



## How the Israel Lobby Takes Out Its Opponents

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**Glenn Greenwald (GG):** All right, so we wanted to spend some time last night talking to you about the career of Paul Findley, who served as a member of Congress from 1960 until 1982, a Republican congressman from Illinois. We didn't have time, so we want to do that tonight because it is a career that is really fascinating and I think very revealing of our current political dynamic. And a lot of times, a lot of this history that's very recent history, I mean 1960, 1982 is not that long ago. People forget about, I had forgotten about his career, I'd known about it at some point. But it is important to remember, because so much of what we're going through now, so much we debate now, is reflected in the history, very recently, because not that much is different. And one of the things that makes him so timely and so relevant to the news cycle is that he was the author of the War Powers Act, the law, the much discussed law last week that governs when a president can deploy military force in an emergency without Congress. And that was being discussed because a lot of people were trying to justify Biden's bombing of Yemen as a defensive act that he doesn't need Congress to do, because the Houthis in Yemen were attacking American ships. And as we walked through the last time, that was not a justification, even if it's a moral justification for the war, it's not a legal one for Biden to do without Congress because it wasn't a defensive act. It wasn't Biden in that moment defending American ships. He had threatened to do this for weeks, they had planned this attack for weeks. And the problem is, as we discussed, that if you do it without congressional approval or congressional debate or public buy in, it could just go on and on and on with no end. And just this week, we'd now seen them bombing Yemen again and again and they likely continue to do it. And this was the reason why Paul Findley authored the War Powers Act. He did it in response to the way in which the United States has kind of fell into the war in Vietnam. There was that 1964 Senate resolution authorising force when the CIA lied to the public and to the Congress about the Gulf of Tonkin incident, where they said that the North Vietnamese had been aggressive and attacked US ships and it came out several decades later that the United States security state lied, that the aggressors were the United States trying to create a cause to justify getting the Senate to

approve the escalation, that war, under President Johnson. But before that, there were years where under President Kennedy, advisers were being sent, advisers were being killed. Kennedy said that the reason he wanted to remove troops or all people out of Vietnam before he was killed was because he was seeing how many advisers were being killed, he didn't know that that was kept from him. And here is Paul Findley, along with a Democratic member of Congress who was an ally of his, Don Fraser, writing in the L.A. Times in September of 2008 about the battle over war powers, which, remember, was a very robust debate during the Bush years. That was one of the things that caused me to get involved in politics, was this debate over the limits of presidential power. And here's what they wrote, quote, "The framers of the Constitution agreed that the president could be commander in chief of land and naval forces, but – deeply concerned over the gravity of war and as a safeguard against hasty and needless hostilities with foreign countries – they agreed that Congress should have the prerogative to, quote, 'declare' or authorize war. The framers meant to prohibit the president from waging war without a declaration of war or specific authorisation by Congress, except when necessary to repel attacks on American territory or commerce, its military or citizens. In recent history, an unauthorised presidential war brought calamity to the United States. Ambiguity in the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution of 1964 was used as a pretext for executive war-making in Vietnam not intended by Congress. That war was unjustifiable from a military and geopolitical standpoint. The resolution retroactively approved the retaliation by President Johnson for an attack on Navy ships in the Gulf of Tonkin, and at war in North Vietnam, and all interested parties of U.S. readiness to engage in further military operation through Southeast Asia Treaty Organization. But it contained no language that actually authorised the president to order acts of war in the future. Johnson nevertheless used it to increase the U.S. commitment in Vietnam to half a million men. As domestic opposition to the war increased and U.S. forces begin to withdraw, Congress passed the War Powers Act of 1973. We were members of the House committee that helped frame this resolution, and were engaged in the process until it was passed over the veto of President Nixon. It is a necessary and proper law that forbids a president from waging war without authority from Congress, except to repel attack."

