

RELEASE IN PART
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From: H <hrod17@clintonemail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, February 22, 2012 7:45 PM
To: 'sullivanjj@state.gov'; 'reinesp@state.gov'
Subject: Fw: H: FYI, re: NYT. She should be given scoop early. S

Had you seen this?

From: sbwhoep [redacted]
Sent: Saturday, February 18, 2012 09:57 AM
To: H
Subject: H: FYI, re: NYT. She should be given scoop early. S

http://walt.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2012/02/17/the_preemptive_strike_on_jodi_rudoren

The preemptive strike on Jodi Rudoren

Posted By Stephen M. Walt  Friday, February 17, 2012 -

In our book on the Israel lobby, John Mearsheimer and I emphasized that it was "wrong -- and objectionable -- to argue that Jews or pro-Israel forces 'control' the media and what [it] says about Israel." Instead, we argued that groups and individuals in the lobby work overtime to monitor what the media says about Israel, and to bring pressure to bear on reporters and editors who said things these groups or individuals didn't like. The lobby didn't "control" the media in a direct or conspiratorial fashion; it just sought to *influence* media coverage in a variety of sometimes heavy-handed ways, much as some other interest groups do. We documented numerous incidents where media organizations faced pressure to alter their coverage. As a former spokesman for the Israeli consulate in New York put it, "Of course, a lot of self-censorship goes on. Journalists, editors, and politicians are going to think twice about criticizing Israel if they know they are going to get thousands of calls in a matter of hours. The Jewish lobby is good at orchestrating pressure." (Note: "Jewish lobby" was his term, not ours). As an anonymous interviewee told journalist Michael Massing, "the pressure from these groups is relentless. Editors would just as soon not touch them."

Discourse about this topic has opened up a lot in recent years, but the same tactics are still on display. Case in point: the warning shots fired at the *New York Times*' new bureau chief in Jerusalem, Jodi Rudoren, which began when the ink on the press release announcing her appointment was barely dry.

What was Rudoren's scandalous transgression? She had the temerity to send a pleasant (but hardly effusive) response to a tweet from Ali Abunimah, who is the author of a book advocating one state for Israel and Palestine. Whatever you may think of Abunimah's views (I happen to think he's wrong on that issue), he's not a violent extremist and there's nothing inappropriate about Rudoren responding to him as she did. Rudoren also tweeted some positive things about Peter Beinart's forthcoming book *The Crisis of Zionism*.

Well, before you could say "hasbara," Rudoren was being chastised by a familiar list of commentators, including Adam Kredo of the *Washington Free Beacon*, Shmuel Rosner of the *Jerusalem Post*, and Josh Block, the former AIPAC staffer who recently led a despicable effort to smear the Center for American Progress. And of course Jeffrey Goldberg of the *Atlantic*, self-appointed Supreme Jurisprudent of What is Permissible to Say about Israel, got into the act as well. (Goldberg's sudden interest in fair-minded reporting is especially amusing, given his penchant for making up lies about those with whom he disagrees.)

Rudoren had done nothing wrong, of course. Her job as a reporter is to reach out to a wide variety of interested parties, to describe the situation on the ground as she sees it, and to render intelligent judgments about what she observes. I frankly don't envy her the job given how politicized the issue is. It remains to be seen how good a job she will do, but the obvious purpose of this little exercise in intimidation was to put her on notice. Her critics were sending a message: "If you write things that we don't like (and especially anything that might present Israel in a negative light), then we're going to raise a stink and try to get you to start pulling your punches."

As I've said *ad nauseum*, this situation is not healthy for the United States or for Israel. If Americans get a one-sided diet of reportage about this conflict, we are going to misunderstand it and we are going to keep making stupid or ill-informed decisions. We're also going to be less capable of giving our Israeli friends sensible advice, which all states need from time to time. Israel's staunchest backers shouldn't want a cheerleader at the *Times*' Jerusalem bureau; in fact, the more you care about Israel, the more you want someone who'll tell you the truth, even when some of it might not be pleasant to read or hear. Otherwise, you might not find out what's really happening until it is too late.