



P.O. Box 1989
Fort Lee, NJ 07024 USA
ph: 201.242.9460
fx: 201.363.9241
ws: www.shalomtv.com

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**ON SHALOM TV, MORT ZUCKERMAN CHARACTERIZES ISRAEL
AS A "CLIENT STATE" OF THE US; LIKENS COUNTRY'S STRUGGLE TO SISYPHUS**

Also comments on presidential hopefuls, saying that Obama aide Brzezinski is "fundamentally hostile to Israel" and views McCain as "very tough-minded about Israel."

FORT LEE, NJ -- In a candid interview on Shalom TV, *US News and World Report* Editor-in-Chief Mort Zuckerman called Israel a "client state" of the US, saying that the country may have to enter into the Bush peace initiative as part of its dependence on a great power.

"There is no doubt that Israel has to make the effort," said Zuckerman. "It is the only way to maintain whatever political support it has, especially in the United States--but really, in the Western World.



"Israel has to understand it is not a great power. It is a client state. The United States has been the most reliable, long-term friend and ally that Israel has--and it [Israel] must do what it has to do in order to maintain that relationship. If this is part of that price, Israel has to do it *for* the United States."

Zuckerman, a recent past chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, clarified the way in which Israel can protect its own needs, noting that his advice to the Israeli government is always "tell them what you can do and tell them what you can't do."

Appearing on Shalom TV's "World Jewish News," hosted by Mark S. Golub, Mort Zuckerman also analyzed presidential candidates in terms of future US-Israel relations.

He was especially critical of Zbigniew Brzezinski, suggested by some to be Barack Obama's choice for secretary of state. Being careful to say that he has never talked with Senator Obama about Israel, and pointing out that the Senator has made "some very good statements," Zuckerman explained that if Brzezinski were to be secretary of state or national security advisor, there would be a change in current US policy "because fundamentally, Brzezinski is hostile to Israel."

In contrast, Zuckerman described Rudy Giuliani--who has since withdrawn from the Republican race--as being "the staunchest supporter of Israel" and "willing to go right out front" in terms of condemning Arab terrorism. None of the remaining candidates would be "as friendly to Israel and as supportive of Israel" as the former New York City mayor.

Having worked for President Bill Clinton, Zuckerman summarized his sense of Hillary Clinton's support for Israel by saying, "The Clintons are the Clintons"--somewhere in between Brzezinski and Giuliani. But Zuckerman pointed out that President Clinton devoted a great deal of time and effort establishing "a very good relationship with the Israelis," concluding, "I frankly think he had a better procedural relationship with Israel than "Condi" [Condoleezza] Rice has with Israel."

Zuckerman observed that John McCain has not "really committed himself in any serious way" on the Middle East, but views the Arizona senator as "very tough-minded about Israel, and about the United States and its interests vis-a-vis that world."

As far as being optimistic or pessimistic about the chances for peace between Israel and the Palestinians, Zuckerman acknowledged "my pessimism is greater than my optimism." But he compared the State of Israel and the Jewish People to Sisyphus, who, in Greek mythology, repeatedly rolled a huge rock up a hill, only to have it roll from his grasp near the summit, compelling him to start his task anew. Similarly, Israel must grasp at every opportunity to make peace with her neighbors.

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[Transcript of comments follows.]

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Transcript of comments from Mort Zuckerman interview with Mark S. Golub on Shalom TV's "World Jewish News":

What it means for Israel to be a "client state" of the United States:

Israel has to understand--like it or not--it is not a great power. It is a client state. And therefore, it must be dependent upon a great power. There is no question that the United States has been and is the most reliable long-term friend and ally that Israel has, and it [Israel] must do what it has to do in order to maintain that relationship. And if this [entering into the Bush peace initiative] is part of that price, Israel has to do it *for* the United States.

It may not work. Israel will have to be firm enough--as Sharon was firm enough--in saying, "This is what we can do; this is what we cannot do." My advice always to the Israeli government is: to deal effectively and constructively and honestly with the United States as early as you can and as clearly as you can--tell them what you can do and tell them what you can't do.

