
From: H

RELEASE IN PART B6

Sent: 3/21/2010 12:34:37 PM +00:00

To: Jon Davidson

B6

Subject: Fw: you guys see this?

Pls print this too. Thx.

----- Original Message -----

From: Sullivan, Jacob J <SullivanJJ@state.gov>

To: H

Sent: Fri Mar 19 19:40:49 2010

Subject: Fw: you guys see this?

From: Vietor, Tommy

To: Reines, Philippe I; Adler, Caroline E; Sullivan, Jacob J; Abedin, Huma

Sent: Fri Mar 19 08:40:35 2010

Subject: you guys see this?

<http://haaretz.com/hasen/spages/1157626.html> <<http://haaretz.com/hasen/spages/1157626.html>>

U.S. President Barack Obama's popularity may be declining in American public opinion, but a sweeping majority of Israelis think his treatment of this country is friendly and fair, according to a Haaretz-Dialog poll conducted this week.

The poll also found that most Israelis don't believe politicians who call Obama anti-Semitic or hostile to Israel, or who say he is "striving to topple Netanyahu."

The poll, which was conducted Tuesday and Wednesday and supervised by Professor Camil Fuchs, comes after reports of a crisis in diplomatic relations due to Israel's announcement during a visit by U.S. Vice President Joe Biden that it will build 1,600 housing units in East Jerusalem.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's aides said they had hoped the public would rally around him and see him as a victim of overly strict treatment by the Obama administration.

However, there was no significant change in the level of public satisfaction with Netanyahu since the previous poll, conducted six weeks earlier. Respondents' evaluation of his suitability as premier also remained stable.

It appears the public was relatively unfazed by the Israeli and American media frenzy over the diplomatic drama. Perhaps Israelis are too busy cleaning and shopping for Passover or looking for cheap vacations.

The survey indicates that Netanyahu emerged from the crisis unscathed in the eyes of Israeli public opinion, but the continued construction in Jerusalem should cause him some concern.

Nearly half the respondents (48 percent) said Israel must keep building in the capital, even at the expense of a rift with the United States, while 41 percent said Israel must accept the American demand (and Palestinian ultimatum) to stop building in Jerusalem until the end of the negotiations (which haven't begun yet). Netanyahu may conclude that at the moment he may have some room to maneuver, but the balance between supporters and opponents of continued construction could easily shift.

A large majority believes Netanyahu is not deliberately causing a crisis to thwart talks with the Palestinians, as some have argued. A smaller majority does not believe Netanyahu should fire Eli Yishai, whose Interior Ministry announced the construction during Biden's visit. Yishai is not particularly liked by the mainstream, but Israelis aren't that interested in seeing heads roll - or the coalition destabilized - over this incident.

Though the public remained composed in the face of the diplomatic fracas, poll respondents are not thrilled with the prime minister's conduct in the affair.

More people said Netanyahu's behavior was irresponsible than said he acted responsibly. The public seems to be treating Netanyahu harshly; after all, he didn't plan the badly timed announcement and he did apologize several times. So why is he seen as irresponsible nonetheless?

Perhaps the words "Netanyahu" and "conduct" are a disastrous combination for a prime minister who lost power a decade ago because of improper behavior.

His performance in the first year of his current term is not especially encouraging. As soon as people hear those two words in the same sentence, they give Netanyahu an F. No matter that he didn't rant and rave, that he made an effort to soothe the Americans.

The prime minister's aides waited tensely for the weekend newspaper surveys. They believed the public's heart would be with their man, whom they see as the underdog who was scolded though he did no wrong.

The public has not turned its back on Netanyahu, but it hasn't applauded his performance either. Perhaps average Israelis cannot, and do not want to, imagine themselves living in a far worse reality than this - without the warmth and light of an American alliance.

Message Headers:

From: H <HDR22@clintonemail.com>

To: Jon Davidson [REDACTED]

Date: Sun, 21 Mar 2010 08:34:37 -0400

Subject: Fw: you guys see this?

B6

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