Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper came to power in 2006 with little experience in foreign affairs but with a well developed plan to transform his minority Conservative administration into a majority government replacing the Liberals as Canada’s “natural governing party.” Because his party’s core of Anglo-Protestant supporters was not large enough to achieve this goal, Harper appealed to non-traditional Conservatives, including Jews, on the basis of shared social values. His efforts were matched by those of Jewish leaders and the government of Israel to win the backing of the government and its followers in the face of declining domestic support for Israel and the rise of militant Islamic fundamentalism. These factors accelerated a change in Canada’s Middle East policy that began under Prime Minister Paul Martin, from a carefully balanced stance to one that overwhelmingly favors Israel. Harper’s “pro-Israel politics,” Michelle Collins observes, has “won the respect—and support—of a large segment of Canada’s organized Jewish community.” However, it has isolated Canada from significant shifts in Middle East diplomacy and marginalized its ability to play a constructive role in the region.

**Harper and the Jewish Vote**

When he became leader of the Canadian Alliance party, which merged with the Progressive Conservatives to form the Conservative Party of Canada in 2004, Tom Flanagan says that Harper realized “The traditional Conservative base of Anglophone Protestants [was] too narrow to win modern Canadian elections.” In a speech to the conservative organization Civitas, in 2003, Harper argued that the only way to achieve power

was to focus not on the tired wish list of economic conservatives or “neo-cons,” as they’d become known, but on what he called “theo-cons”—those social conservatives who care passionately about hot-button issues that turn on family, crime, and defense. Even foreign policy had become a theo-con issue, he pointed out, driven by moral and religious convictions. “The truth of the matter is that the real agenda and the defining

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issues have shifted from economic issues to social values," he said, "so conservatives
must do the same."

Arguing that the party had to come up with tough, principled stands on everything from
parents’ right to spank their children to putting “hard power” behind the country’s foreign
policy commitments, he cautioned that it also had to choose its battlefronts with care.
"The social-conservative issues we choose should not be denominational," he said, "but
should unite social conservatives of different denominations and even different faiths."

In the 2006 election, the victorious Conservatives elected 124 members of
parliament (MPs) to the 308 seat House of Commons, subsequently adding three
more members. The party maintained its stranglehold on western Canada, increased
its representation in Ontario and made a breakthrough in Quebec. It swept cities
in Alberta but fared less well in other urban centers where the largest multicultural
populations reside. Increasing support among Quebeckers and minority voters is
critical to Harper’s goal of forming a majority government. As Flanagan puts it,
“The suburbs of Toronto, Vancouver, and to a lesser extent of other cities are now
filling up with people who, based on their social values and capitalist work ethic,
should be natural Conservative voters, but who are still emotionally tied to the
Liberal Party.” The main targets are the Chinese, Korean, Hindu, Jewish, Persian,
Italian, and Vietnamese communities.

Flanagan claims Harper “has done all he can” to win their support, “starting with
his anti-same-sex-marriage advertising campaign of early 2005. He insisted that the
2005-06 [election] platform contain specific measures, such as an apology for the
Chinese head tax, lower landing fees for immigrants, and better recognition of their
credentials; and he has worked hard to fulfill these promises as quickly as possible
after forming government.” After taking power, Harper created an “ethnic outreach
team” directed by the Prime Minister’s Office (PMO) and Jason Kenney, currently
Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism, to wage a “focused
direct voter campaign to build support” for the Conservatives in order to “replace
the Liberals as the primary voice of new Canadians and ethnic minorities.” The
PMO is in charge of statements in parliament concerning ethnic communities and
of securing the attendance of the prime minister or senior ministers at “major ethnic
events.” Kenney and designated MPs liaise with minority leaders and communities.

Although only 371,000 strong, Canadian Jews are an established part of the
country’s economic and political landscape. Most also “have a strong affinity for
and identification with Israel.” Concentrated primarily in Toronto, Montreal,
Vancouver and Winnipeg, they are an important focus of Harper’s attention. In a
2007 briefing paper, the ethnic outreach team used the Toronto area constituency
of Thornhill, the most Jewish riding in the country, to show how the recruitment
strategy works. Comprising 37 percent of the electorate, Jews were a key target
in the effort to secure the 5,000 additional votes the Conservatives estimated they would need to unseat the Liberal incumbent. The approach included maintaining an up-to-date database of Jewish and other ethnic group electors, championing the party’s positions on issues that concern the community, targeted mailings, and individual contact at various events. Harper also assigned a PMO official to keep in touch with Jewish groups.11

Conservative strategists estimate that 20 percent of minority voters are not “accessible” to the party. This figure appears to include Arab Canadians, although the Conservatives have begun to make overtures to carefully chosen Muslim groups. Arab Canadians are almost twice as numerous as their Jewish counterparts, but they are not as well established and are more reluctant to engage in politics. The community, moreover, is “divided along national, regional and religious lines, which has actively prevented it from presenting a united front to policy makers.”12

The Conservative party’s interest in the Middle East is relatively recent. The Reform Party of Canada, which was established in 1987 and became the Canadian Alliance thirteen years later, paid little attention. But under Stockwell Day, an evangelical Christian who was the first leader of the Alliance, the party began taking strong stands on issues affecting Israel. After taking over the leadership in 2002, Harper, who had no record of speaking out on the Middle East, made it clear that the party would remain firmly in Israel’s corner. Reportedly, his thinking was influenced by neoconservatives in the United States, including expatriate Canadians David Frum, then a speechwriter in President George W. Bush’s White House, and Charles Krauthammer, a syndicated columnist for the Washington Post.13 Accusing the Liberals of “moral neutrality” in world affairs, Harper said an Alliance government would adopt a “value-oriented foreign policy” with “a stronger sense of Canada as a member of an alliance, a member of a family of western democratic nations that share certain political values—and our determination to work with those countries to achieve these things. We have a view of Israel...as an ally and part of our western democratic family.”14 Lloyd Mackey credits Day with building ties to the conservative Jewish community when he was Harper’s foreign affairs critic. Mackey identifies Charles McVety, president of Canada Christian College, and Frank Dimant, executive vice-president of B’nai Brith Canada, as key contacts. “The tradeoff is that B’nai Brith provides social conservatives with access to the conservative Jewish community, while McVety encourages the ‘bonding’ of Christians and Jews as an alternative to Christians proselytizing Jews.”15

According to Mackey, “the evangelical Christian viewpoint,” embraced by many members of the dominant Alliance wing of the Conservative party “has always tended to be quite pro-Israel.”16 Pollster Conrad Winn agrees, citing surveys indicating that “churchgoers and Christians show the most support for the religious rights of Jews in Canada and also the strongest support for Israel.”17 The Conservative caucus
contains up to seventy MPs who can be called evangelical Christians. This has enhanced the party’s appeal to Jewish voters and helped to blunt criticism that the adoption of positions favoring Israel is not simply a response to pressures from the Jewish lobby and the Israeli government.

