Philip Giraldi is a former counter-terrorism specialist and military intelligence officer of the United States Central Intelligence Agency. Now, he chairs the Council for the National Interest as the Executive Director. CNI is a nonprofit organization that advocates for the transformation of United States' Middle East policy.

Kourosh Ziabari: Why is the Israeli lobby so powerful, influential and authoritative? Almost all of the major media conglomerates in the United States own to well-off Jews who are committed to maintaining the interests of the state of Israel in the U.S. Some experts say that Israel is the representative of the United States in the Middle East region, but some others suggest that it's Israel which determines the future of political developments in the United States. What's your take on that?

Philip Giraldi: The Israel Lobby is so powerful because it deliberately set out to establish control over key elements in the United States. It has demonstrated a number of times that politicians who are perceived as being unfriendly to Israel will face serious problems in being reelected because the Lobby mobilizes to provide money and media support to opponents. This means that congress is afraid to oppose anything that Israel and its Lobby wants. The same holds true for the presidency. Every presidential candidate must be seen as friendly to Israel or he will be attacked in the media and denied millions of dollars in political contributions, making it a safer option to support Israel. Finally, pro-Israeli interests control much of the media and, more important, dominate the opinion and editorial pages, making the only narrative that most Americans hear about the Middle East highly favorable to Israel and highly critical of all Israel's enemies. As a result, Israel is able to control U.S. foreign policy as it relates to the Middle East and also much of the Muslim world.

PG: There is no justification for Washington's hypocrisy over Israel's nuclear weapons program.

Israel should be held to the same standard as everyone else, but the action of the Israeli Lobby means that it will never be accountable for anything as long as Washington is in a position to protect it.

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