

Do Critics of the Israeli Government Hate Jews?

by Jacob G. Hornberger

Will America ever get to the point where Americans will be able to criticize the Israeli government without being accused of being anti-Semitic? Only when enough Americans finally come to the realization that the accusation is actually just a clever political ploy designed to suppress criticism of the Israeli government.

One of the commentators whose blogs I read regularly is Glenn Greenwald. He's a liberal who blogs at Salon.com. I have the utmost respect for Greenwald. He is one of the nation's foremost defenders of civil liberties, privacy, and due process of law and one of the nation's foremost critics of torture, illegal NSA spying, prisoner abuse, indefinite detention, military tribunals, Guantanamo, Iraq, Afghanistan, and other aspects of foreign policy and the war on terrorism.

Unlike so many other liberals, Greenwald did not mute his criticism of the wrongdoing once the Obama administration began embracing what the Bush administration was doing. His analyses and criticisms have been consistent and relentless, no doubt earning him the enmity of many Obama supporters.

He also has spoken out firmly and forcefully against the federal government's decades-long failed and destructive war on drugs, including authoring a major report published by the Cato Institute entitled, *"Drug Criminalization in Portugal: Lessons for Creating Fair and Successful Drug Policies."*

It was a big honor for us here at The Future of Freedom Foundation when Greenwald accepted an invitation to speak at our 2008 conference *"Restoring the Republic: Foreign Policy and Civil Liberties."* He gave one of the best talks at the conference and was very well received by the predominantly libertarian audience. I highly recommend watching the [video of his talk](#).

Greenwald has also been outspoken in his criticism of the Israeli government. A while back, I privately predicted that pro-Israeli government types would inevitably go on the attack with their standard ploy: That Greenwald (who is Jewish) must hate Jews given that he's criticizing the Israeli government.

My prediction has turned out to be accurate. According to a [blog post](#) by Stephen M. Walt, some guy named Lee Smith has gone on the standard attack in a column published in a magazine called *Tablet*. Smith blasted not only Greenwald but also Walt, Andrew Sullivan, and Philip Weiss, accusing them of being anti-Semitic and calling them “*career Jew-baiters*.”

As Walt points out, however, Smith’s article “contains not a scintilla of evidence that Sullivan, Greenwald, Weiss, or [Walt] have written or said anything that is remotely anti-Semitic, much less that involves ‘Jew-Baiting.’ There’s an obvious reason for this omission: None of us has ever written or said anything that supports Smith’s outrageous charges.”

Of course, Smith, the attacker, must know this, just as every other person who resorts to this strategy must know it.

The purpose of the strategy, of course, is to suppress criticism of the Israeli government among the American people, in the hopes of keeping U.S. taxpayer foreign-aid largess flooding into the Israeli government’s coffers. By going on the attack against critics of the Israeli government by accusing them of being anti-Semitic, the idea is to try to inflict maximum harm on the critic and, in the process, send an important message to every other American: Dare to criticize the Israeli government and this is what will happen to you.

One of the ridiculous aspects to this entire charade is that in Israel itself, a sizable portion of the Jewish population is critical of the Israeli government. For some reason, the pro-Israeli-government brigade in the United States never levels its charges of anti-Semitism against them. They limit their blasts to American critics of the Israeli government.

Interestingly enough, you hardly ever see this strategy employed with respect to the Vatican. As most everyone knows, the Vatican has been under heavy attack for its handling of the Church’s pedophilia scandal. Yet, does this mean that every critic of the Vatican should be considered a Catholic hater? That, of course, would be ridiculous, as ridiculous as it is to accuse critics of the Israeli government of being a hater of Jews.

Several years ago, someone asked a particular U.S. Senator a pointed question, one that should be directed against every supporter of the Israeli government who resorts to what

is becoming an old, tired, false and fake strategy: “Have you no sense of decency, sir? At long last, have you left no sense of decency?”

Note to Israeli government supporters: Before you attack me as anti-Semitic, keep in mind that I have not criticized the Israeli government in this article. I have criticized you! Does that make me anti-Semitic too?

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