The Jewish Lobby and Israeli Government

For their part, Canada’s Jewish leaders were alarmed that Canadian support for Israel was falling at a time when threats to that country were on the rise. “In particular,” says Harold Waller, “there was concern that Israel’s position in both public opinion in general and in elite opinion was deteriorating, that the media was not treating Israel fairly, and that government policy, especially at the United Nations, had tilted away from Israel.” Underlying these trends, Waller claims, was “the growing clout of Muslim voters (especially in some key areas), an entrenched foreign affairs bureaucracy that tilted toward the Arabs, and declining enthusiasm for Israel among party elites as Israel struggled to combat Palestinian terrorism through the use of techniques that were controversial in some circles.”

In 2002, an ad hoc group, consisting “mainly of wealthy Jewish businesspeople,” reviewed the community’s lobbying efforts. Calling itself the “Israel Emergency Cabinet,” it engaged GPC International, a public affairs firm, to devise a strategy to improve Jewish advocacy. This led to the creation of the Canadian Council for Israel and Jewish Advocacy (CIJA), which “oversees and coordinates the advocacy work” of five agencies: the Canadian Jewish Congress, the Canada-Israel Committee, the Quebec-Israel Committee, National Jewish Campus Life, and the University Outreach Committee. The right-leaning B’nai Brith has remained outside the arrangement.

A study of Canadian attitudes toward Israel and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, commissioned by the CIJA in the fall of 2004, offered a sobering assessment. Of those who considered themselves knowledgeable, 32 percent supported the Palestinians while 26 percent backed Israel. Overall, 89 percent held Israelis and Palestinians equally responsible for ongoing violence; 57 percent thought the conflict involved the human rights of Palestinians rather than the protection of Israelis from terrorism. Eighty-three percent did not want Canada to take sides, and 50 percent thought it should not play a role in settling the conflict. Unlike Jewish Canadians, only 11 percent thought the media viewed Israel unfavorably, while 33 percent saw the media as biased against Palestinians.

The fact that conservative Christians are most supportive of Israel would make Harper’s party a target for Jewish lobbying efforts. The CIJA adopted a two-fold strategy, “to underscore the shared values of an enlightened democracy between Canadians and Israelis and to downplay the significance of whatever the Palestinians...
were or were not doing.”24 B’nai Brith was also active in strengthening ties to evangelical Christians.25

In the meantime, building on a strategy begun by Prime Minister Menachem Begin in the 1970s, the Israeli government began encouraging visits by Christian evangelical groups to build support for Israel and to increase tourist income. In 2003, paralleling similar visits by their US counterparts, twenty prominent Canadian evangelical clergymen, commentators and educators went to Israel at the invitation of the country’s chief rabbi to strengthen ties between Christians and Jews. The group was led by Charles McVety, who, in addition to leading Canada Christian College, represented the US-based John Hagee Ministries in Canada. Hagee, a prominent figure in the Christian Zionist movement, heads Christians United for Israel, which lobbies on behalf of Israel in the United States. The goal of this and subsequent visits was to rally support within Canada’s estimated 2.5 million member evangelical community.26

In 2007, the Israeli Knesset established the Christian Allies Caucus to expand Christian support for Israel. The Canadian Israel Allies Caucus was launched in February 2007, with Harper in attendance.27 An executive assistant at Israel’s embassy in Ottawa is the Jewish representative of the Christian Allies Caucus in Canada. The caucus also has a Canadian Christian representative based in Ottawa. Activities have included speaking tours of major Canadian cities to encourage evangelical Christians to back Israel. According to a caucus representative, support within the evangelical community continues to grow.28

The Liberals and Jewish Voters

Historically Canadian Jews backed the Liberal Party because of its support for Israel and its progressive social policies. By the 1970s Jewish support for the Liberals was 20 percent above the national average.29 Joe Clark’s Progressive Conservative Party attempted to sway Jewish voters in the 1979 election by promising to move Canada’s embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau had resisted pressure from Menachem Begin to do so, but Clark succumbed to the urgings of party candidates in closely contested Toronto ridings with a substantial Jewish vote. The Conservatives won four of those seats to the Liberals’ two, although party organizers said the embassy pledge was marginal to the outcomes. Clark tried to implement the plan after he became prime minister. However, he retreated in the face of strong opposition, including the threat of sanctions from Arab states, concern among Canadian businesses, adverse public opinion, and the reaction of the Jewish community, which did not want to become embroiled in the controversy.30

The issue helped to defeat the Conservatives in the 1980 election, which returned Trudeau’s Liberals to power. According to Charles Flicker, it also had a long-term
impact on Canada’s Middle East policy, “which shifted from a pro-Israel bias to a more even-handed treatment…. Canada established relations with the PLO, its voting record at the United Nations was more balanced, and it strongly criticized the invasion of Lebanon in 1982.”31 Still, Canadian Jewry, which “flourished” under Trudeau’s policy of multiculturalism that sought to promote social cohesion by recognizing the equality of Canada’s ethnic populations, remained loyal to the Liberals. “Jews were not only well represented in virtually all sectors of Canadian society,” says David Goldberg, “they also held leadership positions in, and were making important contributions to, many of these sectors.”32 The connection remained strong during the 1984-93 period when Prime Minister Brian Mulroney’s Progressive Conservative government held power, although its policies were not substantially different from those of its predecessor.33

However, the “increasingly controversial nature of Israeli foreign and domestic politics” soon ushered in a new era in Canada’s relations with Israel.34 Prime Minister Jean Chrétien’s Liberal government, in office from 1993 until 2003, supported Israel’s right to exist within secure borders and the establishment of a Palestinian state. It opposed Jewish settlements in the Palestinian territories and Israel’s security fence inside the West Bank and East Jerusalem, and condemned Palestinian terrorism and excessive retaliation by Israel. At the United Nations, Canada parted company with the United States and Australia, and joined the dominant European and developing country majority in supporting or abstaining on resolutions sponsored by Arab states criticizing Israel’s occupation of the territories, its attacks against civilians, and its nuclear weapons program. “Although these votes were clearly biased against Israel,” columnist John Ibbitson observes, Canada saw them “as one of the few forums through which the Palestinian people [could] make their voices heard.”35 At home, Jewish voters, who showed greater willingness “to openly express competing perspectives on Israel,” continued to vote for the Liberals at a rate 8 to 10 percent above the national average.36

Canadian policy began to shift under Chrétien’s successor, Paul Martin. According to the Jewish Independent, “pro-Israel” parliamentarians gained “significantly more strength” in government, with six members of the recently formed “Liberals for Israel” caucus receiving cabinet appointments.37 Cabinet and caucus supporters “pushed hard” for a change in Canada’s votes at the UN, as did Jewish organizations, including the Canada-Israel Committee, which lobbied the government to adopt criteria to assess resolutions it considered biased against Israel.38 “One of the most powerful voices” says Ibbitson, was that of Gerald Schwartz, a close advisor to Martin and a key fundraiser for his party leadership campaign. Liberal MPs with large Arab Canadian populations and foreign affairs officials warned that a change in policy would not be welcomed by Arab states.39 But the views of Israel’s supporters prevailed.