Now, at the time, this congressman, Paul Findley, was working at a organisation because he had been removed from Congress in 1982 when the pro-Israel lobby in the United States targeted him by recruiting a challenger against him and then financing him lavishly, the challenger, to remove Paul Findley from Congress. Because Paul Findley was not only opponent of American intervention, but also an opponent of American support for Israel at a time when they were trying to make up the pro-Israel lobby was taboo, career destroying for any member of either party to oppose the financing by the United States of Israel. In 2005, while he was still at The New Yorker, Jeffrey Goldberg, who's now the editor in chief of The Atlantic who had used his position at The New Yorker to lie the country into the war in Iraq, wrote an article called the *Real Insiders* that purported to explain why and how Paul Findley was removed from Congress. This was a year before Stephen Walt and John Mearsheimer published their book *The Israel Lobby*, which described the massive amount of power that the pro-Israel lobby in the United States had amassed and their ability to demand and coerce and pressure and intimidate members of Congress to keep sending money to Israel. And Walt and

Mearsheimer were accused of being anti-Semitic for writing that book, even though it was very scholarly about the power of the pro-Israel lobby. As they said, there was nothing illegal about that lobby. There's a lot of other lobbies like it, like the Big pharma lobby, the Wall Street lobby, Planned Parenthood, the NRA, it's just this lobby, involves the interests of a foreign country, and that's what makes it so unique. And here was Jeffrey Goldberg in July of 2005, while still at The New Yorker, just off helping sell the country by lying about Saddam Hussein into the war in Iraq, before he went to The Atlantic, explaining what happened to Paul Findley, quote: "AIPAC, Asher explained, is loyal its friends and merciless to its enemies. In 1982, Asher led a campaign to defeat Paul Findley, a Republican congressman from Springfield, Illinois, who once referred to himself as 'Yasir Arafat's best friend in Congress', and who later compared Arafat to Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr. Quote, 'There was a real desire to help Findley out of Congress', Asher said." He was an AIPAC official [inaudible]. "He identified an obscure Democratic lawyer in Springfield, Richard Durbin, as somebody who could defeat Findley. Quote, 'We met at my apartment in Chicago, and I recruited him to run for Congress', he recalled. 'I probed his views, and I explained things that I had learned mostly from AIPAC. I wanted to make sure we were supporting someone who was not only against Paul Findley but also a friend of Israel'."

Do you see they were removing members of Congress and replacing them based on one factor: who is friendly to Israel, this foreign country. Asher went on, and this is Jeffrey Goldberg telling this story, not John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt. Quote, "Asher went on, quote, 'He beat Findley with a lot of help from Jews in state and out of state. Now, how did the Jewish money find him? I travelled around the country talking about how he had the opportunity to defeat someone unfriendly to Israel. And the gates opened'. Durbin, who went on to win the Senate seat, is now the Democratic whip. He is a fierce critic of Bush's Iraq policy, but like AIPAC, generally supports the administration's approach to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Durbin says that he considers Asher to be, quote, 'his most loyal friend in the Jewish community'."

Now, the reason that is so revealing is when John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt wrote a book explaining how this lobby works the next year, they almost had their careers destroyed because they were widely accused of being anti-Semitic. Here was Jeffrey Goldberg turning this guy into a hero by saying he was right to cleanse and purge the American Congress of anybody critical of Israel. As after he was removed, he formed this Council for the National Interest, where he advocated the kind of interventionist views that I just read you from the L.A. Times, trying to put limits on the president's power to bring the country to war and the ADL boasted of the fact that they were now targeting this organisation. Here's from the ADL on October 3rd, 2008. It's called: Backgrounder: The Council for the National Interest (CNI). "The Council for the National Interest, which includes the Council for the National Interest Foundation, is an anti-Israel organisation which is opposed to U.S. aid to Israel and disseminates demonising propaganda about Israel to academics, politicians and other audiences. CNI founders Paul Findley and Pete McCloskey are the founders of the CNIF, and the president of both entities is Eugene H. Bird. On August 28, 2008, the final day of the Democratic National Convention in Denver, CNI ran an ad in the Denver Post highlighting

high foreclosure rates in the U.S. and charging that quote, 'meanwhile, billions of your tax dollars continue to purchase beautiful homes with subsidised mortgages in Israel'."

