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ISRAEL'S SECURITY SHOULD BE A PRIMARY CONCERN IN PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS (Rabbi Mitchell Wohlberg, Baltimore, MD)

No apology for dual loyalty

August 13, 2010 (Fort Lee, NJ) -- In a candid conversation with Shalom TV President Mark Golub, modern Orthodox rabbi Mitchell Wohlberg states categorically that a Jew concerned with the survival of Israel has every right to make the issue of the future of the Jewish State the deciding factor in a presidential election.



"When we're talking about Israel, we're talking about half the Jews in the world," Wohlberg tells Golub. "Their security goes to the very heart of my existence. I am part of the Jewish people. You're talking about the security of half the Jewish people. One generation ago, we lost one-third of our people and they've never been replaced. We can't afford another such loss. And so, if I have to come out one way or the other I'm going to come out in support of what I believe is the best interests of the security of the State of Israel."

Wohlberg, who rejects the notion that a president can be good for America and bad for Israel, explains that American support of Israel is essential to the future of the Jewish state.

"I will be able to sleep well at night if it's a liberal or a conservative who's appointed to the Supreme Court. I'll not be able to sleep if Israel is threatened and destroyed. And without the support of the United States, Israel's very survival is at stake."

Wohlberg, who delivered a widely publicized sermon explaining to his congregation (Beth Tefilah, Baltimore, MD) why he chose not to vote for Obama despite his feeling that the election of a black man would have been "one of the most positive and remarkable events" of his lifetime, also discusses his feeling that Jewish racism is behind some of the anti-Obama sentiment in the Jewish community.

Explaining that his sermon was reprinted on Jewish and Christian websites, Wohlberg says, "I received over a thousand e-mails in the first week after delivering that sermon. I would say that the positive response had to be at least 98%. But I could tell from reading an e-mail whether it came from a Jew or whether it came from a Christian. For the most part, the Jews expressed their agreement with me because of their intense dislike for Barack Obama. The Christians expressed an agreement with me because of their intense love for the State of Israel.

"There is racism," Wohlberg continues, "and I saw it in the e-mails that I got from Jews in response to my sermon--e-mails that were supportive of my criticism of Obama. But you couldn't help but note that their criticism had racial overtones to them. I'm sorry to say it. There's a racial issue in the Jewish community and a racial issue in the general community."

At the same time, Wohlberg sees no reason for a Jew to apologize for dual loyalty, saying, "[America] is the greatest country on earth and there's never been a country that has been as good to the Jewish people as America. Anybody who would be bad for America is going to be bad for Israel. The world needs the United States to be strong."

See the entire Golub interview with Rabbi Wohlberg on Shalom TV as free Video On Demand on cable systems throughout America and Canada. It can also be seen on Shalom TV's Web site at www.shalomtv.com (click on "Watch Complete Programs").

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