

2006 Audio Emerges of Hillary Clinton Proposing Rigging Palestine Election

Unearthed tape: 'We should have made sure that we did something to determine who was going to win'

By [Ken Kurson](#) • 10/28/16 1:00pm



Hillary Clinton listens to Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump speak during the third U.S. presidential debate at the Thomas & Mack Center on October 19, 2016 in Las Vegas, Nevada. - Drew Angerer/Getty Images

On September 5, 2006, Eli Chomsky was an editor and staff writer for the Jewish Press, and Hillary Clinton was running for a shoo-in re-election as a U.S. senator. Her trip making the rounds of editorial boards brought her to Brooklyn to meet the editorial board of the Jewish Press.

The tape was never released and has only been heard by the small handful of Jewish Press staffers in the room. According to Chomsky, his old-school audiocassette is the only existent copy and no one has heard it since 2006, until today when he played it for the Observer.

The tape is 45 minutes and contains much that is no longer relevant, such as analysis of the re-election battle that Sen. Joe Lieberman was then facing in Connecticut. But a seemingly throwaway remark about elections in areas controlled by the Palestinian Authority has taken on new relevance amid persistent accusations in the presidential campaign by Clinton's Republican opponent Donald Trump that the [current election](#) is "rigged."

Speaking to the Jewish Press about the January 25, 2006, election for the second Palestinian Legislative Council (the legislature of the Palestinian National Authority), Clinton weighed in about the result, which was a resounding victory for Hamas (74 seats) over the U.S.-preferred Fatah (45 seats).

"I do not think we should have pushed for an election in the Palestinian territories. I think that was a big mistake," said Sen. Clinton. "And if we were going to push for an election, then we should have made sure that we did something to determine who was going to win."



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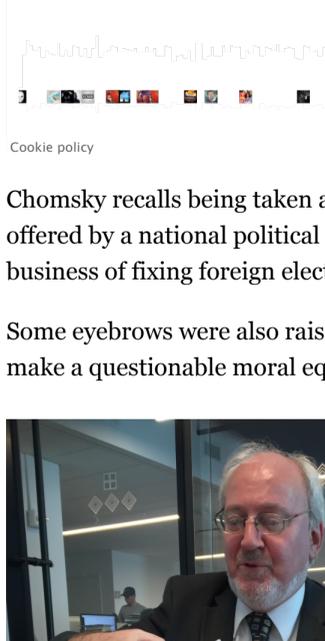
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Chomsky recalls being taken aback that "anyone could support the idea—offered by a national political leader, no less—that the U.S. should be in the business of fixing foreign elections."

Some eyebrows were also raised when then-Senator Clinton appeared to make a questionable moral equivalency.



Eli Chomsky, photographed today at the Observer offices, participated in an interview with Hillary Clinton at the Jewish Press in 2006. - Observer

Regarding capturing combatants in war—the June capture of IDF soldier Gilad Shalit by Hamas militants who came across the Gaza border via an underground tunnel was very much front of mind—Clinton can be heard on the tape saying, "And then, when, you know, Hamas, you know, sent the terrorists, you know, through the tunnel into Israel that killed and captured, you know, kidnapped the young Israeli soldier, you know, there's a sense of like, one-upmanship, and in these cultures of, you know, well, if they captured a soldier, we've got to capture a soldier."

Equating Hamas, which to this day remains on the State Department's [official list](#) of Foreign Terrorist Organizations, with the armed forces of a close American ally was not what many expected to hear in the Jewish Press editorial offices, which were then at Third Avenue and Third Street in Brooklyn. (The paper's office has since moved to the Boro Park section of Brooklyn.) The use of the phrase "these cultures" is also a bit of a head-scratcher.

According to Chomsky, Clinton was "gracious, personable and pleasant throughout" the interview, taking about an hour to speak to, in addition to himself, managing editor Jerry Greenwald, assistant to the publisher Naomi Klass Mauer, counsel Dennis Rapps and senior editor Jason Maoz.

Another part of the tape highlights something that was relatively uncontroversial at the time but has taken on new meaning in light of the current campaign—speaking to leaders with whom our country is not on the best terms. Clinton has presented a very tough front in discussing Russia, for example, accusing Trump of unseemly ardor for strongman Vladimir Putin and mocking his [oft-stated prediction](#) that as president he'd "get along" with Putin.

Chomsky is heard on the tape asking Clinton what now seems like a prescient question about Syria, given the disaster unfolding there and its looming threat to drag the U.S., Iran and Russia into confrontation.

"Do you think it's worth talking to Syria—both from the U.S. point [of view] and Israel's point [of view]?"

Clinton replied, "You know, I'm pretty much of the mind that I don't see what it hurts to talk to people. As long as you're not stupid and giving things away. I mean, we talked to the Soviet Union for 40 years. They invaded Hungary, they invaded Czechoslovakia, they persecuted the Jews, they invaded Afghanistan, they destabilized governments, they put missiles 90 miles from our shores, we never stopped talking to them," an answer that reflects her mastery of the facts but also reflects a willingness to talk to Russia that sounds more like Trump 2016 than Clinton 2016.



This is how news used to be collected. - Observer

Shortly after, she said, "But if you say, 'they're evil, we're good, [and] we're never dealing with them,' I think you give up a lot of the tools that you need to have in order to defeat them...So I would like to talk to you [the enemy] because I want to know more about you. Because if I want to defeat you, I've got to know something more about you. I need different tools to use in my campaign against you. That's my take on it."

A final bit of interest to the current campaign involves an articulation of phrases that Trump has accused Clinton of being reluctant to use. Discussing the need for a response to terrorism, Clinton said, "I think you can make the case that whether you call it 'Islamic terrorism' or 'Islamofascism,' whatever the label is we're going to give to this phenomenon, it's a threat. It's a global threat. To Europe, to Israel, to the United States...Therefore we need a global response. It's a global threat and it needs a global response. That can be the, sort of, statement of principle...So I think sometimes having the global vision is a help as long as you realize that underneath that global vision there's a lot of variety and differentiation that has to go on."

It's not clear what she means by a global vision with variety and differentiation, but what's quite clear is that the then-senator, just five years after her state was the epicenter of the September 11 attacks, was comfortable deploying the phrase "Islamic terrorism" and the even more strident "Islamofascism," at least when meeting with the editorial board of a Jewish newspaper.

In an interview before the Observer heard the tape, Chomsky told the Observer that Clinton made some "odd and controversial comments" on the tape. The irony of a decade-old recording emerging to feature a candidate making comments that are suddenly relevant to voters today was not lost on Chomsky, who wrote the original story at the time. Oddly enough, that story, headlined "Hillary Clinton on Israel, Iraq and Terror," is no longer available on [jewishpress.com](#) and even a [short summary](#) published on the Free Republic site offers a broken link that can no longer surface the story.

"I went to my bosses at the time," Chomsky told the Observer. "The Jewish Press had this mindset that they would not want to say anything offensive about anybody—even a direct quote from anyone—in a position of influence because they might need them down the road. My bosses didn't think it was newsworthy at the time. I was convinced that it was and I held onto it all these years."

Disclosure: Donald Trump is the father-in-law of Jared Kushner, publisher of Observer Media.