

## Obama's Republicans

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### Editorial of The New York Sun

The Obama campaign's conference call yesterday on Republicans who back the presidential bid of the Democrat from Illinois showcased quite a crew. There was Rita Hauser, the PLO apologist whose law firm, Stroock & Stroock & Lavan, racked up millions of dollars in legal fees over the years as a registered foreign agent of Yasser Arafat's Palestinian Authority. Ms. Hauser met with Mr. Arafat as early as 1988, when America still considered him a terrorist and refused even to allow him access to the United Nations headquarters in New York. Though the meeting may have had the tacit approval of the State Department, Israel publicly objected at the time, though it too chose eventually to treat with Arafat.

Ms. Hauser helped fund the Edward Said chair at Columbia for Mr. Obama's pal Rashid Khalidi. "I made a contribution," Ms. Hauser told us back in 2003, describing the chair's namesake, Professor Edward Said, as "a friend of mine. I admire him." Ms. Hauser said she was happy with Mr. Khalidi's selection as a teacher there. "I like him very much. He's a splendid guy, a Palestinian intellectual, a first-class choice, and I think everybody's pleased," she said of the professor whose errors The Sun exposed in its August 5, 2004, editorial, [http://www.nysun.com/editorials/what-the-uae-bought/52739/What the UAE Bought.](http://www.nysun.com/editorials/what-the-uae-bought/52739/What%20the%20UAE%20Bought.)"



Mr. Obama also is boasting of Lincoln Chafee, who, as a senator representing Rhode Island, was responsible for blocking Secretary Bolton from being confirmed as the American ambassador at the United Nations on the grounds that the Bush administration had been too pro-Israel. He was one of two Republicans to vote against repeal of the estate tax, even though he gained his Senate seat in 1999 by being appointed to fill the remainder of his father's term. He voted against confirming Justice Alito. He was one of only three Republicans in 2006 who voted against an extension of the Bush tax cuts on dividends and capital gains.

Back in 2006, a New York Sun article quoted a longtime pro-Israel activist in Washington, Morris Amitay, as saying Mr. Chafee "has one of the worst records of anyone in the Senate, definitely in the bottom 10% of class as far as pro-Israel initiatives are concerned." The Sun article noted that in 2003, Mr. Chafee was one of only four senators to vote against the Syria Accountability Act, a sanctions measure. In 2002, Mr. Chafee was the only Republican senator to vote against

giving President Bush the authority to take military action in Iraq. According to at least one press report, Mr. Chafee left the Republican party in 2007 after losing his 2006 campaign for re-election.

The third "Republican for Obama" after Ms. Hauser and Mr. Chafee — and the only other one who participated in the call — was a former congressman from Iowa, James Leach. Mr. Leach took to the House floor in 2004 to deliver a speech titled "The Case for Restraint in Iran," warning against American or Israeli attacks on the mullahs's nuclear facilities. "It is hard to believe that outside military intervention would lead to anything except greater ensconcement of authoritarian mullah rule," Mr. Leach said, calling instead for America to agree to a comprehensive nuclear test ban. In 2006, when the House voted 397 to 21 to pass the Iran Freedom Support Act that toughened sanctions on Tehran, Mr. Leach was one of the 21 congressmen who opposed it.

Mr. Obama has made pro-Israel statements in his campaign. He spoke at the policy conference of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee in Washington and at a synagogue at Boca Raton, Fla., and at Jerusalem itself. What is one to make of it if he is then going to cart out Ms. Hauser and Messrs. Chafee and Leach? At the least, it exhibits a tone-deafness that weakens the argument that Mr. Obama deserves the benefit of the doubt on these matters. If these are the Republicans who are gravitating to Mr. Obama's campaign, it is an ill omen for the Democrats.

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