



## Facts on the Emergency Committee for Israel

*In July 2010, a new group called the Emergency Committee for Israel (ECI) began airing a television attack ad against Pennsylvania Senate candidate Representative Joe Sestak (D-PA). The New York Times has documented the numerous distortions and inaccuracies contained in ECI's ad. Additionally, the Sestak campaign has appealed to Comcast not to run it.*

<http://tinyurl.com/2em53jh> <http://tinyurl.com/2bwjvmt>

*In August 2010, ECI began airing ads against Representative Rush Holt (D-NJ). The ad against Holt contained outright distortions and was easily debunked by Salon. Further, Salon charged that ECI was "lying" in their ad because of the apparent lack of research that preceded the ad's airing. <http://tinyurl.com/29ogtkz>*

*Unfortunately, ECI's efforts dangerously make support for Israel a partisan wedge issue. Below are some facts about ECI and an explanation as to why the group's efforts are detrimental to the pro-Israel community. At the very least, the statements of ECI's leadership are cause for concern among those seeking to continue the bipartisan nature of the U.S.-Israel relationship.*

### ECI's Efforts Dangerously Make Support for Israel a Partisan Wedge Issue:

- **ECI appears to be positioning itself to tear down the decades-old standard of bipartisan support for Israel as they seemingly demand lock step agreement with their hawkish partisan ideology.**
- **ECI also appears intent on dismissing and ignoring the pro-Israel accomplishments of the Obama Administration simply so they can bash President Obama, Democrats, and their supporters.**
- **Israel's Ambassador to the United States Michael B. Oren has expressed deep concern over the increasing use of support for Israel as a partisan issue in American domestic politics. Ambassador Oren stressed that bipartisan support for Israel is a strategic national interest for the State of Israel. <http://tinyurl.com/2donk5r>**
- ***Haaretz* reported on this issue in a story that highlighted ECI's activities:**

Israel is not too happy about this tendency. 'Israel has become a partisan issue in the U.S., and this political Ping-Pong is bad for us,' Israeli Ambassador to the U.S. Michael Oren said to *Haaretz*. <http://tinyurl.com/2343dgg>

[President Obama heads] “the most anti-Israel administration in the history of the United States.”

“I encourage our Democratic friends to have a competition with us on who can be more pro-Israel.”

-Gary Bauer, July 12, 2010 <http://tinyurl.com/2dvvr2o>

“Emergency Committee executive director Noah Pollak said that the organization was not partisan and wouldn’t want Israel to be a party-line issue, even though he thought that given the group’s conservative leadership it was ‘unlikely’ the group would back a Democratic candidate this year.”

-*The Jerusalem Post*, July 15, 2010 <http://tinyurl.com/2dzo8yg>

“Our purpose is to address three major threats to the U.S.-Israel alliance in the context of the American political debate: the Iranian nuclear program and Iran’s sponsorship of terrorist groups; the campaign to delegitimize and isolate Israel; and the hostility of the Obama administration to the traditional closeness of the two nations.”

-Noah Pollak, July 15, 2010 <http://tinyurl.com/24qs8jr>

“Perhaps the most telling feature of ECI’s first two ads has been the targets they’ve chosen. Both Sestak and Kilroy are not known within the Democratic caucus for being particularly critical of Israel... Both, however, face uphill election battles, with the betting money on their defeats. ECI could have chosen a tougher race in which to invest. But a campaign win would presumably allow it to flaunt its electoral muscle once the new Congress convenes.”

-The Huffington Post, August 5, 2010 <http://tinyurl.com/2up3bdm>

“... Israel isn’t exactly of paramount concern to the average voter. But ECI hopes that the attacks will hurt the fund-raising of politicians like Holt, as Jewish donors hold back. J Street will lose influence.

But then, destroying J Street in the name of protecting Israel is just one of ECI’s goals. Its larger mission is to destroy Obama—or, at the very least, destroy his ability to push Israel into agreeing to the sort of peace deal he was trying to craft last week. In that sense, ECI’s war against J Street and its Democratic allies in Congress is just a skirmish. The real big guns aren’t likely to come out for another two years.”

-Jason Zengerle, *New York Magazine*, September 3, 2010 <http://tinyurl.com/2d9lunj>

“Pollak and ECI spokesperson Michael Goldfarb said that the campaigns are meant to expose Democratic candidates who, they claim, merely pay Israel lip service.”

-*Washington Jewish Week*, October 27, 2010 <http://tinyurl.com/22obu6q>

### **ECI Seeks to Narrow the Definition of “Pro-Israel:”**

- **Statements like these reflect an “either you’re with us or against us” mentality, which has a high potential to narrow the size and diversity of the pro-Israel community.**

“We’re the pro-Israel wing of the pro-Israel community.”

“There are some who say they’re pro-Israel but aren’t really. ... Then there’s AIPAC, which is a wonderful organization, but one that’s very committed to working with the administration, so they pull some punches publicly.”

