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**Synopsis:** AIPAC spy scandal and ZOG traitors

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The New Pravda has fingered one of the two unnamed U.S. government officials implicated in the AIPAC spy scandal -- while bending over backwards to make it clear the whole thing is really just a great big fuss about nothing. I mean, we're talking about Israel, for Christ's sake, not some foreign country.

The second-highest diplomat at the United States Embassy in Baghdad is one of the anonymous government officials cited in an Aug. 4 indictment as having provided classified information to an employee of a pro-Israel lobbying group, people who have been officially briefed on the case said Wednesday.

The diplomat, David M. Satterfield, was identified in the indictment as a United States government official, "USGO-2," the people briefed on the matter said. In early 2002, USGO-2 discussed secret national security matters in two meetings with Steven J. Rosen, who has since been dismissed as a top lobbyist for the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, known as Aipac, who has been charged in the case.

Now if you read the indictment filed against Rosen, his AIPAC colleague Keith Weissman, and Pentagon analyst Larry Franklin, you'll see that "USGO-2" is just one of a rather large cast of uncredited actors who appear in this movie. Others include:

"USGO-1," which the Jewish Telegraphic Agency has suggested is someone "recently appointed to a senior Bush administration post."

DoD employees "A and B," who accompanied Franklin on some of his clandestine meetings with AIPAC's dynamic duo.

"A senior fellow at a Washington D.C. think tank."

FO (foreign officials) 1, 2 and 3 -- all alleged diplomats at the Israeli embassy in Washington. FO-3 has been positively identified as Naor Gilon, former head of the embassy's political department, and a guy who, for a political officer, took an awfully keen interest in intelligence matters.

"A person previously associated with an Israeli intelligence agency, now running a think tank in Israel." This individual has also been identified as ex-Mossad official Uzi Arad.

Like Satterfield, none of the American members of this supporting cast have been indicted, or disciplined, or even hindered in their career progress -- as Satterfield's posting to Baghdad indicates. Neither have any of Rosen and Weissman's fellow AIPACers, even though the indictment claims that classified information obtained from both Satterfield and Franklin was distributed to others within the organization -- continuing a pattern that stretches back to at least the early 1980s, according to this report and this one in the New York Jewish Week.

On the face of it, it's hard to grasp the legal logic for giving USG-01, USG-02 and DoD employees A and B a pass from prosecution (I kept waiting for the indictment to mention Little Cats C, D and E, but apparently the U.S. Attorney's Office doesn't read Dr. Seuss.) In Satterfield's case, for example, the indictment clearly states he leaked classified information -- including secret stuff about Al Qaeda -- to Rosen, who then passed it along to the Israelis. This is cited as one of the overt acts backing up the conspiracy charge against the AIPAC lobbyist.

But if Rosen committed a crime by promptly passing that information along to the Israelis, what about Satterfield, the guy who gave it to him? Or what about USGO-1? According to the indictment, Rosen was overheard in 1999 boasting that USGO-1 had given him "code-word protected intelligence." Such codes are normally used to protect what the spooks call SCI -- or "sensitive compartmentalized information" -- the highest possible level of classification.

Update 8/19 10:00 am ET: I should have doublechecked that. USGO-1 didn't give Rosen the SCI; he or she didn't show up on the scene until 2000. The actual source is one of several who are not identified at all in the indictment (see below). According to the indictment, this particular SCI consisted of "national defense information concerning terrorist activities in Central Asia," which I'm guessing was code worded to prevent the disclosure of intelligence sources and methods (the most common use of the SCI designation). That ain't chicken feed -- nor is it the kind of harmless "policy-related" leaking that AIPAC and its media apologists have tried to portray in their spin on the scandal.

There are still other leakers who are not specifically listed in the cast, but whose existence can be deduced from the indictment. In June of 1999, for example, Weissman (Rosen's sidekick) told an Israeli official he had obtained a "secret FBI, classified FBI report" on the Khobar Towers bombing from three different sources, including at least two U.S. government officials. Who are these people? Does the FBI know? If not, does the Justice Department have any particular interest in finding out?

If it does, you sure can't tell from the statements and actions of Jay McNulty, the U.S. Attorney handling the case. As the New Pravda notes, USGO-2 (Satterfield) is "not believed to be the subject of a continuing investigation," and McNulty ruled out any further delving into AIPAC's activities when he announced the indictments against Franklin, Rosen and Weissman:

"We have no basis for charging anyone else for unlawful disclosure of classified information," he said. "And I might add also that AIPAC as an organization has expressed its concern on several occasions with the allegations against Rosen and Weissman, and, in fact, after we brought some of the evidence that we had to AIPAC's attention, it did the right thing by dismissing these two individuals."