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The shift began in the summer of 2004 when Canada abstained on a heavily supported resolution that took note of a finding by the International Court of Justice that Israel’s security barrier contravened international law. It continued during the General Assembly’s annual fall debate when Canada joined the United States and a few other countries in voting against resolutions condemning Israeli violence against Palestinians and the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza on which it had abstained in the past. The government argued that it could not support unbalanced measures condemning Israeli attacks against Palestinians while ignoring Palestinian assaults on Israelis. But Ottawa reversed earlier abstentions in supporting another resolution aimed at Israel, which called for a nuclear-free Middle East. The change in Canada’s voting record was confirmed in November 2005 when Ottawa opposed three more resolutions on the basis that they were one-sided and hindered peace negotiations. But by then Martin’s government had been defeated in parliament forcing an election that would bring Stephen Harper to power as head of a minority Conservative government.

Harper Comes to Power

During the election campaign Harper assured the CIJA that the Jewish community had “a good friend in the Conservative Party.” Describing Israel as “the only fully fledged, developed democracy in that part of the world,” he said “We share a unique relationship…that we believe all freedom oriented, democratic countries should share in.” A Harper government would “not support resolutions at the UN that are aimed specifically at Israel or designed to create a bias in the resolution of the Middle East conflict.” Harper’s comments drew praise from Shimon Fogel, CEO of the Canada-Israel Committee, who expected Canada would be more active in “encouraging the kind of reforms that would allow the UN to fulfill the objectives it was initially designed to address,” including an end to “the annual cycle of Israel-bashing.”

Dealing with Hamas

While the Canadian campaign was under way Palestinians were in the midst of an election of their own to choose a new Palestinian Legislative Assembly. It was apparent that Hamas, running on an anti-corruption platform, would defeat the ruling Fatah, confronting Canada and its allies with the challenge of how to deal with a democratically elected party espousing terrorism, and whether to continue their aid programs to the Palestinian Authority. In a conference call with Marc Gold, chairman of the Canada-Israel Committee, and Ed Morgan and Victor Goldbloom, the president and national executive chairman of the Canadian Jewish Congress, Harper credited his party with forcing Chrétien’s government to declare Hamas a
terrorist organization in 2002. He added, “if institutions committed to terrorism are playing a role in the Palestinian state, whether elected or not, that is an indication to me that the road to democracy has not been travelled very far.” The representatives seemed pleased. “I think you have answered fully,” Gold replied.44

On February 14, after speaking with President Mahmoud Abbas, Prime Minister Harper indicated that future Canadian aid to the Palestinian Authority would depend upon the new Hamas government’s commitment to non-violence, recognition of Israel, and acceptance of previous agreements, including the “road map,” sponsored by the United States, the European Union, Russia and the UN, which called for a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.45 Confusion over the government’s stand arose when foreign affairs minister Peter MacKay met with his Russian counterpart, who claimed Hamas had agreed to a “monitoring mechanism” to assure that aid would not be used for military purposes. Appearing to abandon his government’s conditions, MacKay said the mechanism would ensure that aid reached civilians and that Canada would continue to provide some assistance. But he backtracked after receiving “a flurry of phone calls from pro-Israeli groups.”46

Knowing that the United States and the European Union would soon suspend their aid programs to the Palestinian Authority, Harper decided that Canada would be the first country after Israel to do so. MacKay declared that Canada would have no contact with the Hamas government and would withhold aid until Harper’s conditions had been met. The action would reduce by a third Canada’s annual $25 million assistance package to the West Bank and Gaza. Another $10 million would continue to go to the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East via the Canadian International Development Agency. “We cannot send any direct aid to an organization that refuses to renounce terrorist activities,” said MacKay. “There will be no contact and no funds period.”47

The announcement was praised by pro-Israel organizations and condemned by Arab and Muslim groups. “Canada has stood true to its principles by refusing to do business with a terrorist entity whose avowed aim continues to be the destruction of the Jewish state,” said B’nai Brith. “A resounding slap in the face to Canadian values,” charged the Canadian Islamic Congress, which accused Harper’s government of “blindly following the lead of Washington and of the influential pro-Jewish lobby in both [the United States and Canada].”48 Opposition parties in parliament urged the government to concentrate on humanitarian assistance to Palestinian civilians.

Close observers of Middle East politics were also skeptical. Norman Spector, a former Canadian ambassador to Israel, applauded Ottawa’s decision to cut funding to the Palestinian Authority but criticized its refusal to deal with Hamas. “I think we should be finding some way to explain to Hamas what it is going to take to become an accepted and respected member of the international community, and

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even if there is just a one percent chance of success, we should take that chance,” said Spector. “We cannot foreclose any possible avenue to trying to resolve this conflict, and as good as it feels to say we have to cut off all contact with them, it won’t work.” However, Harper put more distance between his government and Hamas, telling a Holocaust Memorial Day ceremony that Hamas posed a threat to Israel similar to that of Nazi Germany.

Evangelical Christians applauded Harper. Promoting his Christians United for Israel lobby group before an audience of 2,000 Canadian evangelical leaders and Jewish representatives, including Israel’s ambassador, Alan Baker, and Major General Aharon Zeevi Farkash, chief of that country’s military intelligence, at Charles McVety’s Canada Christian College in Toronto, John Hagee praised the prime minister for denouncing Hamas. McVety established Christians United for Israel-Canada as an affiliate of Hagee’s group.

Meanwhile, Canada joined the United States in opposing a non-binding resolution in the UN Economic and Social Council calling on Israel to allow Palestinian refugee women and children displaced in the 1948 Arab-Israeli war to return to their homes. Ottawa had abstained on the same vote a year earlier. Harper reportedly made the decision “quickly and with little consultation.” MacKay denied that the vote marked a shift in Canadian policy. But the Canada-Israel Committee’s Shimon Fogel left little doubt that this was the case, saying “This government is showing some really meaningful resolve in continuing and expanding on what the previous government had begun to do.”

**War in Lebanon**

Events in the Middle East took an unexpected turn on July 12, 2006, when Hezbollah militants fired rockets into northern Israel and attacked a military patrol, killing three soldiers and abducting two others in an attempt to force Israel to return Lebanese prisoners. Calling the attack “an act of war,” Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, ordered a massive artillery, air and ground offensive to break Hezbollah’s grip on southern Lebanon. By the time the conflict ended 34 days later more than a thousand Lebanese civilians had been killed, almost a million had been displaced, and much of the country’s infrastructure lay in ruins. Forty-three Israelis perished as a result of Hezbollah rocket attacks. An Israeli government sponsored commission would later call the operation a “serious failure.”