-William Kristol, July 12, 2010 <http://tinyurl.com/2dvvr2o>

**“I am hardly qualified to make national security recommendations** [emphasis added], but it seems clear that Israel must revive one of the tactics that decisively helped win the second intifada. It is time to resume assassinating terrorists. And by terrorists, I mean every member of Hamas. There should be no distinction made between ‘regular’ members of Hamas and those from the ‘military wing’ -- a dichotomy that has always been a self-serving fiction. The people who comprise Hamas are dedicated to the annihilation of Israel and the slaughter of every Jew who lives there; the IDF should reciprocally dedicate itself to the annihilation of every member of Hamas, and it should start with its leadership, so that the surviving subordinates can make informed decisions about their career prospects.”

-Noah Pollak, June 15, 2007 <http://tinyurl.com/274nwe>

### **What Others Have Said About ECI:**

“Israel’s Ambassador to the United States and others have it right when they stress the importance of bipartisanship in supporting a strong U.S.-Israel relationship. In contrast, Gary Bauer shows this new group’s true colors when he wildly and wrongly bashes the Obama Administration as ‘the most anti-Israel administration in the history of the United States.’ President Obama has gathered a global coalition against Iran, and strengthened strategic ties with Israel to unparalleled heights. Playing partisan games with support for Israel is wrong, period.”

-David A. Harris, President and CEO of the National Jewish Democratic Council, July 13, 2010  
<http://tinyurl.com/2bom53f>

“I think it will have an effect on the political debate. That’s troubling in the sense that what we’ve always striven to do is make sure that support for Israel in the United States is a bipartisan effort. ... To the extent that this fractures it and makes it a politicized issue is troubling.”

-Abraham Foxman, Director of the Anti-Defamation League, July 15, 2010  
<http://tinyurl.com/2dzo8yg>

“... Observers say the new organization, with an overwhelmingly Republican cast of characters and a strongly anti-Obama focus, is just a continuation of the longstanding and largely unsuccessful GOP effort to woo Jewish voters....”

“Colby College political scientist L. Sandy Maisel said the new group is more about partisan politics in today’s highly polarized environment than anything else ....”

“‘This kind of crude appeal — that if you label candidates anti-Israel, Jews will vote against them — just hasn’t worked,’ [Maisel] said. ‘Jewish voters are much too sophisticated for that.’”

-*The Jewish Week*, July 14, 2010 <http://tinyurl.com/24p7bhg>

“What is shamelessly clear from these cynical attacks against Sestak is that Israel policy is being used for harsh political purposes, with the ultimate goal of dealing President Obama a devastating foreign policy setback while blocking his attempts to promote Middle East peace. Unfortunately, these ideological warriors have little care for the real world consequences of such actions, which if successful, would undercut American interests in the Middle East for narrow partisan gain.”

-Joel Rubin, Deputy Director of the National Security Network, July 26, 2010  
<http://tinyurl.com/2v7yz9e>

“The charges against Mr. Sestak have no merit whatsoever. In fact few members of Congress can match Mr. Sestak's intimate understanding of Israel's legitimate and significant security concerns and appreciation for the U.S.-Israel relationship.”

“While Mr. Sestak's positions in support of a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict are consistent with the stated positions of the state of Israel and of the United States, those of the so-called Emergency Committee for Israel are not.”

“... [In] a recent interview with Politico, a spokesman for the Emergency Committee for Israel refused to endorse the goal of two states. The U.S. and Israeli governments have officially chosen a two-state solution as the preferred path to securing peace and security in the region.”

-Peter Joseph, President of the Israel Policy Forum, July 26, 2010 <http://tinyurl.com/22uup2n>

“Bill Kristol's new group the [Emergency Committee for Israel](#) is out with another TV ad attacking another Democrat, Rep. Rush Holt (D-NJ), for supposedly being unfriendly to the Jewish state. But it turns out a key fact in the ad -- that a purportedly Hamas-linked Muslim advocacy group gave Holt a 100% approval rating -- is, if you scratch just a little below the surface, so misleading as to be essentially a lie.

And not only that, there's evidence that ECI didn't even know what the 100% rating was based on (not very much, as it turns out) when the group produced the ad attacking Holt for the rating.”

“The remarkable thing is that ECI leaders seemingly *did not even know themselves* what the 100% rating was based on when they made and broadcast the ad.”

“In short: ECI based the attack ad on a number floating around on the Internet without even bothering to find out what it meant. Reporters would do well to keep that in mind when covering the group in the future.”

-Salon, August 31, 2010 <http://tinyurl.com/29ogtkz>

“We'd love to understand, if the ECI does support a viable two-state solution and recognizes the need for a successful peace process, why – other than partisan politics – is it so vehemently attacking members of Congress who share the views outlined above and continually vote for aid to Israel and other key pro-Israel measures?”

-Jeremey Ben-Ami, Executive Director of J-Street, August 31, 2010 <http://tinyurl.com/2acfmh8>

“ECI and other far-right organizations are sadly transforming the U.S.-Israel relationship into a partisan wedge issue, through distortions and outright lies, as demonstrated by mainstream American media. It's a nasty game, and beyond targeting pro-Israel Democrats, the real victim is the historic, bipartisan U.S.-Israel relationship that is truly essential. These groups see a short-term political gain by playing this dangerous game, but they are tragically missing the damage they are doing to the U.S.-Israel relationship in the process. We refuse to play this game; we will not turn Israel into a political football.”

-David A. Harris, President and CEO of the National Jewish Democratic Council  
<http://tinyurl.com/29ek65d>