Yeah, sure. They were fired all right -- eight months after news of the investigation first broke, and long after it became clear the FBI had been tailing Rosen and his Israeli contacts (or should I say handlers?) for years. Of course, this hasn't stopped the usual fools and tools, like neocon fanatic Joel Malbray, from dismissing the whole scandal as a figment cooked up by the liberal media and (you had to expect this part) those sneaky pro-Arab diplomats in the State Department:

Now that the election is history—as are the secretary and deputy secretary of state who allowed such anonymous character assassinations—the smearing has stopped. No stories have run since September . . . Here's what loyal readers of the Post won't know: Mr. Franklin is back working for the Department of Defense. And he still has not been arrested, let alone charged. His security clearances remain pulled, but it would seem significant that after using up a combination of vacation and leave—though he was never suspended—he's back at work.

That was a rather spectacular bit of bad timing on Mowbray's part, since Franklin was arrested and charged about three weeks after his column ran. But Mowbray's hardly the only media stooge trying to deny the obvious.

With few exceptions (I'll get to them later) the corporate media -- and the New York Times in particular -- have also rigidly toed the party line, with increasingly absurd results. Today's Times story, for example, professes to be "puzzled" by the FBI's focus on such a well-established (if informal) exemption from the rules normally applied to the handling of classified information:

The investigation is one of the more puzzling national security cases in recent years, focusing on the interactions between foreign affairs lobbyists and officials of the United States and other governments, who over the years, have routinely traded gossip and sometimes classified information. Under the Justice Department's theories of the case, it is no longer clear whether such conversations are legally permissible.

It would be interesting to hear the Times describe some of the other "interactions" between U.S. officials and lobbyists that somehow or another have resulted in highly sensitive compartmentalized information being passed to a foreign government that is:

a.) not a NATO ally,

b.) not bound by any formal defense treaty with the United States, and

c.) has been known to trade sensitive intelligence materials (like the satellite recon photos it received from Jonathan Pollard) with hostile foreign governments.

I won't hold my breath.

It's also amusing to note that the two U.S. officials quoted to back the Times's assertion that passing secret materials to Israel is an old and accepted custom inside the Beltway are former ambassador to Israel Martin Indyk, an ex-AIPAC staffer, and Dennis Ross, former lead U.S. negotiator in the Israeli-Palestinian "peace process" and the director of a pro-Israel Washington think tank created by AIPAC.

Nobody here but us chickens.

But there's nothing new about making excuses for Israel's espionage activities in the United States, and nothing partisan about aiding and abetting it. Republican and Democratic administrations alike have been doing it for years, as Stephen Green, a former UN official and a diligent user of the Freedom of Information Act, makes clear in this article, which covers the unauthorized leaks -- and subsequent cover ups -- of many of the usual suspects (Perle, Feith, Wolfowitz, Ledeen, etc.) as well as some players most people have never heard of, like Stephen Bryen, ex-Senate Foreign Affairs Committee staffer, ex-deputy assistant secretary of Defense, and current member of the United States-China Economic and Security Review Commission, which is charged with monitoring the flow of advanced technology to the People's Republic.

Bryen had been overheard in the Madison Hotel Coffee Shop, offering classified documents to an official of the Israeli Embassy in the presence of the director of AIPAC, the American-Israel Public Affairs Committee. It was later determined that the Embassy official was Zvi Rafiah, the Mossad station chief in Washington. Bryen refused to be polygraphed by the FBI on the purpose and details of the meeting; whereas the person who'd witnessed it agreed to be polygraphed and passed the test.

A few years later, in his role as director of the Pentagon's Defense Technology Security Administration, Bryen was involved in an attempt to transfer extremely sensitive ballistic missile technology to Israel -- "without the usual consultations with the tech transfer officials of the Army and Air Force."

Other Pentagon officials (including one of Mowbray's "character assassins," then-DoD assistant secretary Dick Armitage) intervened and the deal was cancelled. But, according to Green:

Two senior colleague in DOD who wish to remain anonymous have confirmed that this attempt by Bryen to obtain klystrons for his friends was not unusual, and was in fact "standard operating procedure" for him, recalling numerous instances when U.S. companies were denied licenses to export sensitive technology, only to learn later that Israeli companies subsequently exported similar (U.S. derived) weapons and technology to the intended customers/governments.

I could go on to explore the potential links between Bryen's current job on the China Commission and the long-running dispute over Israeli sales of military technology to Beijing. But I'm not trying to write a comprehensive history of the "special relationship" here -- just making the point that conduct that would be considered criminal, or even borderline treasonous, in any other context, has been a routine feature of U.S.-Israeli diplomacy for going on 25 years now, if not longer. To the point where you really have to wonder why the FBI got such a bug up its ass about Larry Franklin and his lunch buddies.

I mean, Ross and Weissman must have been flabbergasted when they were finally confronted by the gumshoes. It seems to have taken them a few days even to process the fact that they were in big trouble -- otherwise it's hard to believe they would have continued leaking the stuff Franklin gave them even after they were contacted by the FBI:

52. One or about August 9, 2004, WEISSMAN was interviewed by FBI agents and falsely told the agents Franklin had never discussed classified information with him and had never provided him with classified information.

