

Earl Raab

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SHHH! GOOD NEWS!

There are always the Jews who try to ignore bad news. But these days there may be even more Jews who can't stand to hear *good* news. Neither ostrich is very helpful.

This past week, Gallup reported that the American public's attitudes towards Israel are again as favorable as they were before the Lebanese campaign. During the last few years, as now, the American public has usually preferred Israel over the Arabs by [✓]more than four to one margin. There are not many issues which get that kind of overwhelming support from the public.

As a matter of fact, the ratio of support was higher before Sadat's visit to Jerusalem, after which the American public's support of "the Arabs" increased. If Egypt were taken out of the equation, the ratio of American public support for Israel over the rest of the Arab entities would be much higher than four to one. The PLO is usually on the short end of a ten to one ratio.

Many Jews don't want to hear such good news. They prefer to believe that massive "Arab propoganda" and the media treatment of Israel during the Lebanese campaign have subverted the American public. It just hasn't happened.

Another study released this past week revealed the characteristics of those who are in charge of the main body of television: the dramatic series and the TV movies. Among the top producers, writers and vice presidents in charge of program development, about 60 per cent are Jewish. That is about 25 times the proportion of Jews in the American population. Jews do not own the TV networks, any more than they own much of the media in general. But for several reasons which have nothing to do with design, they are an astonishing majority of the top "creative" people in the visual media.

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There is no conspiracy involved. Indeed, many of those Jews are not connected to the Jewish community in any way. Some of them are Jewish Acrobats -- that is, they "bend over backwards" so strenuously to prove their objectivity that they often end up more hostile than friendly to Jewish objectives. However, most of them somehow partake of the Jewish historical consciousness which has a special concern with such matters as the Holocaust, anti-semitism and, yes, the survival of Israel.

When we complain about the bias of the media against Israel, we often forget that the dramatic series and the movies take up much more TV time and have a more lasting effect on the audience than does the news reporting. And have you kept count of the startling number of series, mini-series and movies which have dealt strongly with the mistreatment of Jews in the world, or have projected friendly images of Israel?

But the American public is no more simply brainwashed by those programs than they are by the media news treatment. The basis of the American public support of Israel lies in its image of Israel as the only democratic and value-compatible ally of the U.S. in the Middle East. And the strength of that image is that it is *fact*.

The American public still holds that image. That's the good news. But don't worry, there's plenty of bad news.