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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
November 19, 2008

MALCOLM HOENLEIN DENOUNCES *JEWISH FORWARD*

Says newspaper has no facts in suggesting that Conference of Presidents backed McCain

On a Shalom TV program airing this week, Conference of Presidents Executive Vice Chair Malcolm Hoenlein calls out the *Jewish Forward* for insinuating that the national organization favored Senator John McCain in the presidential election.

"There's only one place that wrote this--the *Forward*--which never has anything to say and usually gets it backwards," charges Hoenlein. "They have consistently written scurrilous things."



According to the *Forward* article, "the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, which represents 51 communal groups, distributed invitations to a conference call with GOP candidate John McCain that was organized by his campaign. The Presidents Conference urged its members to 'circulate' the invitation to the October 19 call to 'local and state levels.'"

The paper added that "the Obama campaign has made it clear that meetings and conference calls between the candidate and Jewish leaders were arranged by the campaign without any involvement by the Presidents Conference."

"Had they known the facts, they would have known that this first started because we *did* schedule a call with Senator Obama," explains Hoenlein to Shalom TV's Mark S. Golub. "And when it looked like the call might take place, I notified Senator McCain's office to say, 'In fairness...we are probably doing this. If you want the same opportunity, you can have it.' Which is what we do all the time"

"Senator McCain's people got back to me and said 'we would like to do the call,' and we [the Conference of Presidents] would notify the leadership," continues Hoenlein. And while the executive vice chair was unhappy about the campaign's conditions for the call, feeling that it was more politically staged than the suggested question-and-answer format, the process moved forward.

"That's all we did. We set Senator McCain's call."

Meanwhile, per Hoenlein's comments on America's Jewish cable television network, Senator Obama was called to Hawaii and was then involved in other activities, so the conference call with the Democratic presidential nominee didn't take place.

As for the *Forward* article, "Conference Riles Critics Again by Promoting Call With McCain Campaign," quoting an anonymous Jewish Democrat saying, "there is a general perception that the Presidents Conference leans more to the right," Hoenlein takes direct aim at the newspaper.

"They have an agenda which they pursue, so truth gets in the way and facts get in the way," he responds. "And, after an editorial like that, you would assume that we got bombarded. [Yet,] I had just two reactions to it--one where somebody called me to ask what was really happening, and the other said 'Well, they're at it again.'"

"It's not a paper of great import in any event."

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