53. On or about August 20, 2004, WEISSMAN contacted another member of the media and disclosed to that person classified national defense information obtained on July 21, 2004 from Franklin. WEISSMAN further advised that he was trying to arrange a meeting (!) between Franklin and the member of the media.

I'm not trying to make excuses for espionage here, but when you put the Franklin-Rosen-Weissman spy ring in the context of the overall U.S.-Israel relationship, you do start to see the point their apologists are trying to make.

Israel, for all intents and purposes, is no longer treated like a foreign country in Washington, but more like Puerto Rico -- an affiliated territory that enjoys most of the benefits of U.S. statehood, without actually being one. Except unlike Puerto Rico, Israel has nukes, and the upper hand in the relationship. To the point where when Franklin wanted a job at the White House, he knew who to ask:

19. On or about February 14, 2003, FRANKLIN and ROSEN discussed FRANKLIN's prospects for a position on the National Security Council (NSC) staff, and ROSEN told FRANKLIN that by working at the NSC that he would be "by the elbow of the president." FRANKLIN asked ROSEN to "put in a good word" for him, and ROSEN said "I'll do what I can." It isn't clear from that paragraph whether Franklin was asking Rosen to put in a good word at the White House -- or the Israeli embassy. Nor is it clear that it made much of a difference.

This is all quite embarrassing for those who like to argue that there's nothing peculiar, nothing at all, about the behavior of the Israel lobby and its affiliates in the U.S. government -- and that anyone who thinks otherwise is a raving anti-Semite. (Or rather, it would be embarrassing, if the Washington press corps was devoting more than perfunctory coverage to the story.) But the minnows now wriggling in the net hardly seem to justify the effort and expense that clearly were poured into the FBI's big fishing expedition.

Did the guys in the shiny blue suits really spend six years (maybe more) following Israeli diplomats around Washington and New York in order to snag one low-level analyst with an obsession about Iran and a couple of pro-Israel lobbyists who never learned not to talk about their clandestine activities on their cell phones?

One theory is that the indictment is supposed to serve as a warning -- or, as one, ex-prosecutor puts it, a "brush back pitch," to let the Israelis and their U.S. agents know that while the relationship may be special, it's not that special:

"If I am the prosecutor, what I really want to prosecute is not AIPAC," says Rishikoff. "I want to start prosecuting anyone who thinks they can give information to AIPAC. I want to use this as a test case, to stop people feeling the US has a special relationship with this group."

On the other hand, a few establishment journalists have been treating the story like a legitimate spy scandal, and they've intimated that the FBI's fishing hole may contain much bigger trophies than the ones hauled up so far. Last September, the Washington Post's Steno Sue Schmidt, of all people, suggested that secret NSA intercepts -- the crown jewels of the American intelligence community -- might be involved:

The counterintelligence probe, which is different from a criminal investigation, focuses on a possible transfer of intelligence more extensive than whether Franklin passed on a draft presidential directive on U.S. policy toward Iran, the sources said. The FBI is examining whether highly classified material from the National Security Agency, which conducts electronic intercepts of communications, was also forwarded to Israel, they said.

Hmmmm . . . access to leaked NSA intercepts, a pro-Israel official recently appointed to a senior position in the Bush administration -- a conspiratorially minded person might try to connect the dots.

But there are already so many dots in plain view, clearly connected, that it hardly seems worth the effort. Like a grizzled old investigative reporter once told me: It's not the stuff they try to hide that's the real scandal; it's the stuff they think they

can get away with right out in the open. And after more than 25 years of this particular stuff, the lines between Israeli influence peddling and Israeli espionage have gotten awfully blurry.

The Franklin case isn't likely to make them any clearer. It might, if USGO-1 and USGO-2 -- and the rest of the alphanumeric cast of characters -- were required to testify in court, or if the FBI decided to follow the trail a little higher up the bureaucratic food chain. But those avenues of investigation now appear to be blocked. And the smart money is betting that, rather than risk seeing all the beans spill out in court, the Justice Department eventually will settle for plea bargains from Rosen and Weissman. That would leave Franklin (a bit player in a minor sideshow) to take the fall -- something like 40 years worth. Maybe he and Pollard can become pen pals.

So: problem solved, harmony restored, a special relationship (which one particularly ardent pro-Israel Senator -- Frank Lautenberg -- once compared to a marriage) preserved. 'Til death do us part.

But while the marriage may look like perfect conjugal bliss from the Washington end, the Jerusalem end has a different point of view -- and always will. The Israelis understand, even if their American patrons do not, that they live in another country, one with its own national interests, its own strategic ambitions and its own enemies, none of which necessarily overlap with America's.

They don't even make much of an attempt to hide it, as this writer for David Horowitz's Frontpage (to Israel what the Daily Worker once was to the Soviet Union) makes clear:

A more independent Israel is determined to make its own mark on the world -- questioning US authority more frequently in order to establish its own autonomous relations with other countries.

A good idea. It's just a shame our own political lap dogs and their media water carriers won't do likewise.

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