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‘Clinton Scares the Generals’: Democratic Party Divides over Foreign Policy

Par Philip Weiss
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The divisions inside the Democratic Party are breaking out in a big way, especially now the divisions in the Republican Party are last week’s headline. Many Democratic establishment types are openly wringing their hands about what Bernie Sanders’s young hordes will do at the convention and in the general election if they lose and are not respected.

This divide is very substantive. Last night Ralph Nader said he couldn’t vote for Hillary Clinton because she’s such a hawk. Chris Matthews asked him who he’s voting for.

> My vote is one of conscience, I don’t disclose my vote. But I never vote for somebody I don’t believe in. Obviously I don’t believe in Hillary’s militarism. She scares the generals.

Nader said Trump is an unknown quantity in foreign policy because first he says he wants to negotiate, then he says he wants to smash enemies. “It’s an extremely unstable situation,” Nader said. He also said that either Sanders or Clinton would defeat Trump.

Israel and Palestine are central to this divide. Here’s another neocon walking the path toward supporting Hillary because of her unapologetic support for Israel. Jennifer Rubin in the Washington Post:

> [A] large portion of pro-Israel voters of both parties (accurately or not) view Hillary Clinton as an improvement over President Obama on Israel. She’s gone out of her way to challenge Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) on his false accusations about Israel’s conduct during the Gaza War and to denounce the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement. She’s at least rhetorically taken a harder line on Iran and expressed a desire for more cordial relations with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. Given that Jewish voters usually vote overwhelmingly Democratic, she is likely to regain any lost ground Democrats suffered among Jewish voters during the Obama era.

Neoconservative Robert Kagan already moved to Hillary Clinton; now he says of Trump, “this is how fascism comes to America.”

But of course Trump has now got megadonor Sheldon Adelson on his side; and Adelson sent an email to members of the Republican Jewish Coalition telling them that Trump is better for Israel than Clinton, presumably because the Democratic Party is untrustworthy on the matter.

> “Like many of you, I do not agree with him on every issue,” Adelson wrote board members of the Republican Jewish Coalition in the Monday email, which was first reported by The Associated Press. “However, I will not sit idly by and let Hillary Clinton become the next president. The consequences to our country, and Israel, are far too great to take that risk.”

At least one member of the RJC is with Adelson on Trump.

The Forward says the Adelson news is important because nearly a quarter of Republican presidential funding comes from Jewish donors.

> Jewish donors have made up in the past an estimated quarter of direct funding for Republican presidential campaigns and may have played an even greater role in Super PAC funding. For Trump, who is reportedly interested in raising $1 billion, Jewish donors, if they follow Adelson’s lead, could prove valuable not only in providing major funds but also in signaling to other centrist establishment contributors that Trump represents a worthy political investment.

Democrats are even more dependent on Jews for funding (the level of Jewish support for Democrats is “gigantic” and “shocking,” according to experts), and given that a lot of that money is pro-Israel, it would seem that the lobby has this presidential election right where it wants it: the two leading candidates will be beholden to pro-Israel donors.



Hillary Clinton speaking to the 2016 AIPAC Policy Conference.

Clinton just held a fundraiser in Tel Aviv, featuring her Jewish outreach person, Sarah Bard; and Clinton’s major backer, Haim Saban, has worked closely with Sheldon Adelson. Alternet’s Alexandra Rosenmann reports that Clinton once played footsie with Adelson himself:

> [I]n October 2014, Hillary Clinton met Adelson for the first time at a Las Vegas fundraising dinner honoring the major Republican donor at an event at which Clinton's speaking fee may have been upward of $200,000.

But Adelson would rightly remind us: Don't forget about the divisions inside the Democratic Party. Bernie Sanders's freedom to criticize Netanyahu signals that he has the solid support of his base here; and the polling makes clear that the political address for criticism of Israel inside the United States is liberal Democrats, who sympathize with Palestinians more than Israelis. When Ralph Nader calls Clinton militaristic, he has heard her AIPAC speech in which she promised to take the Israel relationship to the "next level."

Many young Democrats who go to the convention in Philadelphia, or to the demonstrations outside it, are sure to have Palestine on their minds.

Oliver Stone beseeches Democrats to nominate Bernie Sanders; and he cites Israel/Palestine prominently, calling the AIPAC speech vicious:

> Hillary Clinton has effectively closed the door on peace, blasting both the Palestinian peace process and the Russians in the same week. NATO is her god, the best thing the "exceptional" US has to export in this new "American Century." ..
>
> Our media has credited Hillary Clinton with wonderful foreign policy experience, unlike Trump, without really noting the results of her power-mongering....
>
> Hillary's record includes supporting the barbaric "contras" against the Nicaraguan people in the 1980s, supporting the NATO bombing of the former Yugoslavia, supporting the ongoing Bush-Iraq War, the ongoing Afghan mess, and as Secretary of State the destruction of the secular state of Libya, the military coup in Honduras, and the present attempt at "regime change" in Syria. Every one of these situations has resulted in more extremism, more chaos in the world, and more danger to our country.
>
> Next will be the borders of Russia, China, and Iran. Look at the viciousness of her recent AIPAC speech (don't say you haven't been warned). Can we really bear to watch as Clinton "takes our alliance [with Israel] to the next level"? Where is our sense of proportion? Cannot the media, at the least, call her out on this extremism? The problem, I think, is this political miasma of "correctness" that dominates American thinking (i.e. Trump is extreme, therefore Hillary is not).

Thanks to Yakov Hirsch.

Philip Weiss is Founder and Co-Editor of Mondoweiss.net.

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