In the United States, religion and politics are intertwined. This entwinement helps to explain America’s strong and unwavering support for Israel. Jewish-Americans, virtually across the board, are strong supporters of Israel, despite strong disagreement over a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The influence of Jewish-Americans on American foreign policy in the Middle East is primarily by way of Jewish strength in the Democratic party. Not only do Jewish-Americans strongly support Democratic candidates in all elections, but all but one of the disproportionately high number of Jewish Senators and Representatives in Congress are Democrats.

The Republicans are also strong supporters of Israel, because many conservative Christians, an important component of Republican voters, believe that Jewish control of the “holy land” will bring about a “second coming of Christ.” Finally, the overwhelming majority of Americans, religious and non-religious, support Israel, because it is a democratic state, and because they have a favorable opinion of Jewish-Americans, and at best a mixed opinion about Arab-Americans and Muslims, in general.

The main thesis of the presentation is Jewish-American support for Israel, combined with their support of the Democratic Party, can help President Obama in his efforts to achieve a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The Jewish-American members of Congress, and the liberal part of the American-Jewish community that favors a solution can provide a degree of cover for the President. This degree of cover, reflected in assuring the Jewish community and the rest of the Nation, that the President is a “strong supporter of Israel,” may serve to deflect criticism of the President from those from the conservative part of the Jewish community and from Christian conservatives, and may make any solution that the President succeeds in bringing about politically acceptable to the American public.

Robert Sedler
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Professor Sedler has been at Wayne State University Law School since 1977. Prior to coming to Wayne Law, he was professor of law at the University of Kentucky. He has also held permanent or visiting appointments at Saint Louis University, the Addis Ababa University School of Law, the University of Iowa, Washington University of St. Louis and Cornell University. He is a member of Phi Beta Kappa and the Order of the Coif. Professor Sedler teaches courses in Constitutional Law and Conflict of Laws. He has published extensively in both fields and, in 1994, published a book titled “Constitutional Law — United States” in the Constitutional Law series of the International Encyclopedia of Laws for an international audience. The book was updated and republished in 2005 with the same title. Professor Sedler has made a number of trips to Russia, lecturing at Russian universities on American constitutional law, and publishing articles translated into Russian in Russian law journals comparing American and Russian constitutional law.