



AFL STATEMENT

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We at the American Friends of Likud are very disappointed by the overt interference into the elections in Israel by certain leaders of American Jewish organizations who have criticized Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu for urging that the Jewish Home and National Union parties merge with the party known as Otzma Yehudit (Jewish Power) for the upcoming election.

It is insulting and obtrusive to the only true democracy in the Middle East for American Jewish leaders to meddle in these elections. Moreover, it bears noting that these same Jewish leaders (left and right) were pretty silent when other members of the Knesset made blatantly anti-Semitic remarks and comments. The unmistakable message to the Israeli public is that these American Jewish leaders are casting their uninvited votes in the election against the Likud, the Prime Minister's party, and that Israeli voters should vote the same way. Candidates and parties deemed illegitimate on the basis of racism, terrorism or other reasons have been disqualified in the past, and will continue to be disqualified, from running in Israeli national elections by the Israeli Central Elections Committee and/or Supreme Court - not by outsiders. Unless and until that happens, they are potential democratic representatives of segments of Israeli society.

The American Friends of Likud is neither endorsing nor condemning Otzma Yehudit or any other political party in Israel. We have too much respect for Israel's sovereignty to show the same bad judgment as the American Jewish leaders who have pretentiously put their thumbs on the scale of the Israeli political process. We do note, however, that mergers are common in Israel. We believe the Prime Minister has the same right as the opposition, to try to urge the creation of voting blocs.

The AFL suggests that American Jewish leaders learn from the U.S. Secretary of State, Mike Pompeo, who, when asked if the White House had any concerns about Netanyahu's outreach to Otzma Yehudit, answered: "We'll allow the Israeli people to sort this out." He further commented, "We're not about to get involved in an election, to interfere in an election of a democracy." We at AFL believe that leaders of American Jewish Organizations that have complained about foreigners meddling in United States elections should themselves refrain from interfering in Israel's elections. There will be a time for legitimate criticism of positions or statements of Israeli politicians once the democratic electoral process in Israel has been completed.

The AFL hopes Israeli voters join us in rejecting the interference into their elections by foreign leaders and are not influenced by anything other than their own views of what is best for Israel's future.

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