

Who is this Israel, and what's all this talk of an "Israel Lobby"?

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ED HAAS - MUCKRAKER REPORT

Who is this *Israel*, and what's all this talk of an "Israel Lobby"?

April 14 2006 – In March 2006, the London Review of Books published *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy* by Professor John J. Mearsheimer, Department of Political Science, University of Chicago and Professor Stephen M. Walt, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University.^[1] In this working paper, the two authors make the argument that the centerpiece for US Middle Eastern policy, especially since the Six-Day War in 1967, has been developed by the United States based primarily on its relationship with Israel. While many fellow scholars have applauded the authors for having the courage to suggest that the "Israel Lobby" might have too much power and influence in Washington DC, *which it in fact does*, the mainstream media has blacklisted the merits of this report by only reporting on the backlash of those who are offended by its content.

Mearsheimer and Walt have expectedly been accused of distorting history while being paranoid and conspiratorial. In a Washington Post article, Harvard Law professor Alan M. Dershowitz said the professors "destroyed their professional reputations." Dershowitz went on to say "We've all heard this before, the talk of powerful Jewish lobbies and the language one hears on Arab and extreme right-wing web sites."^[2] In the same Washington Post article, Marvin Kalb, a senior fellow at the Kennedy School said the report was filled with errors such as the assertion that Israeli forces were better armed and positioned than the Arab armies in the 1947 – 1948 war. "It does play into the terrible argument that Jewish no-goodniks control the media and our foreign policy," Kalb said.

What is most fascinating about the shallow rebukes delivered by Dershowitz and Kalb is their rigid denial that much of anything factual is contained in the report. Kalb for instance focused in on one of the least important statements made in the report to claim it was "filled with errors" even though history clearly demonstrates that the Israeli forces must have been better armed and positioned than the Arab armies in the 1947-1948 war because the Israeli forces won the war. What Kalb claims is an error, suggests in a distorted effort to defend all things Israel at all costs, that the public should dismiss the content of this bold paper while believing that Israeli forces won the 1947-1948 war because they were less armed and poorly positioned against the Arab forces. Talk about an extreme, right wing conspiracy! Wars are won by being better armed and better positioned than your opponent, even in the *Promise Land*.

In *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy*, the authors make the point that the term "Israel Lobby" is a generic term used to define those who *lobby* the U.S. Congress on behalf of Israel and Israeli – United States relations. It would be simply mindless to suggest that such lobbying organizations do not exist. They are as matter of fact as the out-of-control federal government operating in Washington DC itself today. The question isn't if these lobbying groups exist, but rather who they are, and how much influence do they actually wield on Capitol Hill?

In the June 10, 2002 edition of *The Nation*, Michael Massing wrote an article titled, *The Israel Lobby*.^[3] In this piece, Massing reported on a May 2, 2002 vote by the U.S. Congress, which basically expressed the United States' unqualified support for Israel in its recent (2002) military actions against the Palestinians. The vote in the Senate was 94 to 2 and in the House, 352 to 21. According to Massing, the media coverage regarding

this overwhelming resolution to support Ariel Sharon's militarized and oppressive handling of the Palestinians failed to research and report on the *real causes* behind such a bipartisan, blind vote in favor of a resolution that proved to later hamper the restart of peace talks; a resolution that now retired, South Carolina Senator Fritz Hollings suggested was actually motivated by "senators after campaign contributions". Who then would those senators be seeking campaign contributions from?

Massing indicated that the real story behind the lopsided resolution vote is the *American Israel Public Affairs Committee*. The AIPAC is widely regarded as the most powerful foreign-policy lobby in Washington DC and by other accounts, the most powerful lobby period, except for perhaps the *Association for the Advancement of Retired Persons* (AARP). Describing the AIPAC, Massing wrote, "Its 60,000 members shower millions of dollars on hundreds of members of Congress on both sides of the aisle. It also maintains a network of wealthy and influential citizens around the country, whom it can regularly mobilize to support its main goal, which is making sure there is "no daylight" between the policies of Israel and of the United States." As powerful, influential, and often intimidating as the AIPAC is, Massing is quick to point out that the mainstream media reports on Congressional votes that serve Israeli interests and policies as if the AIPAC does not even exist and therefore had nothing to do with the outcome of how members of the U.S. Congress voted.