When hostilities broke out Harper was en route to Europe for meetings with Prime Minister Tony Blair in London, G8 colleagues in St. Petersburg, and President Jacques Chirac in Paris. Although up to 50,000 Canadians were stranded in Lebanon, Harper agreed with President George W. Bush that Israel had “the right to defend itself,” describing its response as “measured.” He also supported Blair’s call for a
return to the road map approach to the Israel-Palestine conflict but saw no evidence that Hamas agreed.56

The crisis in Lebanon dominated discussion among the G8 leaders. The United States, the United Kingdom and Canada opposed an immediate end to the fighting, in effect giving Israel a green light “to destroy as much of Hezbollah as it could.” France, Germany and Russia agreed that Hezbollah had started the conflict but condemned “Israel’s disproportionate response and insisted on an immediate cease-fire.”57 The communiqué tried to bridge the gap. It expressed concern about the rising death toll, destruction of infrastructure, and the impact on Lebanon’s government, and called for the return of captured Israeli soldiers, an end to rocket attacks on Israel, cessation of Israel’s military operations and early removal of its forces in Gaza, and the release of arrested Palestinian politicians. Harper backed the statement, which Canadian officials insisted was consistent with his earlier comments.58

However, the declaration was overshadowed by the bombing deaths of eight members of a Montreal family in southern Lebanon, which accelerated Ottawa’s plans to evacuate Canadian citizens from the country. Harper expressed sympathy to the relatives of the victims but moderated his earlier views only slightly. “We are not going to give in to the temptation of some to single out Israel, which was the victim of the initial attack,” he said. “The onus remains on the parties that caused the conflict,” although “We urge Israel and others to minimize civilian damage.” Asked whether he would still describe Israel’s response as “measured,” he replied, “I think our evaluation of the situation has been accurate. Obviously there has been an ongoing escalation and, frankly, ongoing escalation is inevitable once conflict begins.”59

Harper joined Bush in opposing Chirac’s call for an immediate cease-fire, which, he argued, was not “the first thing” or “the only thing” called for in the G8’s statement.60 But with domestic criticism growing, the prime minister, accompanied by a photographer, press aides and his security detail, diverted his aircraft to Cyprus to return the first of 15,000 Canadians rescued from Lebanon. The government would also provide a $1 million aid package for Lebanon, which would grow to $30.5 million by the time the conflict ended.61

An opinion poll suggested that most Canadians supported the government’s handling of the evacuation, with 66 percent approving and 34 percent calling it inadequate. Criticism was strongest in Quebec, where most of the country’s 150,000 Lebanese Canadians reside.62 Only 45 percent agreed that Harper’s position on the conflict was “fair and balanced” versus 44 percent who thought it “decidedly too pro-Israel.” Again, opposition was highest in Quebec, where 62 percent were dissatisfied with the government’s stand.63

Apparently believing that the controversy would not damage its electoral prospects, the government stuck to its position. It participated in peace talks in

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Rome in late July, which failed to produce an agreement on ending the war. Canada joined the United States and the UK in insisting that a durable settlement had to precede a cease-fire, while moderate European and Arab states maintained that the fighting had to end first. Harper said Canada would not participate in a possible peacekeeping force, adding that its purpose should be to drive out terrorists, a task best performed by soldiers from nearby states. He would ask Israel and the UN for an explanation after Israeli forces bombed a UN observer post in southern Lebanon, killing a Canadian officer and three other soldiers serving with the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization. But Harper appeared to blame the UN for putting the soldiers at risk. A Canadian Forces board of inquiry later held Israel’s military responsible for the deaths, which it called “tragic and preventable.”

Canadian supporters lined up behind Israel’s war effort. In late July, 8000 people attended a “Stand with Israel” rally in Toronto organized by Jewish groups. The event’s master of ceremonies, film producer Robert Lantos, thanked Harper for his “unequivocal support,” and announced that he was giving up his membership in the Liberal party. Another participant, Israel’s consul general in Toronto, called the gathering a significant endorsement. Charles McVety, who had been the principal speaker representing the Christian right at the rally, called on Christians “to stand shoulder to shoulder with our Jewish friends in their hour of need.” In his capacity as chair of Christians United for Israel-Canada, he joined B’nai Brith’s Frank Dimant and Ambassador Baker in designating August 20 as a “National Day of Prayer for Israel and the Peace of Jerusalem.”

Conservative party officials sought to capitalize on Harper’s stand, asking supporters for “a special contribution of $150 or $75” in order “to keep the focus on principle and character and Canada’s return to its place in the world.” The Liberal and New Democratic Party opposition denounced the government for seeking to profit from the crisis. Arab Canadian groups were also outraged. But Jewish groups were not opposed. “The Liberal party has been a great beneficiary of Jewish largesse,” said Dimant. “Harper has taken a principled stand and I think that, in the next election, Canadians will respond accordingly.”

Exploiting Liberal Divisions
Harper’s stance put pressure on the Liberal Party, then in the midst of a campaign to choose a successor to former leader Paul Martin, to declare its position. With members split between those supporting Israel and those favoring Canada’s traditional peacekeeping role in the region, interim leader Bill Graham tried to steer a middle course. Reitering the party’s friendship with Israel, he argued that the government needed to maintain its capacity “to act as an appropriate intermediary,” for only in this way could it “truly help our friends.”
The public, too, believed the government had abandoned Canada’s traditional approach. A new poll reported that 45 percent of Canadians, including 61 percent in Quebec, disagreed with Harper’s support for Israel’s actions, while only 32 percent agreed. Seventy-seven percent wanted Canada to take a neutral position. Saying he was “not concerned with opinion polls,” Harper refused “to be drawn into a moral equivalence between a pyromaniac and a fireman.” Ambassador Baker weighed in calling Ottawa’s stand “completely consistent with Canada’s values of supporting the right of a sovereign state to act in self-defense against a terrorist organization that is part of the world Islamic jihadist attempt to destroy the state of Israel.” Setting diplomatic propriety aside, he called Graham’s statement “a continuation of the non-committal and un-useful position that was held by the previous Canadian government, which neither helped advance peace or prevented terrorism.” Jewish groups also applauded Harper. “We are enormously appreciative of the support that the government has extended to Israel,” said Shimon Fogel of the Canada-Israel Committee. This, he added, could help pry Jewish votes from the Liberals in the next election.

The Conservatives received another boost during their national caucus meeting in Cornwall, Ontario in early August. Gerald Schwartz, Heather Reisman and six other prominent members of the Jewish community, several of whom had been active in the Liberal party, took out an advertisement in a local newspaper praising Harper for “standing by” Israel. Frank Dimant called it a “very loud wake-up call” for the Liberals. “If Mr. Harper stays the course…I think this will end up being a long-term commitment [to the Conservatives] by these people.” Reisman, a life-long Liberal, joined the party shortly thereafter.

