

Mr. Podhoretz, Your Animus Is Showing

In the most recent copy of Commentary, John Podhoretz complains about the alleged treatment that Prime Minister Netanyahu received during the latter's visit to the White House to meet with President Obama. By his own admission, Podhoretz concedes, "We still don't know what happened..." That does not stop him, however, from attacking Obama and from speculating about how the president operates "unconsciously" to show an "informal aggression" against Netanyahu.

I am not presumptuous enough to analyze either the meeting or how Podhoretz, himself, operates "unconsciously." Rather, I shall deal with facts:

- Obama has not decreased military and other aid to Israel, nor has he threatened to do so. That cannot be said even of Ronald Reagan, possibly the most pro-Israel president ever.
- Obama stood with Israel by rejecting the Goldstone Report.
- Obama has continued the American policy of not negotiating with Hamas.
- At his news conference following the conclusion of his nuclear nonproliferation summit last month, Obama evaded a question that would have compromised Israel's nuclear program. Obama continues to support Israel's policy of "ambiguity" with respect to nuclear weapons.

On April 20th this year, President Obama wrote:

Let me be very clear: We have a special relationship with Israel that will not be changed. Our countries are bound together by shared values, deep and interwoven connections, and mutual interests. Many of the same forces that threaten Israel also threaten the United States and our efforts to secure peace and stability in the Middle East. Our alliance with Israel serves our national security interests.

I am not the prophet that Podhoretz may fancy himself to be. I do not know whether Obama will succeed in helping to bring about a lasting, just and secure peace for Israel, or whether he will end up antagonizing both Israelis and Arabs. Unlike Podhoretz and Obama's other conservative and "neo-conservative" opponents, I am keeping an open mind and giving this administration a chance, just as I have done for each of his Republican and Democratic predecessors.

If anyone has "oozed" hostility and has been "a little churlish and somewhat peevish," not to mention tendentious, it is Podhoretz, as he amply demonstrates by his gratuitous swipe at the White House Passover seder.

The next time that he wishes to engage in psychology and speculate about the president's unconscious motives, Podhoretz would do well to first look up the term, "projection."

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