On President Bush's understanding of Middle East:

It is fair to say that [President Bush] understood a lot of things that previous presidents did not understand--and I worked for a previous president, which was President Clinton. Bush came very clearly to the conclusion as to who and what kind of an individual Arafat was and he marginalized him and wouldn't deal with him, pushed him aside in effect. Bush also understood there is no moral equivalence, as we say, between the arsonist and the firefighter--between what Israel was doing in response to terrorist attacks and what the terrorists were doing just because they wanted to kill Jews. There are several things of this nature that are quite important that no previous president really understood to the degree that Bush did.

Will American policy toward Israel remain the same regardless of which candidate becomes president?

No, I don't think it will stay the same. It never does stay the same--and it is often a surprise. But it is my judgment that there are a whole variety of views of Israel.

On Brzezinski and Obama:

If Zbigniew Brzezinski is an advisor to one of the candidates [Barack Obama], and has a clear role, I don't think that that will be the same thing as having President Bush in office--not as good for Israel, for sure, because fundamentally Brzezinski is hostile to Israel. There is no question about it.

I have never talked with Barack Obama about Israel. He has made some very good statements and whatever his rationale for having Brzezinski is, maybe this is just for the campaign. Who knows who will be his secretary of state if he is elected? Who will be his national security advisor? We don't know the answer to that. And believe me, it makes a huge difference when you have people who understand the issue.

On Giuliani:

I don't think there will be any one of them will be as friendly to Israel and as supportive of Israel as is Rudy Giuliani. He has been the staunchest supporter of Israel and willing to go right out front and to be very up front and outspoken in terms of his condemnation of not just Arab terrorism in a physical sense--and I've been to Israel with him as I have been with Mayor Bloomberg; and he [Giuliani] is as up front and tough minded on this issue as anybody could be.

On "the Clintons:"

The Clintons are the Clintons. They are somewhere in between those two. In fairness, President Clinton was willing to spend a great deal of time and effort--and worked very well with the Israelis on a very good relationship. I frankly think he had a better procedural relationship with Israel than "Condi" [Condoleezza] Rice has with Israel.

On McCain:

I don't have a detailed [sense of where John McCain would be on Israel]. I don't think he has really committed himself in any serious way [on Israel]; but I think he is somebody who is very tough-minded about Israel, and about the United States and its interests vis-a-vis that world.

Why making peace with the Palestinians is so difficult:

You have no sense whatever that there is any education for peace on the Palestinian side. They are not hearing from their leadership, "Look, understand there are going to be compromises here. We are not going to be able to move 'refugees,' as you call them, back into whatever Israel is going to be in its boundaries. And we are not going to be able to move out all the main 'population centers' or settlement blocks. What is more, those settlement blocks have to be connected to Israel. There was never an obligation under [UN] Resolution 242 that there has to be an equal exchange of land. Originally, the United States, when that was first proposed back with Clinton, it was nine-to-one in terms Israeli would keep nine and give back one. Well now its somehow or other gotten back to one-to-one, as if the implication of Resolution 242, which was Israel would not have to yield back all of the territories, was the real principle when it is not. So there are some things in it [i.e. the President's peace initiative] that I genuinely do not like.

Israel compared to Sisyphus:

Israel is condemned to be like Sisyphus--the obligation to push that rock up the hill and get it to the top and it's going to roll down again. And they're going to push it up again. Israel cannot give up any opportunity to try and reach this heavenly state. Israel has no choice. The standards will never be the same for Israel as it is for the other countries of the world--nor will it be the same for the Jews. This is our joy and our burden; most of it is a burden. Israel can never give up the opportunity to try and strike an agreement with the Palestinians and the others who are hostile to it. It is not going to be a normalization; we do not have a normalization between Israel and Egypt. You have a cold peace at best in which the Egyptians are in no way friendly to Israel. You have a slightly warmer peace, at least at the level of the King, in Jordan. It is a cold peace with the Jordanians, most of whom are Palestinians. Israel is just looking to have a cessation of hostilities they can rely on. That's all they're hopeful for at this stage of the game, and that's all they should pay a price for.

Despite "pessimism," Israel must try for peace:

Whatever my pessimism may be, or my optimism--and my pessimism is greater than my optimism--there is no doubt but that Israel has to make the effort, on many grounds--not the least of which, it is the only way to maintain whatever political support it has, especially in the United States--but really, in the Western World. There may be, over time, changes for the better, and there may be changes for the worse. But, in order to maintain your political relationships which are essential to Israel, there must be a clear sense that Israel does not miss an opportunity.