Dismissing the complaints of protesters outside the meeting as “very predictable,” Harper said “There are a lot of long-term strategic interests of this country and of the world at stake here and that’s why we’re taking the positions that we’re taking.” However, he took a softer line in remarks in French directed at Quebeckers, most of whom remained opposed, saying, “We have a completely different situation from three weeks ago…. We have a full-blown conflict, almost a war, and it’s hard to say whether a response is proportional to another.” Still, Lebanese Canadian groups in sensitive electoral battlegrounds in Quebec and Ontario vowed to campaign against the Conservatives in the next election.

On August 8, two days after 15,000 people demonstrated against his government’s policy in Montreal, Harper tried to assuage the dissenters, taking the unusual step of appointing Wajid Khan, a Liberal MP for the Toronto area riding of Mississauga-Streetsville and a native of Pakistan, as his special advisor on South Asia and the Middle East. Khan’s assignment was to visit the Middle East and report on Canada’s policy involvement. The Conservatives had tried to persuade other ethnic Liberal MPs to join the party, but Khan would not have to do so. Jason Kenney, then Harper’s
parliamentary secretary responsible for ethnic outreach, called the initiative an attempt to “to reach out past partisan concerns.”

Khan would not say where he stood on Middle East matters, claiming he had an open mind. He also denied that he would become a Conservative, insisting his appointment was “a supra-partisan issue.” But Arab Canadian groups were skeptical. Mazen Chouaib, executive director of the National Council on Canada-Arab Relations (NCCAR), said “We don’t want to see this another public relations stunt. The government has to deal with real issues and substantive issues.”

Khan’s appointment aggravated the split within Liberal ranks. Fellow MPs forced Khan to resign as assistant defense critic and to withdraw from caucus. The divisions deepened when Senator Jerry Grafstein called on the party to put its support firmly behind Israel. MP Borys Wrzesnewskyj, who had been a member of a parliamentary delegation invited to visit Lebanon by NCCAR, suggested Canada find a way to communicate with Hezbollah. Seizing the opportunity to exploit the Liberals’ differences, Kenney declared there should be no discussions with Hezbollah, which he likened to the Nazis. Bill Graham affirmed the party considered Hezbollah a terrorist group “that should be treated as such under all applicable Canadian laws,” but MPs were entitled to their views. Still, Wrzesnewskyj was forced to resign his associate defense critic post.

Controversy continued to follow the hapless Liberals. Leadership candidate Michael Ignatieff, who had said he was “not losing sleep” over an Israeli bomb attack that killed 29 Lebanese civilians in the village of Qana, reversed himself. In an interview on a popular Quebec television talk show in early October, he described the attack as a “war crime.” Widely seen as an attempt to regain lost support in Quebec, his comment was sharply criticized by Jewish organizations. Harper also pounced on the gaffe, accusing “virtually all” of the leadership contenders of harboring “anti-Israeli” views. B’nai Brith and other Jewish groups urged Graham to denounce Ignatieff’s remark and to ensure that “anti-Israeli rhetoric” did not become part of the leadership contest. But they were silent on the prime minister’s characterization of the Liberal candidates.

The Toronto Globe and Mail editorialized that the comment was “illustrative of an unbecoming hyper-partisanship that Mr. Harper carries around like a chip on his shoulder.” But columnist John Ivison pointed out that Harper hoped to gain a “tactical advantage” with his attack. “The Conservatives are becoming the logical political option for many in the influential Jewish community because of Harper’s steadfast support for Israel,” he observed. In mid-October the prime minister would speak at B’nai Brith’s annual dinner with sponsorship packages available for $1 million “and, by all accounts, people are lining up to offer him their thanks.”
Confirming Ivison’s judgment, Frank Dimant said, “I don’t predict an ovation. I predict several ovations…. There is certainly a groundswell of support today in the Jewish community for the Conservative Party.” Harper did not disappoint. Fresh from preventing passage of a resolution acknowledging only Lebanese suffering in the Lebanon war at a meeting of la Francophonie, he made no apologies for his stand. “When it comes to dealing with a war between Israel and a terrorist organization, this country and this government cannot, and will not be neutral,” Harper said, “those who seek to destroy the Jews, will, for the same reason, ultimately seek to destroy us all.” The reaction was all he could have hoped for. “Every Shabbat, every Saturday, we recite [a] prayer for you, Mr. Prime Minister,” said Dimant. “I believe that the Almighty has answered our prayers.

Some observers believed that opposition to Harper’s foreign policy, especially among Quebeckers, contributed to his party’s failure to improve its popularity. A new survey put the Conservatives in a virtual tie with the leaderless Liberals and pointed to a steady decline in support in Quebec. Another poll reported that although more Canadians approved than disapproved of the evacuation of Canadians from Lebanon, 40 percent disagreed with the government’s approach to the war, while only 29 percent agreed. Fifty-five percent of francophones disapproved of Ottawa’s handling of the issue.

Canada’s pro-Israel tilt at the UN became more pronounced when the government abstained on three more General Assembly resolutions dealing with Palestinian peoples’ right to self-determination, nuclear proliferation in the Middle East, and Israel’s exploitation of natural resources on “occupied Arab lands,” which its predecessor had supported. Harper admitted that diplomacy was the only way to achieve peace, but his government would not deal with Hamas or Hezbollah “whose objectives are ultimately genocidal.” Despite this, Ottawa could serve as an interlocutor. “My own assessment of Canada’s role in the Middle East in the past decade or so is we have been completely absent,” he asserted. “I don’t see any evidence we were playing any role.” The government was looking for ways to encourage dialogue with the Palestinian Authority through President Abbas.

Searching for a Role?