The authors of *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy* make the same observations. According to the report, "In 1997, *Fortune* magazine asked members of Congress and their staffs to list the most powerful lobbies in Washington. AIPAC was ranked second behind the AARP, but ahead of heavyweight lobbies like the AFL-CIO and the National Rifle Association (NRA). A *National Journal* study in 2005 reached a similar conclusion, placing the AIPAC in second place (tied with AARP) in the Washington's "muscle rankings." Again, it must be emphasized that the question is not whether there is an "Israel Lobby" but rather how much power does the "Israel Lobby" command and wield in Washington DC.

Exactly how does the AIPAC accomplish its goals? What about the other groups / supporters that are defined as part of the "Israel Lobby"? Who else is supporting these lobbying groups and why? What is the real agenda and does it in fact place what's best for the United States behind what's best for Israel? The Muckraker Report interpretation of the working paper by Professors Mearsheimer and Walt is that the writing is on the wall if the American people want to read and comprehend it. What follows are the key elements of the Mearsheimer / Walt report pertaining to the "Israel Lobby."

- It wields significant influence in Washington, pressuring both Congress and the Executive branch to support Israel down the line.
- The Lobby strives to ensure that public discourse about Israel portrays it in a positive light with the goal being to prevent critical commentary from getting a fair hearing in the political arena.
- The Lobby controlling the debate is essential to guaranteeing U.S. support for Israel because a candid discussion of U.S.-Israeli relations might lead Americans to favor a different policy.
- By controlling the debate, the Lobby's effectiveness is its influence in the U.S. Congress, *where Israel is virtually immune from criticism*.
- AIPAC's success is due to its ability to reward legislators and congressional candidates who support its agenda, and to punish those who challenge it.
- AIPAC makes sure that its friends get strong financial support from the myriad pro-Israel political action committees.
- AIPAC organizes letter-writing campaigns and encourages newspaper editors to endorse pro-Israel candidates.
- Members of Congress, for research and information, often turn to AIPAC *before* staffers call the Library of Congress, Congressional Research Service, committee staff or administration experts.

The conclusion made by Mearsheimer and Walt is that AIPAC is a *de facto* agent for a foreign government and has a stranglehold on the U.S. Congress. As former South Carolina Senator Fritz Hollings said in 2004, “You can’t have an Israeli policy other than what AIPAC gives you around here.”^[4] What was the “Israel Lobby” response to the Hollings’ remarks? After all, Mearsheimer and Walt contend that the lobby works to portray Israel in a positive light while striving to prevent negative commentary. How did the “Israel Lobby” control the debate, particularly after Hollings proclaimed that the Iraq war is being fought for Israel, and said in defense of his proclamation, “That is not a conspiracy. That is the policy. Everybody knows it because we want to secure our friend, Israel.”?

On May 23, 2004, *Global News Service of the Jewish People* (JTA) published an article by Matthew E. Berger titled, *Not so gentle rhetoric from the gentleman from South Carolina*.^[5] Virtually every fact that Mearsheimer and Walt reported in their working paper on the “Israel Lobby” is validated in the JTA piece. What follows are key points from the Berger article:

- Hollings comments come as Democrats are fighting to retain support among Jewish voters and campaign donors because President Bush’s vigorous prosecution of the war on terrorism and his strong support for Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon have made him unusually popular, for a Republican, with Jewish voters.
- Several American Jewish organizations reacted strongly to Hollings’ column, suggesting he was scapegoating the Jewish community and providing ammunition for anti-Semitic attacks.
- Some pro-Israel lobbyists say he (Hollings) has a poor voting record on Israel.
- Several American Jewish organizations rebuked Hollings for his column.
 - “Regardless of whether one feels that America’s war on Iraq was justified, the charge that it is being fought by the U.S. on behalf of Israel grossly misrepresents the legitimate U.S. interests that are involved in the debate,” Abraham Foxman, national director of the Anti-Defamation League, wrote in a letter to Hollings.
- The National Jewish Democratic Council did not speak out against Hollings until two weeks after the column appeared. The council had won praise a year earlier when it was the first Jewish group to criticize Rep. James Moran (D-VA) for suggesting that the Jewish community had pressed for the Iraq war.
 - Ira Forman, the council’s executive director, said his group had not spoken out because publicizing Hollings’ original comments might have fueled anti-Jewish sentiment.
- In response to Hollings specifically attacking AIPAC, the spokesman for AIPAC, Josh Block said he would not comment on the Hollings’ statement, referring questions to other Jewish organizations such as the Anti-Defamation League and the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations.