Now, that's absolutely true. This is the point we've been making for a long time, is that millions of Americans have a lower standard of living than millions of Israelis, even as the United States transfers millions, billions of dollars over to Israel. Now, you may support that, you may not support it, but it's certainly something the American citizenry should know. And the group that was led by Paul Findley took out an ad making Americans aware of that. The ADL said, quote, "Insinuating that U.S. taxpayer dollars are helping Israelis afford their homes even while Americans cannot, the ad called for, quote, 'a big change' in U.S. policy towards 'Israel and her neighbours.' CNI ran a similar ad in the Christian Science Monitor the same day. CNI has run inflammatory anti-Israel ads in major national newspapers since 2002. In 2007, CNI published an ad in The New York Times in support of an anti-Israel rally held that same day in Washington. The ad demanded: quote, 'End the Israeli occupation now!'. In a widely circulated 2003 article, 'Liberating America from Israel', Paul Findley, a member of CNI's board of directors, blamed America's relationship with Israel for the 9/11 terrorist attacks. 'Nine-eleven would not have occurred', Findley wrote, 'if the U.S. government had refused to help Israel humiliate and destroy Palestinian society'. He continued, quote, 'America has suffered 9/11 and its aftermath and may soon be at war with Iraq, mainly because U.S. policy in the Middle East is made in Israel, not in Washington!'. It's the kind of thing that is now more frequently said, but back then was barely ever said. Paul Findley paid for his career with it, and we just want to kind of show you a video clip of him, because he was such an interesting voice, given that he was the author of the War Powers Act, which now governs and tries to put limits on the ability United States to go to war. He was trying to tell the truth about Israel just to say that obviously, we're sending enormous amounts of money to that country, and we're paying a big price for our support of that country, not just financially, but in terms of our security. Here's Paul Findley speaking in 2007, he's now deceased. He lived to be 98. And here he is giving a speech on this topic.

**Paul Findley:** Even sales of spare parts for pumps, for old pumps, are rigorously controlled. As an American, I hang my head in shame to recount this fact because I know that America is the pipeline without which Israel could not survive and could not inflict this punishment upon those poor people in Gaza and the West Bank. Israel Shahak says torture of Palestinians comes in many forms. Listen again to the words of Israel Shahak, torture by humiliation. Palestinians, including the elderly, he writes, are frequently ordered to attend the office of the military governor for hours and even days. They are required to stand all that time patiently and quietly. Even the elderly must politely ask permission of a young Israeli official in order to have the right to go to the toilet. The aim is to reduce all Palestinians without distinction. Here I'm reading again from Israel Shahak, these are not my words, the aim is to reduce all Palestinians without distinction, to the level of small children, completely dependent upon higher authority, and to put every Israeli on a higher level. It is also legal, he continues to write, to close all clinics, all medical services in a town to cut off electricity for hours and days, to cut off telephone service for hours and days. As an American, I hang my head in shame to have to recount these facts to you, because I know that the U.S. government is the

lifeline to Israel, without which Israel could not inflict these dreadful policies upon these people.

**GG:** It is a very interesting fact that this is a moderate Republican who came out of the Congress in the 1960s, very much shaped by the war in Vietnam, by the fact that at the height of the Cold War, the US began increasing this massive security state that operated in the dark, that engineered coups and all other kinds of countries and he applied that same rationale consistently and equally to U.S. support for Israel. He did not have an Israel exception to his worldview. And for that he was destroyed. He was removed from Congress, branded an anti-Semite. And we tried showing you through the videos we've shown you many times of Ron Paul and Pat Buchanan offering a lot of these same critiques. Pat Buchanan, a top official in the Nixon, Reagan, and Bush 41 White House and then ran for president on these principles and got a lot of support, as did Ron Paul, who was on our show a few weeks ago talking about all of this. There is a strain in Republican politics for a long time, questioning why the US is enduring so much damage and harm to fund the government of Israel. But the intent of AIPAC, as Jeffrey Goldberg himself documented in that 2005 New Yorker article, was to send the signal that anybody who does that will be destroyed. And we had Congressman Thomas Massie on our show, who is one of the most principled, smartest members of the U.S. Congress who's very popular among the populist right, but who is a dissenter on the issue of U.S. funding of Israel. He does not believe the U.S. government should be funding Israel, nor does he believe that we should be giving up our free speech rights in the name of protecting that foreign country. And here he is in 2024, 40 years after Paul Findley was successfully removed from Congress by AIPAC, where AIPAC is troving through Kentucky trying to find a primary challenger to run against Thomas Massie. There's no way a Democrat could win that district. They need to remove him in the Republican primary based solely on, as they said, the question of who is friendly to Israel. It is a very unhealthy environment that we have this major policy and anybody who asked questions about it or who in any way expresses any dissent, let alone tries to stimulate the debate on it in Congress, where all of these things should be aired, knows that there is a very powerful pro-Israel lobby in this country that will set out to destroy them, remove them from Congress, destroy their political career, and in more cases than not likely succeed in doing so.

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