

Obama's right wing critics should be dizzy from all their spinning

Ever since President Barack Obama's inauguration, his right wing critics have devoted countless hours and millions of keystrokes to spinning the President's record of support for Israel so far from reality that it threatens the historical bipartisan foundation of American support for Israel.

The vortex of right wing spin was fully on display last week as Republican partisans and right wing pundits pounced on selectively-chosen quotes and inaccurate media reports to continue their baseless attacks on Obama's stellar record of support for Israel.

Defense Secretary Leon Panetta delivered — in front of a pro-Israel crowd gathered to substantively and civilly discuss Israel — an entire address that discussed the actual steps taken by the Obama Administration to strengthen the U.S.-Israel relationship.

Right wingers took five words from the question and answer section, removed their context and ran

wild with them as if they nullified every pro-Israel action described in Panetta's speech.

Despite what you may have heard or read, Panetta — who is widely regarded as being pro-Israel by many involved with the issue — made two things crystal clear. First, "Israel will always have the unshakable backing of the United States," and second, that the President is considering a "wide range of military options" as part of his approach to stopping Iran's nuclear weapons program.

As usual though, Republicans overlooked Panetta's positive statements and continued their effort to make Israel a partisan wedge issue. The spin on Panetta's speech was so far removed from reality that the non-partisan American Jewish Committee weighed in and criticized the inaccurate reports of Panetta's speech, in addition to setting the record straight on his strongly pro-Israel statements.

Secretary of State Hillary Clin-

ton — also a stalwart supporter of Israel — received similar treatment following an off-the-record session during the same Israel forum where Panetta spoke. Clinton reportedly expressed concern over certain recent Knesset bills and incidents regarding women and Israel's Orthodox community.

Predictably, Obama's right wing critics spun Clinton's reported comments past the point of reality, and largely ignored the mainstream American Jewish leaders and organizations that vocally expressed similar concerns about similar issues.

These two recent incidents highlight the lengths that Obama's right wing detractors will go to malign his Administration's stellar record of support for Israel.

After vocally opposing the Palestinians' unilateral state declaration, increasing security cooperation with Israel to unprecedented levels — including supplemental funding for the Iron Dome missile system that protects Israelis from Hamas' rockets, consistently defending Is-

rael's legitimacy at the United Nations, personally intervening to save Israel's diplomats in Cairo, and personally authorizing the delivery of any equipment Israel needed to fight the Carmel fire, Obama's naysayers simply have little substance to criticize.

As a result, those seeking to make Israel a partisan wedge issue create bogus stories based on inaccurate media reports and remarks taken out of context.

Most seriously though, right wing partisans politicize the occasional tactical disagreements that have zero impact on the fundamental core principles of the U.S.-Israel relationship.

When Israeli and American leaders state publically that the U.S.-Israel relationship is as strong as it has ever been — as Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, President Shimon Peres, Defense Minister Ehud Barak and Ambassador to the United States Michael Oren have all loudly and repeatedly stressed — right wing partisans tune out and keep pushing their spin and smears.

Their hope is that their efforts will bring the mass exodus of Jews from Democratic Party to the Republican Party that they've been wishing for since at least the 1980s.

Recent polls of American and Israeli Jews indicate that the right wing spin of Obama's Israel record is not causing the massive Israel-based shift that Republicans want to see.

Given the wide distance separating the Republican presidential field from the majority of American Jews, right wing partisans should be dizzy to the point of sickness by now.

But since the GOP — from Party leaders to presidential candidates to rank-and-file members of Congress — has demonstrated its intent to politicize the U.S.-Israel relationship without regard to Obama's actual record, those who support a strong bipartisan consensus of support for Israel must speak out loudly to refute the spin before the relationship suffers collateral damage from their partisan attacks.

Marc R. Stanley is chair of the National Jewish Democratic Council.



By Marc R. Stanley

LETTER

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The remaining 20 percent of donations are actual bone marrow extractions. Marrow cells are collected from the back of the pelvic bone using a syringe. These donors can expect to feel some discomfort in their lower back. The marrow completely regenerates within a few weeks. For more information, go to www.getswabbed.org.

The Bone Marrow Donor Drive for Zach was a true community event; people of all ages volunteered and came to partake in the events of the afternoon. Lemons to Aid had young children decorating hats for cancer patients, making cards for Zach and thank you cards for the donors as well as making holiday decorations to brighten the spirits of Children's Medical Center patients.

The outpouring of support from the community was inspiring and amazing! Julie, Zach's mom, had quite a birthday greeting as the volunteers sang Happy Birthday to her when she entered the large room full of love and support! When the guest of honor, Zach, was released from

the hospital and stopped at Parish to wave to well-wishers from a second floor window, a dry eye was hard to find! Zach stood and gazed out of the window with his parents, brother and sister by his side.

Our community has so much to be proud of, this was an incredible

culmination of efforts and energy to help darling Zach and many other blood cancer patients. Thank you *TJP* for your help getting the word out and to the countless volunteers who gave so much in the 10 days we had to plan this amazing event!

— Amy Roseman

Jewish National Fund

wishes you and your family a very Happy Chanukah!

For more information about JNF, contact Julie Malin, Regional Director, at 713-271-3030 or jmalin@jnf.org



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