As Mearsheimer and Walt point out, the “Israel Lobby” is quick to tag as *anti-Semitic* anybody who dares speak of its work and methodology, which is exactly how it responded to the Hollings’ comments. Politicians across the United States fear such a label and so does the media. Recall that fellow professors commended Mearsheimer and Walt for the *courage* to write *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy*. Why was courage necessary? Listen to what some anonymous sources in the JTA article had to say and you decide whether the “Israel Lobby” is a real force that could be wielding enough power in Washington to influence U.S. policy into a shape that is pleasing and favorable to Israel. Said one senior Democratic staff member who spoke on condition of anonymity, “Senator Hollings eloquently stated what many members of Congress believe but are too afraid to say.” According to JTA, the *staffer* went on to say that “lawmakers fear they’ll lose elections if they don’t support AIPAC. More likely, they’ll lose key fund-raising support or be deluged with calls and appearances from pro-Israel lobbyists and constituents.” If this isn’t a pro-Israeli lobby having a stranglehold on the U.S. Congress, what than I ask, is?

According to the Mearsheimer and Walt paper, when 2004 presidential candidate Howard Dean called for the United States to take a more “even-handed role” in the Arab-Israeli conflict, Senator Joseph Lieberman accused him of selling Israel down the river and said his statement was “irresponsible.” Mearsheimer and Walt go on to say that virtually all top Democrats in the House signed a hard-hitting letter to Dean criticizing his comments, and the *Chicago Jewish Star* reported that “anonymous attackers are clogging the e-mail inboxes of Jewish leaders around the country, warning, *without evidence*, that Dean would somehow be bad for Israel.” It is worth noting that the downfall of Dean proved to be the audio manipulation by the media of his now infamous, “I have a scream speech” in which the actual background noise in and of the crowd of Dean supporters was turned off and the microphone in which he was speaking into turned on, thus creating the news clip that made him look and sound like a pro-wrestler gone mad. All Dean said was that the U.S. might consider taking a more “even-handed role” in the Arab-Israeli conflict, and his bid for the Presidency was taken to the mat by a mystery *super fly* coming off the top rope of the political *squared circle*!

This article would be incomplete if the Muckraker Report did not describe, in biblical terms, another critical component to the success of the “Israel Lobby” operating in the United States. It would be a great disservice to the reader to not talk about the Christian Zionists that, driven by faith in a literal second coming of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, believe in their hearts that there is a higher purpose and prophecy yet to be fulfilled, and that fulfillment is contingent on the survival of Israel. It is without debate that many Christians believe that the establishment on May 15, 1948 of the Jewish state now called Israel was a fulfillment of biblical prophecy that was a necessary prelude to the second coming of Jesus Christ. In the *Book of Jeremiah* it is written,

Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that it shall no more be said, The Lord liveth, that brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt; But, The Lord liveth, that brought up the children of Israel from the land of the north, and from all the lands whither he had driven them, and I will bring them again into their land that I gave unto their fathers. Jeremiah 16: 14-16

American Christians primarily support Israel from a biblical perspective and not a policy perspective. Over 40 million evangelical Christians living in the United States believe that we are living in the end times as described in the Book of Revelation. Ever since Y2K, the turn of a new millennium in the year 2000, hundreds of millions of Christian books have been sold pertaining to the end of the world and the second coming of Jesus Christ. For example, the Left Behind series, with sales of more than 62,000,000 copies, comprise the fastest-selling adult fiction series ever. Seven of the titles reached number one on the *New York Times* bestseller list as well as those of *USA Today*, *The Wall Street Journal*, and *Publishers Weekly*.