In January 2007, Peter MacKay visited the Middle East seeking to build on Ottawa’s role as chair of the Refugee Working Group of the Middle East Peace Process, to “find a niche where Canada can make a contribution.” MacKay met with Abbas, who encouraged Canada to help resolve the future of Palestinian refugees in Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon. But a senior aide to the president charged that the decision to cut aid to the Palestinian Authority and refusal to meet with Hamas officials had diminished Canada’s influence in the region. MacKay also met with Tzipi Livni, Israel’s foreign minister, whose view of a two-state solution would not give refugees
the right to return. MacKay appeared to agree, although his officials said Canada’s policy was that the issue should be settled by negotiation.92

MacKay was mildly critical of Israel’s security fence but reaffirmed that Canada stood “shoulder-to-shoulder” with Israel. Israel’s foreign ministry praised Harper’s government for maintaining “particularly warm relations,” and noted that “bilateral and diplomatic ties are currently at their peak.”93 However, as columnist James Travers saw it, MacKay’s visit confirmed that the Palestinians were “losing interest in what this country has to say,” and that the Israelis had “heard everything they need to know.”94

Meanwhile, to no one’s surprise, Harper’s Middle East advisor, Wajid Khan, left the Liberals and became a Conservative. Harper blamed the party’s new leader, Stéphane Dion, for forcing Khan to choose between his roles as a Liberal MP and prime ministerial advisor. But Harper had facilitated Khan’s move by appointing his Conservative opponent in the 2006 election to a citizenship court position.95 Harper hailed the defection as a sign that minority voters were becoming more receptive to the Conservatives. “There’s a place for everyone within the new Conservative Party of Canada,” he boasted. “The news is getting out and the party is continuing to grow.”96

However, the government refused to release Khan’s report as Khan undertook to do when he was appointed. Its claim that Khan’s advice would become less valuable if it were made public led to speculation that the document did not exist or that it ran counter to government policy.97 The rebuff increased Arab and Muslim Canadian skepticism about Ottawa’s intentions. “We are now suspicious that this whole thing was a charade,” said Khaled Mouammar, president of the Canadian Arab Federation. “Wajid Khan is not a professor of political science,” the Canadian Islamic Congress’s Mohamed Elmesary asserted, “and his knowledge of the Middle East is very limited. He’s a member of Parliament and he so happens to be a Muslim, and he does not represent the Muslim viewpoint.” The Canadian Muslim Forum and the Muslim Canadian Congress also called on the government to produce the report.98

In June, Hamas fighters attacked Fatah security forces and took control of Gaza, leading President Abbas to appoint an emergency government from which Hamas was excluded. Israel responded by imposing an escalating blockade of Gaza. King Abdullah of Jordan visited Ottawa the following month to encourage support for the new government and a renewed Arab league peace initiative. Harper said the government was committed to peace. But it was only after the United States and the European Union resumed their aid that Harper agreed to do so. The Canada-Israel Committee, which had opposed restoration of the funding, said the action would not “undercut the appreciation the pro-Israel community has for the Harper government.”99
More evidence of Harper’s attempts to strengthen ties to Jewish voters surfaced in the fall of 2007 when Canada’s privacy commissioner began a “preliminary enquiry” into reports that the Conservatives had compiled a mailing list of Jewish voters. It followed complaints from some recipients of personalized Rosh Hashanah greeting cards from the prime minister. Jason Kenney defended the initiative as part of the government’s commitment to multiculturalism. B’nai Brith and the Canadian Jewish Congress approved. Calling it a first, Frank Dimant hoped “it’s a tradition that prime ministers down the line will carry on.”

More of the Same

In November, the United States launched another Middle East peace initiative at a conference attended by forty countries, including Canada. The meeting failed to produce agreement on the so-called “core issues” of borders, settlements, the status of Jerusalem, and the Palestinian right of return. But Israel and the Palestinian Authority made a best-efforts commitment to reach a deal by the end of 2008. Responding to Prime Minister Olmert’s request, Harper agreed to contribute $300 million over five years to further Palestinian security, governance and development. But the aid would be contingent on “demonstrable progress in negotiations by both sides, as well as progress in Palestinian democratic reforms.” Ottawa would ensure that it did not go to “Hamas or other terrorist groups.”

In January 2008, during a follow-up visit to the Middle East by Maxime Bernier, the new foreign affairs minister, Olmert’s government announced the expansion of existing settlements in East Jerusalem. Although Canada opposed “any new growth of settlements,” Bernier did not say whether this included expansion of existing ones. His officials called the expansion “extremely unhelpful” but added that individual settlements would be dealt with in negotiations over the final status of territories held by Israel, leading observers to speculate that Ottawa had shifted its position.

In March, Bernier expressed concern over an Israeli military assault on Gaza, which killed 120 Palestinians, in retaliation for rocket attacks on cities in Israel by Hamas militants. Bernier’s comments were criticized by Israel’s vocal ambassador, Alan Baker, and the Canada-Israel Committee. However, Canada was the only member of the UN Human Rights Council to oppose a resolution accusing Israel of war crimes in its attack on Gaza. The action followed Ottawa’s decision to lead the way in withdrawing from the second UN World Conference Against Racism, to be held in Durban, South Africa (later moved to Geneva) in 2009. The government argued that the conference would provide a platform for opponents to resume attacks on Israel begun at the first conference seven years earlier. “We’re very happy that we see things in a similar way,” said an Israeli official, “Canada has adopted several times in recent months very brave positions.” In another sign of their deepening
relationship, the two countries signed a “declaration of intent” to deal with “common threats” to national security.105

But relations with Israel continued to provoke controversy. In May, Ambassador Baker expressed alarm that the growing Muslim population could produce a shift in Canada’s policy. Singling out a Liberal MP, Omar Alghabra, who he claimed, “had been outspoken in his hostility toward Israel,” (though he offered no evidence) Baker suggested “that the type of political influence that we’re seeing in Britain, in France, might ultimately reach the Canadian political system.” Public safety minister Stockwell Day gently chided the ambassador for his intrusion into domestic politics, saying “we are proud of the fact that we are made up and built from people from all countries, including the Jewish people.” But Harper appeared to agree with Baker, charging that “some members of Parliament” were willing to pander to “anti-Israeli sentiment,” which he described as “a thinly disguised veil for good old-fashioned anti-Semitism.”106 In his address to a dinner marking the 60th anniversary of the founding of Israel, Harper assured the audience of his government’s “unshakable support.”

Harper tried to balance his stance by praising “the moderate but theologically isolated Ahmadiyya Muslims” at the opening of their new mosque in Calgary, Alberta in July. A party source claimed the overture, similar to those made to Ismaili Muslims, was aimed at the wider Muslim audience. “It’s an important signal the prime minister is sending, not just to militant Islamists abroad, but to their sympathizers here at home, that he’s perfectly prepared to ignore them and side with persecuted minorities within the faith.” Harper’s comments provoked predictable criticism from the Arab and Muslim communities. “As a prime minister I can remind people of the danger of extremism in religion or ideology, but you don’t try to describe one Islam as better than another,” said a spokesman for the Canadian Arab Federation. The Canadian Islamic Congress’s Mohamed Elmasry contended that Harper needed to improve his understanding of Muslim issues “instead of relying on overnight experts supplying him with one or two pages [of information].”108 But Harper’s remarks were consistent with his strategy of “digging deep into a few select social strata,” rather than seeking broad support, in order to enhance his party’s electoral prospects.109

Conclusion

Opinion polls conducted as late as August 2008 suggested the Conservatives and Liberals remained about where they stood at the time of the 2006 election.110 But there were signs that Harper’s strategy had begun to have an effect. For example, long-standing Jewish support for the Liberals in the Montreal riding of Outremont collapsed in a by-election in September 2007. Jews, who make up 10 percent of
the constituency’s electors, voted Conservative or stayed away, contributing to the victory of the New Democratic Party candidate. The Liberal standard bearer finished a distant second.111

