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The supreme excellence is to subdue the armies of your enemies without even having to fight them.

– Sun Tzu

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Keeping It Quiet: The Israel Lobby's Crushing of Dissent

by Charley Reese

The first weapon of choice for the Israeli lobby when someone with prestige publishes a soundly researched paper or book critical of Israel or its powerful lobby is silence. If it's a book, it rarely gets reviewed; its author doesn't get interviewed. If it's a paper, there are no news stories in the big corporate press, no interviews with the authors, no television appearances.

For the average American who depends on the press to tell him what's going on, it's as if the criticism never existed. The second weapon is, of course, to launch vicious personal attacks.

Both methods are being used against an astounding paper titled "**The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy.**" It was written by two renowned academics, John J. Mearsheimer of the University of Chicago and Stephen M. Walt of the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University.

So far as I've been able to determine with the help of Google, while the paper and talk about it are all over the Internet, they are missing from the big corporate press as of this writing. It was published in the *London Review of Books*, and you can read it or download an edited version at www.lrb.co.uk. There was one news story about it in the *Christian Science Monitor* and an attack on it by David Gergen in *U.S. News & World Report*. Gergen is editor at large of the magazine, which is owned by an ardent Zionist, Mortimer Zuckerman. Gergen is a professional spinmeister who has always served the people who have the butter for his bread.

The essence of the paper, which is thoroughly footnoted, is that Israel's lobby has so skewed American foreign policy in the Middle East that the

U.S. places the security of Israel ahead of security for the United States.

"This situation has no equal in American history," the authors state.

The Anti-Defamation League was quoted in a Jewish publication as saying that if the paper gained the attention of the mainstream media, then a "more vigorous attack" would be launched. So far, it has not, though in the *Christian Science Monitor* story one of the attack dogs of the Israel lobby branded these two esteemed academics from prestigious universities as "incompetents."

This paper isn't the first to criticize the Israeli lobby. There have been lots of papers and books written by distinguished individuals, none of which you've probably ever heard of. *They Dare to Speak Out*, by former Rep. Paul Findley, and *The Passionate Attachment*, by George W. Ball, one of America's most distinguished diplomats, are two that come to mind. It was the late Sen. William J. Fulbright who first called Congress "Israeli-occupied territory."

What the authors of the current paper hope to do is start a sensible public debate about the Israeli lobby and America's policy in the Middle East. Of course, avoiding an honest debate is one of the primary objectives of the lobby. That's why it uses silence and, if that doesn't work, vicious personal attacks. It has certainly buffaloed Congress and most of America's news media.

Another author given the silent treatment as well as vicious personal attacks is Norman Finkelstein, a professor at DePaul University. He's written three outstanding books you've probably not heard of: *The Holocaust Industry, Image and Reality of the Israel-Palestine Conflict*, and his latest, which got not a line of review, *Beyond Chutzpah: On the Misuse of Anti-Semitism and the Abuse of History*. Finkelstein, by the way, is Jewish and the son of Holocaust survivors.

This is a most serious issue and deserves an honest public debate. Whether you agree with any of the above authors and academics, you should read what they have to say and not be deterred by cheap ad hominem attacks.

You've heard the same message from me, of course, but I'm only a country boy turned journalist with no fancy degrees. If you're impressed with

credentials, Finkelstein, Findley, Walt, Mearsheimer
and Ball have them up to their armpits.

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Charley Reese has been a journalist for 49 years, reporting on everything from sports to politics. From 1969-71, he worked as a campaign staffer for gubernatorial, senatorial and congressional races in several states. He was an editor, assistant to the publisher, and columnist for the Orlando Sentinel from 1971 to 2001. He now writes a syndicated column three times a week for King Features, which is carried on Antiwar.com. Reese served two years active duty in the U.S. Army as a tank gunner.

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