For those of you who are unfamiliar with the Left Behind series, it is a set of twelve books, with volume one telling the story of Christians being “raptured” or lifted up to heaven at the beginning of the “great seven year tribulation” as described in the Book of Revelation. As God’s wrath is poured out on the world, Israel, particularly Jerusalem, takes center stage when the antichrist enters the Holy of Holies and commits the *Abomination of Desecration* of the Jewish Temple by proclaiming himself God, Lord, and Savior. There is some debate among Christians as to how the original Jewish Temple will be rebuilt so that this prophesy can be fulfilled, but the majority believe in a literal rebuilding of the Jewish Temple, which is even more the reason to be pro-Israel. Simply put, Israel must not only survive, but it must also be able to deal with the problem of the *Dome of the Rock*. The Dome of the Rock is the Muslim Shrine erected in 691A.D. on the spot where Muslims believe Muhammad ascended to Heaven during his Night Journey to Jerusalem. The Rock also refers to the spot where Abraham prepared to sacrifice his son Isaac. Jews believe the Dome is built on the original site of the Jewish Temple, and so do Christians!

It is fascinating to consider world events, particularly the War in Iraq, and the overall U.S.

policy to change Muslim countries into democracies rather than theocracies. Is it possible that U.S. military might and imperialist policy is fulfillment of prophesy prerequisites aimed at weakening the will and unity of Muslims to such a degree that the Jews will be free from any real national security threat to demolish the most sacred Muslim shrine in the world so that the Jewish Temple can be rebuilt? Is it possible that Christian Zionists, many of which now rule the United States with an iron fist, also see their role in U.S. policy as secondary to their yearning to be the generation that does not know a natural death, the generation that does not pass away but is raptured out of the great tribulation? For some this is scary, scary stuff. For others, it's the love of God. To understand this further, the question that needs to be answered is who is this Israel and is the Israeli state of May 15, 1948 actually part of the second coming equation?

From a biblical point of view, Israel was first a person, and then a people. In the Book of Genesis it is written,

And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed. Genesis 32:28

There is some important biblical genealogy to consider at this point. Noah had three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth. Shem was the ancestor of Abraham. God's blessing and promise was given and placed upon Abraham. Jews, Christians, and Muslims all share this belief. Abraham was the father of Isaac who fathered Jacob. Jacob was renamed Israel by God as revealed in Genesis 32:28. Jacob was the father of Joseph who was the father of Ephraim and Manasseh. It is revealed that the *'Birthright Blessings' of God's Covenant Promise* was passed by Jacob (Israel) unto Ephraim and Manasseh in Genesis 48:13-16.

*And Joseph took them both, Ephraim in his right hand toward Israel's left hand, and Manasseh in his left hand, and brought them near unto him
And Israel stretched out his right hand, and laid it upon Ephraim's head who was the younger, and his left hand upon Manasseh's head guiding his hands wittingly; for Manasseh was the first-born.
And he blessed Joseph, and said, God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God who fed me all my life long unto this day,
The angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads; and let my name be named on them, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth. Genesis 48:13-16*

Why all this talk and reference to the Bible and God's Covenant Promise given to Abraham that passed to Jacob (Israel) that passed through Joseph to two of his son's, Ephraim and Manasseh? The point in all of this is that if you are a Christian, particularly a Christian that has faith in the end times and the literal second coming of Jesus Christ, and that faith involves God's chosen people as the great tribulation unfolds, then you have to ask yourself, does the Zionist state of Israel as defined by world maps of today represent the genealogical peoples of Ephraim and Manasseh of whom God's blessing and covenant is upon? Point blank – does every person who calls himself or herself a Jew and lives in Israel today necessarily represent God's promise and God's *chosen* people in the biblical context? It is hardly likely if you seriously consider the historical facts in the light of the Bible. Another key point that must be considered is that the biblical Promised Land is called Canaan and encompasses a far greater territory than that of the state of Israel. The fact is that the borders of Israel as we know it today were drawn by men with armies, and not by God! Yet Christian Americans today regard the state of Israel as it emerged in 1948 and exists today as the biblical Israel, which as described herein was a *people*, not a *state*.