In another by-election in March 2008, in the British Columbia constituency of Vancouver Quadra where the Liberals had piled up impressive wins in recent years, the Liberal candidate’s margin of victory was reduced to 151 votes over the runner-up Conservative. “We have worked aggressively to court the Jewish community there,” said a party strategist. Actions included a meeting between Harper and Jewish representatives a week before the vote. “People are now trying to determine if that influenced the numbers,” the official said. “This all goes back to the government’s strong support of Israel in 2006.”112

The big test came in the October 2008 election in which the Conservatives portrayed themselves “as the only party with a staunchly pro-Israel record.”113 In a major speech in the Toronto riding of Eglinton-Lawrence, home to the fourth largest Jewish community in Canada, Harper reminded his audience of the government’s support for Israel in the Lebanon war and its veto of the Francophone summit resolution acknowledging only the suffering of Lebanese civilians. He also accused opposition MPs of “marching in the streets beside the flag of Hezbollah” at the August 2006 rally in Montreal opposing the government’s policy toward the war.114

The Conservatives promised to continue to work closely with Israel on economic and security issues, and reaffirmed that a Harper-led government would not participate in the UN’s forthcoming anti-racism conference. They committed to fund a $3 million pilot Security Infrastructure Project to increase safety at places of worship, schools and other community centers for Jewish and other ethnic groups at risk of hate crimes.115

Harper’s government was returned to power with 143 seats, short of the 155 it needed to attain majority status.116 Early assessments suggested that the party’s ethnic outreach strategy had started to pay dividends. Although the Liberals took 48 of the 80 constituencies with ethnic minorities larger than 20 percent, the Conservatives increased their total to eighteen, six more than in 2006, and boosted their vote in others.117 The party lost ground in Vancouver and Winnipeg constituencies with a substantial Jewish population. It also failed to win in Montreal and Toronto, which together account for more than forty seats. However, it improved its share of the vote, in some cases dramatically, in ridings in both cities where large numbers of Jewish electors reside.118 In the test case riding of Thornhill they helped the Conservative candidate defeat the Liberal incumbent by slightly more than the 5,000 additional votes the party’s ethnic outreach team estimated it would take to win. Liberal turned Conservative MP, Wajid Khan, though, was soundly defeated by his Liberal opponent, despite several visits by Harper.119
Bernie Farber of the Canadian Jewish Congress calls the Conservatives’ electoral strategy normal political activity. “I see both a positive outreach to communities and I see politics at play, which is not a bad thing.”\textsuperscript{120} Polling firm executive Paul Adams adds, “This is a game of inches in a minority [government] situation. The Jewish community is not a large demographic, but it tends to be concentrated in a small number of seats…. It looks like an ethnic group that could be separated from the Liberals.” At times, Harper’s party has gone to questionable lengths to do so. In November 2009, it targeted six Liberal constituencies containing large Jewish minorities (three in Montreal, two in Toronto, one in Winnipeg) with taxpayer-funded flyers claiming the Liberals had “opposed defunding Hamas and asked that Hezbollah be delisted as a terrorist organization,” that Jean Chrétien’s government had “willingly participated” in the “overtly anti-Semitic” first World Conference Against Racism in Durban in 2001, and that Michael Ignatieff, the Liberals’ current leader, had “accused Israel of committing war crimes.” As Sheldon Gordon notes, “Only the last charge was incontestably accurate and free of distortion.”\textsuperscript{121} Privileging one set of interests over others to enhance its electoral prospects, moreover, does nothing to further the government’s professed goal of multiculturalism.

Likewise, good electoral politics does not necessarily lead to good foreign policy. As James Travers puts it, “Seeing the planet through a provincial prism encourages certainty over caution and, as a glance towards the Middle East confirms, is often catastrophic…. In exercising his foreign policy prerogatives, Harper [has] repositioned the country from being a small part of an elusive solution to the centre of an entrenched problem.”\textsuperscript{122} Former prime minister Joe Clark agrees. In a speech in 2007, he argued that the Harper government had abandoned Canada’s traditional “constructive role” in the Middle East. He took issue with Harper’s claim that Canada had absented itself from the region during the previous decade, saying, “Apart from being flatly false, that rebuke is even more unsettling as either a warning shot, or an unguarded statement of belief, by the prime minister who so dominates this government.” Harper should admit his mistake as Clark himself had to do on “one celebrated occasion.” Successive Liberal and Conservative governments had tried to be a “reliable interlocutor,” between Israel and its Arab neighbors. “Not many other countries have that reputation.”\textsuperscript{123} Harper was unmoved, telling the CIJA that a “battle between a democratic state and terrorist groups who seek to destroy it and its people is not a matter of shades of grey, it is a matter of right and wrong.”\textsuperscript{124} However, Israel has sometimes shown more flexibility than its Canadian backer, creating opportunities for states with more balanced perspectives to perform a facilitating role. For example, in May 2008, months of indirect talks between Israel and Hamas brokered by Egypt culminated in a six-month cease-fire in Gaza and a temporary end to Israel’s blockade. The following month, with Germany serving as mediator, Israel and Hezbollah agreed to exchange prisoners and the remains of
the two Israeli soldiers whose capture helped ignite the 2006 Lebanon war. Turkey was also instrumental in helping Israel and Syria begin indirect negotiations aimed at achieving an overall peace settlement.125

Although Canada is not a major player in Middle East politics, it can encourage constructive solutions to the region’s problems. It can also provide expertise, as it has done elsewhere, in such areas as governance, federalism, judicial reform, economic development, border control and enforcement, and the training of security forces. But this will not happen as long as electoral politics dominates the Harper government’s foreign policy thinking.

Notes

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3. Flanagan, “Thou shalt not lean too far to the right.”
5. The Conservatives won 124 seats (receiving 36.3% of the popular vote) in the 308 seat parliament, followed by the Liberals with 103 (30.3%), the Bloc Quebecois (BQ) with 54 (10.5%), and the New Democratic Party (NDP) with 29 (17.5%). One Independent was elected. Three Liberal members subsequently joined the Conservatives. According to an Ipsos Reid election day poll, 52% of Jewish electors voted Liberal, 25.5% Conservative, and 15.2% NDP. Muslim voters voted 48.6% in favor of the Liberals, 15.5% for the Conservatives, and 28.2% for the NDP. Overall, 50.4% of non-Christian voters supported the Liberals, 23.6% the Conservatives, and 19.8% the New Democrats. Barry Kay, “The Denominational Vote: Non-Christians,” September 17, 2008, www.wlu.ca/lispop/fedblog/?p=67 (9/23/2008).
province's public and Roman Catholic schools to other faith-based systems. Tory was forced to withdraw his pledge in the face of public opposition, although it was welcomed by Thornhill's ethnic populations. Premier Dalton McGinty's Liberal government was returned to power. But the Progressive Conservatives won the Thornhill seat, which had been held by the Liberals.


