



Written by [Steve Byas](#) on February 12, 2019

Omar Remarks Highlight Increasing Possibility That Israel Will Be Issue in 2020

A tweet by Representative Ilhan Omar (D-Minn.) — “It’s all about the Benjamins baby,” — saying the reason Israel has such strong support in Congress and in American politics is because Jewish money has brought to the surface a deepening divide in the United States over its historically unique relationship with Israel.



While Democrats and Republicans have sharply disagreed on a host of issues since World War II, support for the state of Israel was one of the few examples of bipartisan agreement. But now, like many other issues that divide Democrats and Republicans, our nation’s relationship with Israel is increasingly a point of contention between the two political parties.

It has raised the question of what impact this realignment of views on Israel will have on the Democratic presidential contest, and even the general election. Will Democratic candidates feel compelled to distance themselves further from support for the existence of the Jewish state in order to please an increasingly left-wing and anti-Israeli base, and if that happens, will this allow President Donald Trump to bolster his own support among American Jews, and other Americans who are mostly sympathetic to Israel?

In 2000, Vice President Al Gore picked a Jew from Connecticut — Joe Lieberman — to help him win Florida. It was almost a master-stroke, as many northeastern Jews had moved to the Sunshine State over the years, and having a practicing Jew on the ticket did increase the Jewish turn-out for the Democrats. In the end, Gore lost to Texas Governor George Bush by less than 600 votes in Florida, and with it, the entire election.

But this does illustrate that the support of American Jews is important in presidential politics, not only in terms of votes, but also, as Omar so crudely put it, campaign contributions. In reality, the vast majority of American Jews give their votes and their money to Democrats — not Republicans (the exception is that Republicans tend to do slightly better among Orthodox Jews).

However, there are other, deeper, cultural reasons that Israel enjoys such strong support among Americans. Much of the historic support for Israel comes from sympathy for the Jewish people who lost millions of their people in the Holocaust.

Another factor is that many American Christians feel a bond with Jews and the nation of Israel. As the Democratic Party becomes increasingly secularized, leaving more and more Christians to the Republican Party, it is not surprising that this factor increases the animosity of some “progressive” Democrats toward Jews.



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In 2012, not only was there a strong effort to remove mention of God from the Democratic Party platform, there was an attempt to oppose recognizing Jerusalem as the capital of Israel. Trump, in stark contrast, boldly moved the U.S. embassy to Jerusalem from Tel Aviv, just last year.

A 2018 Pew Research poll reflects this shift of loyalties. Only 27 percent of Democrats polled said they had sympathy for Israel, compared to 38 percent less than 20 years ago. In sharp contrast, support for Israel among Republicans has risen dramatically, from 50 percent to 79 percent. Older Americans are generally more sympathetic toward Israel than younger Americans.

It is more likely that Republican politicians are influenced by their base, which includes many Christians and older Americans, than by whatever Jewish money they receive.

On the other hand, many Democrats and not a few Republicans are nervous about American foreign policy appearing too pro-Israel, fearing that this will offend Arab populations in the Middle East, which are mostly Muslim. Others have expressed displeasure that this support for Israel has caused the United States to be drawn into armed conflict in the region — although the two wars against Iraq and the military presence in Afghanistan had less to do with Israel and more to do with oil and building the New World Order and increasing the power of the UN and the rest of the globalist agenda.

Still, Representative Omar was pressured into backtracking her remarks, issuing a statement on Monday afternoon, “My intention is never to offend my constituents or Jewish Americans as a whole. We have to always be willing to step back and think through criticism, just as I expect people to hear me when others attack me for my identity. This is why I unequivocally apologize.”

Representative Adam Schiff (D-Calif.), who is himself Jewish, used the opportunity, as he often does, to attack Republicans. While conceding, “It’s never acceptable to give voice to, or repeat, anti-Semitic smears,” he added the allegation that Republican attacks on George Soros were also anti-Semitic.

It is likely that America’s relationship with Israel will be a hotly-debated topic in the 2020 presidential campaign.

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