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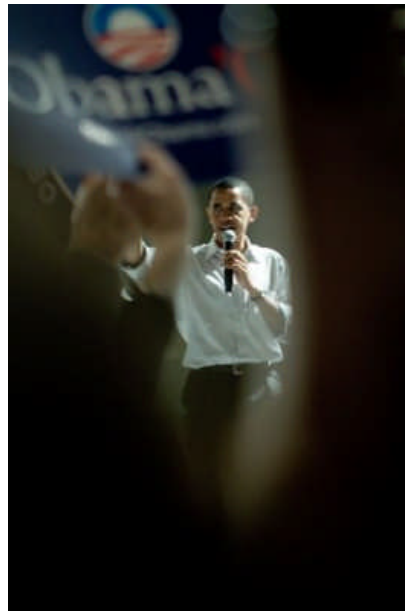
Obama: Israel is a 'constant sore'

Questions whether 'settlements' are in Jewish state's best interest

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10:55 pm Eastern

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Democratic presidential front-runner Barack Obama says Israel is a "constant wound" and a "constant sore" that infects "all of our foreign policy."



Sen. [Barack Obama](#) (barackobama.com)

Obama, under fire for attracting praise and support for his [presidential](#) run from the terrorist group Hamas, spoke to Atlantic Monthly at length about his views of the Middle East.

Asked if he thought Israel represented a drag on America's reputation overseas, [Obama](#) said: "No, no, no. But what I think is that this constant wound, that this constant sore, does infect all of our foreign policy. The lack of a resolution to this problem provides an excuse for anti-American militant jihadists to engage in inexcusable actions, and so we have a national-security interest in solving this, and I also believe that Israel has a security interest in solving this because I believe that the status quo is unsustainable. I am absolutely convinced of that, and some of the tensions that might arise between me and some of the more hawkish elements in the Jewish community in the United States might stem from the fact that I'm not going to blindly adhere to whatever the most hawkish position is just because that's the safest ground politically."

"I want to solve the problem, and so my job in being a friend to Israel is partly to hold up a mirror and tell the truth and say if Israel is building settlements without any regard to the effects that this has on the peace process, then we're going to be stuck in the same status quo that we've

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been stuck in for decades now," he said.

The interview was set up by the now famous quote from Hamas leader Ahmed Yousef to WND's Jerusalem bureau chief Aaron Klein, author of "[Schmoozing With Terrorists](#)," and WABC radio host John Batchelor: "We like Mr. Obama and we hope that he will win the election."

The controversy unfolded last month when Hamas political adviser Ahmed Yousef told WND's Aaron Klein, author of "[Schmoozing with Terrorists](#)," and WABC radio his group hopes Obama will win the [presidential election](#) and change America's foreign policy.

(Story continues below)



McCain, the presumptive Republican nominee, responded, prompting sharp exchanges between the two candidates and their campaigns.

"If Sen. Obama is favored by Hamas, I think people can make judgments accordingly," McCain said.

The U.S. State Department regards Hamas as a terrorist organization.

Last week, Obama severed ties with a Middle East policy adviser who acknowledged holding private meetings with Hamas. Robert Malley, who had advocated negotiations with Hamas, was sacked after disclosing to the Times of London he had been in regular contact with the group in conjunction with his work for a conflict resolution think tank.

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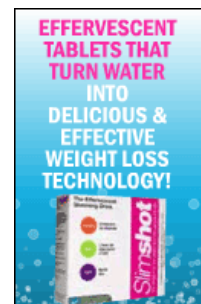
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