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NATAN SHARANSKY CALLS OBAMA PRESIDENCY "A RISK" TO THE STATE OF ISRAEL IN EXCLUSIVE SHALOM TV INTERVIEW

Says "there is no record" on Obama, while McCain "has an absolutely great record of supporting Israel"

August 6, 2008 (Fort Lee, NJ) - In an exclusive Shalom TV interview, Natan Sharansky, distinguished fellow of the Shalem Center in Jerusalem and chairman of its Adelson Institute for Strategic Studies, characterized a potential Barack Obama presidency as "a risk" to Israel, based on their being "no record" of his foreign affairs policy, experience, or actions.

Commenting on whether the visit of Senator Obama to Israel meant something to its citizens, Sharansky, a prolific author who was the world's most famous Soviet refusenik, acknowledged that the Democratic presidential candidate "said all the right things which Israelis wanted to hear."



"He spoke about the Iranian threat and gave to understand that, of course, he would do his best that Israel would not have to fight, but if, God-forbid, Israel will have to fight, it can be understood.

"He spoke with the mayor of Jerusalem and the mayor of Jerusalem understood that Obama is for a united Jerusalem.

"He said many good things, but it's very difficult to overcome the skepticism of Israelis by words. After all, we've heard so many good words and we know that the deeds are sometimes very different."

However, Sharansky was quick to point out that "everyone understands that it was a quick visit, with a lot of picture opportunities mainly for the audience--the electorate. And the electorate are American Jews, and Americans in general."

When asked by Mark S. Golub, host of Shalom TV's "World Jewish News," if he thought it would matter whether Senator McCain or Senator Obama was elected president in terms of the relationship and bond between America and Israel, Natan Sharansky offered a stark contrast based on the each candidate's record.

"In the case of McCain, we know exactly where his policy is," said Sharansky. "I know, personally, McCain for twenty years. He is a person of principle, and he's also a person who has absolutely a great record of supporting Israel.

"Getting to Obama, there is no record. Nobody can know for sure what will be. It can happen to be good. It can happen to be very bad. It's a risk."

A former Deputy Prime Minister of Israel, Sharansky also emphasized the extent to which Israel is ultimately in control of its own destiny, qualifying the impact on the Middle East of the next American president.

"After all," he concluded, "the main decisions which are made--whether it's about the Oslo agreement, whether it's about the disengagement, or to start this so-called 'Second Lebanese War'--these are decisions which are made in Israel, by Israelis, and they have great importance on our future."

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