18. Not all of these MPs would identify themselves as evangelical Christians. However, they tend to fall within David Bebbington’s classic definition of evangelicalism, based on a belief in biblicism (biblical authority), crucicentrism (the redemptive role of Christ on the cross), conversionism (the conversion of non-Christians), and activism (a commitment to spreading the Christian message). They may be members or followers of evangelical or conservative Protestant or Catholic churches, attending on a regular or periodic basis. Their activities may include participation in prayer breakfasts or faith-based study or advocacy groups. Lloyd Mackey, personal communication.


21. Ibid. The group included Gerald Schwartz, CEO, Onex Corporation; Schwartz’s wife Heather Reisman, CEO, Indigo Books and Music Inc.; Brent Belzberg, owner of Torquest Partners; Larry Tannenbaum, chairman, Maple Leaf Sports & Entertainment; Stephen Cummings, CEO, Maxwell Cummings; Stephen Reitman, executive vice-president, Reitmans (Canada) Ltd.; Israel Asper, CEO, CanWest Global; Sylvain Abitbol, CEO of NHC Communications; Senator Leo Kolber, a former director of the Toronto-Dominion Bank, Seagram’s and Loews Cineplex; and philanthropist Julia Koschitzky. See David Noble, “The New Israel Lobby in


25. The author of the strategy is B’nai Brith’s Frank Dimant, who has close ties to Charles McVety of the Canada Christian College. In 2004, the college awarded Dimant an honorary doctorate. Four years later he was appointed inaugural chair of its new Department of Israel Studies. Another important figure is Joseph Ben-Ami. In 2002, after serving on the staff of Stockwell Day, Ben-Ami joined B’nai Brith first as director of communications and later as director of government relations and diplomatic affairs. In 2005, he left B’nai Brith to become executive director of McVety’s Institute of Canadian Values. Three years later, Ben-Ami established the Canadian Centre for Policy Studies, his own conservative think tank. See Stephen Scheinberg, “Partners for Imperium: B’nai Brith Canada and the Christian Right,” Canadian Jewish Outlook (July-August 2008), 5-8, 37-39; McDonald, The Armageddon Factor, 318-323.


29. Scrivener, “Jewish Liberals a Hezbollah casualty?”


33. Michael Bell, Michael Malloy, and Sallama Shaker, “Practitioners’ Perspectives on Canada-Middle East Relations,” in Heinbecker and Mornani, eds., Canada and the Middle East, 12.

34. Goldberg, “The Post-Statehood Relationship,” 143.


36. Goldberg, “The Post-Statehood Relationship,” 143; Scrivener, “Jewish Liberals a Hezbollah casualty?”

arabstudiesquarterly.plutojournals.org
37. They were: Montreal MP Irwin Cotler (justice), Vancouver’s Stephen Owen (public works and government services), Toronto area members Joe Volpe (human resources), Carolyn Bennett (public health), Jim Peterson (international trade), and Vancouver senator Jack Austin (government leader in the Senate). Pat Johnson, “Israel supporters in cabinet,” *Jewish Independent*, January 9, 2004.

38. Paul Lungen, “Canada shifts vote on UN resolution,” *Canadian Jewish News*, March 16, 2006. The criteria, whether the resolution singled out Israel, used excessive language, and offered a balanced treatment of the issue, of course, leave considerable room for discretion in making such decisions.

39. Ibbitson, “In case you missed it, our Mideast policy has shifted”; John Ibbitson, “Is Canada preparing to shift line in the sand?” *Globe and Mail*, October 21, 2004; Ron Csillag, “Liberal MPs work to change Canada’s UN votes on Israel,” *Canadian Jewish News*, October 28, 2004; Scrivener, “Jewish Liberals a Hezbollah casualty?” Private contributions, once the mainstay of party financing in Canada, are now strictly limited as a result of the Federal Accountability Act, passed by parliament in 2007. The act bans corporate and union donations to political parties and party leadership candidates, and restricts individual contributions to $1,000 per year.


46. Sallot, “How Tories tripped over Hamas.”


100. Quoted in Daniel Leblanc, “Voters disturbed by PM’s letters, Thornhill MP says,” Globe and Mail, October 19, 2007, and Bruce Cheadle, “Jewish groups defend PM over holiday cards,” Globe and Mail, October 13, 2007. The privacy commissioner concluded that there had been no breach of Canada’s privacy legislation because political parties are not bound by most of its terms. However, the commissioner also began a broader study of political parties and privacy matters that will lead to recommendations on how personal information should be used. Michael Valpy, “Holiday wish both baffling and bothersome,” Globe and Mail, September 10, 2008.


107. Canada, Office of the Prime Minister, “Prime Minister’s Speech for Israel’s 60th Anniversary,” 8 May 2008.


115. Levy-Ajzenkopf and Arnold, “Tories make inroads with Jewish voters.”

116. The Conservatives won 143 seats (37.7 % of the popular vote), the Liberals 77 (26.3%), the BQ 49 (10%), the NDP 37 (18.25%), Independent candidates 2. The Green Party did not win any seats but garnered 1% of the vote.


120. Quoted in Leblanc, “Responses to tactics range from outrage to shrugs.”

121. Sheldon Gordon, “Where have all of Canada’s Jewish Liberals gone?” Haaretz.com, December 24, 2009, www.haaretz.com/misc/article-print-page/where-have-all-of-canada-s-jewish-liberals... (6/18/2010). Describing the controversy over his comment as “the most painful experience of my short political career” and “an error,” Ignatieff later apologized for his choice of words saying it might have been better to have said that Israel “may have failed to comply with the Geneva Convention of the laws of war,” or that it “has the right to defend itself but had to avoid civilian


125. Michelle Collins reports that although most observers agree that “the Conservative government has positioned itself strongly behind Israel… it is the way the PMO [Prime Minister’s Office] so tightly controls its affairs with the Middle East—experts say more than any previous minister—that for many signals a distinct drift away from Canada’s traditional foreign policy in the region. ‘People in Ottawa run scared of the PMO on Middle East issues,’ one source close to the government’s Middle East policy process told Embassy, speaking on condition of anonymity for fear of reprisal.

‘You see at CIDA (Canadian International Development Agency), you see it at DFAIT (Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade). People are worried about putting things forward in case of getting slapped down by the Prime Minister’s Office for not being sufficiently inclined toward Israel, so there’s a real chill cast over the federal bureaucracy on these kinds of issues now, over our ambassadors in the region, and so forth,’ the source said.” Michelle Collins, “Harper’s Silence on Middle East Politically Calculated, Experts Say,” Embassy, January 7, 2009.