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Memo Reveals Plan of U.S.-Funded Groups to Influence the Israeli Elections

Posted By [Alana Goodman](#) On February 5, 2015 @ 3:30 pm In [Issues](#) | [No Comments](#)

A coalition of U.S.-funded progressive groups has planned a massive get-out-the-vote effort to influence the Israeli elections, targeting communities that are most likely to vote against Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his right-leaning Likud Party, according to a [confidential strategy memo](#) obtained by the *Washington Free Beacon*.

The U.S.-based 501(c)(3) group Ameinu sent out the fundraising proposal for the campaign to American donors on Dec. 17, 2014.

The \$3 million initiative is described in the document as “a massive, non-partisan Get Out The Vote (GOTV) campaign targeting selected demographic and geographic segments of Israeli society.”

The targeted groups listed in the memo—young secular Israelis, low-income secular Jews, and Arab Israelis—are communities that traditionally oppose right-leaning parties such as Likud.

The Arab Israeli community in particular is expected to play a larger role than usual in Israel’s March elections. The four major parties that represent Arab Israelis merged in January, a move that could make it easier for the left-leaning Labor Party to form a government.

American involvement in the Israeli elections came under [scrutiny last week](#), after it was reported that the U.S. group OneVoice and Obama’s 2012 reelection team were assisting the V15 campaign to oust Netanyahu. OneVoice said its involvement is nonpartisan and that it is solely trying to increase voter participation.

However, the fundraising proposal by Ameinu indicates that the effort extends far beyond V15 and OneVoice.

The Ameinu memo noted that it is in contact with experts from Obama’s reelection team, which was involved in “similar” operations.

“We are already in touch with a highly talented combination of knowledgeable Israeli professionals and American experts with experience in similar recent operations, including the Obama presidential campaign,” said the proposal.

The campaign would include bi-weekly polling, messaging, an advertising effort, grassroots outreach, and an operation to bring targeted voters to the polls on Election Day.

The Israeli group Givat Haviva, which has received State Department funding, was tapped to lead the get-out-the-vote effort in the Arab Israeli community, according to the memo.

The groups planned to conduct an initial survey of 1,000 participants in the Arab Israeli community to help guide voter outreach strategy.

The proposed poll included questions such as “Whom would you vote for?” “Where do you receive information that serves you to form an opinion?” and “Whom do you trust as a guide in your voting decision?”

The information from the poll would be used to launch a \$350,000 media effort and a \$1 million advertising campaign, according to the proposal.

Another \$1 million would go toward a “Leave No Voter Behind” operation, which would help transport targeted voters to the polls and deploy “influencers” to get the community out on Election Day.

The memo stressed the urgency of securing funding in a timely manner and indicated that the plan would be put into place immediately.

"As of the writing of this document on December 17, there are only 91 days until the election," said the document. "We need to raise the necessary funds immediately to allow the operations to get established in order to maximize the remaining time until voting day."

Ameinu president Kenneth Bob told the *Free Beacon* that his group was involved in sending out appeals to U.S. donors regarding the initiative, and he said on-the-ground efforts began in mid-January. He called the fundraising memo an "overview document" and said there have been other drafts since December, when Bob emailed it out to donors.

He stressed that the campaign was nonpartisan.

"I'm sure you know that in the Arab sector, the Likud also gets votes, they have strong pockets of support," said Bob. "I'm very comfortable with this as a nonpartisan effort."

Bob initially told the *Free Beacon* that the initiative outlined in the memo had no connection to the V15 campaign or former Obama aide Jeremy Bird.

He later said that V15 and Bird's consulting group 270 Strategies were involved in the discussions early on, but have since parted ways with Ameinu.

"When we first began soliciting funds for GOTV efforts ahead of the Israeli elections, we spoke to a number of entities with projects in mind, including Strategies 270, which ultimately became V15," said Bob.

"In January when we finalized our plans, Ameinu decided to limit itself to the Arab Community GOTV effort. That is why I so emphatically said to you that the Arab GOTV effort has nothing to do with V15 or Strategies 270."

Bob said multiple groups, including Givat Haviva, were involved in the get-out-the-vote effort.

On Wednesday, Givat Haviva brought a delegation of over two-dozen Arab Israeli mayors to the United States, where they will be meeting with top Democrats and U.S. Jewish and Arab groups and learning political organizing techniques in New York and Washington, D.C.

Last Thursday, the mayoral delegation and organizers met with high-level American officials at the U.S. embassy in Tel Aviv to discuss their plans for the trip.

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