On February 4, 2006, Israel News source, *Haaretz Daily*, reported that U.S. Christian televangelist, John Hagee plans to launch a Christian pro-Israel lobby.^[6] In the *Haaretz* piece by reporter, Shiomo Shamir, Reverend Hagee is reported to have said that his group would be a Christian – *and more powerful* – version of the *American Israel Public Affairs*

Committee (AIPAC). Hagee said that his pro-Israel lobby would target senators and congressmen on Capitol Hill. He claims that a quarter of all congressmen are evangelicals, and many American legislators represent regions that include a large evangelical population. Hagee is also reported to have said to the *Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations* that the evangelical support Israel from a biblical perspective, but did not explain exactly what that meant. The Muckraker Report on the other hand, just did. The point is that Christian Zionists and evangelicals support Israel for biblical purposes. Jerusalem is a holy city for Christians as well as Jews and Muslims.

Is it not peculiar how Hagee said that his Christian pro-Israel lobby would be more powerful than AIPAC? When asked to respond to Senator Hollings' comments, is it not interesting that AIPAC referred responses to other pro-Israel interest groups? It certainly does demonstrate a network of a powerful pro-Israel lobbyists operating in Washington but does it necessarily indicate that the "Israel Lobby" is controlling U.S. foreign policy? Does the fact that a divided Iraq is in deed favorable to Israeli security, *divide and conquer*, indicate that the U.S. invaded Iraq because it's what the "Israel Lobby" wanted? Israel certainly favored the toppling of Saddam Hussein and the decentralization of power and control in Iraq, but then again, Iran also favors the ousting of the Hussein regime. Iran doesn't care much for U.S. troops as their next door neighbors, but make no mistake about it, after Saddam Hussein used chemical weapons on the Iranian people during the Iran – Iraq War killing and disfiguring millions of Persians, seeing his power crumble, even in the hands of Americans, was initially, and granted, temporarily pleasing to Iran.

A better and current understanding of the "Israel Lobby" is found in current Israeli comments regarding speculation that the Bush Administration already has a bombing date "penciled in" for Iran; an allegation that Bush denies. On April 12, 2006 the Washington Post ran an article by Luke Baker titled *Israel reacts warily to Iran's nuclear progress*.^[7] According to the Baker piece, Elder Israeli statesman Shimon Peres, responding to Iran's declaration that it has successfully enrich uranium said, "The United States has placed this at the top of its agenda. I do not recommend that we should be involved. I am sure the United States is aware of the expected danger and the matter is in its hands." Think about what Peres has said. Iran leadership has said it venomously opposes Zionism and would like to wipe the Zionist state of Israel off the map, and a former Prime Minister of Israel, Shimon Peres says "The United States has placed this at the top of its agenda." It should be obvious to the reader that Peres is completely confident that Israeli security is in the United States' best interests and therefore "we" will handle Iran.

Israel's chief of military intelligence, Amos Yadlin, is reported to have said that he "urges" an acceleration of efforts to stop Iran's enrichment program. Think about it! The Chief of Israeli Military Intelligence is urging acceleration of efforts to stop Iran's nuclear program! Who is it that Yadlin is urging and what role is his country going to play in the effort? The answer is that Israel is urging the United States to "handle" Israel's current and greatest threat - *Iran*, even though Israel has by far, the most powerful and sophisticated *nuclear* military in the region. But because of what atrocities the Israelis have inflicted on the Palestinians, they are so hated in the region that the U.S. feels compelled to fight its battles so that Arab-Israeli tensions do not deteriorate further, rather than allow Israel to deal with its own regional problems absent the might of the U.S. military. Maybe if the U.S. would take a more even-handed approach in the region, Israel would be more willing to behave neighborly and humanly. Instead the U.S. gives Israel, an unchecked nuclear power, \$3 billion a year to fight its battles with American blood and American taxpayer dollars in a distorted effort to improve the chances for peace in the Middle East.

