Movement
11. Americans for Peace Now
12. AMIT
13. Anti-Defamation League
14. Association of Reform Zionists of America
15. B'nai B'rith International
16. Bnai Zion
17. Central Conference of American Rabbis
18. Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting in America
19. Development Corporation for Israel/State of Israel Bonds
20. Emunah of America
21. Friends of Israel Defense Forces
22. Hadassah, Women's Zionist Organization of America
23. Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society
24. Hillel: The Foundation for Jewish Campus Life

25. Jewish Community Centers Association
26. Jewish Council for Public Affairs
27. The Jewish Federations of North America
28. Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs
29. Jewish Labor Committee
30. Jewish National Fund
31. Jewish Reconstructionist Federation
32. Jewish War Veterans of the USA
33. Jewish Women International
34. MERCAZ USA, Zionist Organization of the Conservative Movement
35. NA'AMAT USA
36. MCSK” Advocates on behalf of Jews in Russia, Ukraine, the Baltic States & Eurasia
37. National Council of Jewish Women
38. National Council of Young Israel
39. ORT America
40. Rabbinical Assembly
41. Rabbinical Council of America
42. Religious Zionists of America
43. Union for Reform Judaism
44. Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America
45. United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism
46. WIZO
47. Women’s League for Conservative Judaism
48. Women of Reform Judaism
49. Workmen’s Circle
50. World ORT
51. World Zionist Executive, US
52. Zionist Organization of America