Meanwhile back in Washington, the "Israel Lobby" is churning out the Iran nuclear threat rhetoric through the controlled media and lambasting any person or group that suggests that the *lobby* has a stranglehold on U.S. foreign policy. Politicians fear speaking out against anything AIPAC says or does and professors apparently risk their careers to state the obvious – that the U.S. Congress is bought and paid for by a foreign lobbying effort

that has, can, and will make or break a political career. Christians have fallen for the bait by believing that the Zionist Israel of today is the biblical Israel and the forerunner to the second coming of Jesus Christ, when it is not.

It can be concluded that the “Israel Lobby” only wields its power in Washington because of the evangelical belief that the state of Israel is the biblical Israel. As fundamentalists and Zionist Christians cling to the belief that we are living in the end times, hundreds of millions of Christians have turned to the Book of Revelation in an attempt to uncover what will happen next in the world and gauge how close “we” are to the “rapture” of the church. Yet for as many as are devoted to Israel and the Book of Revelation, few if any evangelical and apocalyptic Christians are studying and considering the meaning of Revelation 2:9 and 3:9.

I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan. Revelation 2:9

Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but so lie; behold, I will make them come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee. Revelation 3:9

Who is this Israel and who are those that say they are Jews and are not, but so lie? As a Christian man, although I concede one of the worst examples of a Christian I have ever known, I want to know where the lost tribes are that Jesus Christ said he sought. I want to know who are God’s chosen people in the biblical sense, as well as their relationship with *God’s Promise* given to Ephraim and Manasseh. I want to know if the Jew living in the modern day state of Israel is in fact, God’s Promise and God’s People.

As an American, I want *truth* in government and I want America and American interests here at home in our small towns, cities, and states to come first and foremost. I don’t want \$3 billion going to any country while American children are going to bed hungry, or sick because their families simply cannot afford medical attention and medicine. I don’t want to rebuild Iraq before rebuilding New Orleans and the Gulf Coast. I don’t want America’s sons and daughters shedding blood on foreign soil on behalf of another capable military. If military actions benefit Israel, then Israeli soldiers should be on the battlefield too! I believe Jews should not be persecuted, but neither should Muslims. I believe that if a Jewish state is acceptable within America’s concept of democracy, then we must concede that so is a Muslim state, a Palestinian state, yet our *actions* in that region of the world indicate we do not. Rhetoric and action are as opposing as *good* and *evil*.

But most of all, I believe far too many politicians in Washington DC amount to nothing more than modern day *Pharisees* and *Scribes*, claiming to be Christian, *acting all righteous*, but whose actions are not even remotely close to *Christ-like*. War is not Christ-like and neither is bearing false witness to the nation to justify war. Rationalize if you must, but the neo-conservative tyranny / fascist state that now rules the United States is a shameful and despicable abomination to the Christian faith, operating outside the teachings of Jesus Christ, and so is the work and methodology of the “Israel Lobby” that does in deed control U.S. foreign policy and the U.S. Congress.

[1] London Review of Books, Vol. 28 No. 6, [The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy](http://www.lrb.co.uk/v28/n06/mear01_.html), March 23, 2006, John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt, http://www.lrb.co.uk/v28/n06/mear01_.html, [Accessed April 12, 2006]

[2] Washington Post, Page A03, [Report on Effect of Israel Lobby Distorts History, Critics Say](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/04/02/AR2006040201039.html), April 3, 2006, Michael Powell, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/04/02/AR2006040201039.html>, [Accessed April 3, 2006]

[3] The Nation, [The Israel Lobby](http://www.thenation.com/doc/20020610/massing), Michael Massing, June 10, 2002, <http://www.thenation.com/doc/20020610/massing>, [Accessed April 6, 2006]

[4] [The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy](#), Footnote 74, Mearsheimer and Walt, Sen. Hollings Floor Statement Setting the Record Straight on His Mideast Newspaper Column, May 20, 2004

[5] JTA, [Not so gentle rhetoric from the gentleman from South Carolina](#), Matthew E. Berger, May 23,

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