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There are many terrorist states in the world, but the United States is unusual in that it is officially committed to international terrorism.

– Noam Chomsky

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## The Axis of Treason Israeli spies in the Pentagon

by Justin Raimondo

The death agony of the **neoconservatives** is going to be a prolonged and quite ugly procedure, painful not only for them but for the entire country – which will learn, to its chagrin and growing anger, how and by whom they were **lied into war**. It started late Friday, when **Lesley Stahl of CBS News reported** that the FBI has "solid evidence" that a spy, embedded in the top echelons of the Pentagon's civilian leadership, handed over classified documents, including the draft of a presidential directive on U.S. policy toward Iran, to Israel. Such an investigation would have been politically explosive in any case, but add to this the



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news that Franklin had passed the documents to Tel Aviv via AIPAC, the American Israeli Public Affairs Committee, one of the most powerful lobbies in Washington, and the result is political dynamite.

Within hours **the story had grown** from focusing on a single individual, **Lawrence Franklin**, described as a "mid-level desk officer," to include an entire nest of spies ensconced in the top echelons of the Pentagon, centered around the office of **Douglas Feith**, the Director of Policy:

*"An FBI probe into the handling of highly classified material by Pentagon civilians is broader than previously reported, and goes well beyond allegations that a single mid-level analyst gave a top-secret Iran policy document to Israel, three sources familiar with the investigation said Saturday.*

*"The probe, which has been going on for more than two years, also has focused on other civilians in the Secretary of Defense's office, said the sources, who spoke on condition they not be identified, but who have firsthand knowledge of the subject.*

*"In addition, one said, FBI investigators in recent weeks have conducted interviews to determine whether Pentagon officials gave highly classified U.S. intelligence to a leading Iraqi exile group, the Iraqi National Congress,*

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*which may in turn have passed it on to Iran. INC leader Ahmed Chalabi has denied his group was involved in any wrongdoing."*

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This Knight-Ridder report, by Warren Strobel, went on to note that "the linkage, if any, between the two leak investigations, remains unclear." But it couldn't be clearer to those of us who have been following the various scandals that have recently rocked the national security bureaucracy – Chalabi-gate, the outing of CIA agent Valerie Plame, the Niger uranium forgeries, and now the Franklin affair. They all involve the same cast of neoconservative characters: the inhabitants of the "policy shop" presided over by Feith, including the infamous **Office of Special Plans** – otherwise known as the **Lie Factory** – which produced a steady supply of utter falsehoods to justify the rush to war. Former CIA analyst **Larry Johnson, commenting on MSNBC**, said his sources were telling him that the Franklin affair is also connected to the Niger uranium forgery investigation. As I wrote **a couple of months ago**:

*"The other day FBI agents paid a visit to the Pentagon, and subjected several top neocons to lie-detector tests. They wanted to know where neocon protégé (and Iranian spy) Ahmed Chalabi got his hot little hands on highly valued U.S. secrets. But what I want to know is this: How many different teams of investigators have to go through the same desks? Why*

*not consolidate all these ongoing investigations – l'affaire Plame, the Niger uranium forgeries, Chalabi-gate, and the Abu Ghraib war crimes – into one big investigation? We can call it Neocon-gate."*

That's what the Franklin affair shows every sign of turning into: Neocon-gate. And it's about time. As regular readers of **this column** are aware, it's been a long time coming.

For over two years, the feds have put scarce law enforcement resources into this investigation, and it hasn't been for nothing: they've been watching and eavesdropping on Israel's American fifth column for at least that long, as Michael Isikoff and Mark Hosenball make clear enough in this *Newsweek* piece:

*"It was just a Washington lunch – one that the FBI happened to be monitoring. Nearly a year and a half ago, agents were monitoring a conversation between an Israeli Embassy official and a lobbyist for American Israel Public Affairs Committee, or AIPAC, as part of a probe into possible Israeli spying. Suddenly, and quite unexpectedly, in the description of one intelligence official, another American 'walked in' to the lunch out of the blue. Agents at first didn't know who the man was. They were stunned to discover he was Larry Franklin, a desk officer with the Near East and South Asia office at the*

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*Pentagon."*

*"... FBI counterintelligence agents began tracking him, and at one point watched him allegedly attempt to pass a classified U.S. Policy document on Iran to one of the surveillance targets, according to a U.S. Intelligence official. But his alleged confederate was 'too smart,' the official said, and refused to take it. Instead, he asked Franklin to brief him on its contents – and Franklin allegedly obliged. Franklin also passed information gleaned from more highly classified documents, the official said. If the government is correct, Franklin's motive appears to have been ideological rather than financial."*

Yes, but what ideology are we talking about here? Hosenball and Isikoff don't say. However, unconditional support to Israel has always been **a central tenet** of neoconservative foreign policy doctrine, and never more so than today. Feith was a co-author, along with several prominent neocons, of "**A Clean Break**," a 1996 policy paper written for then Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu that proposed the elimination of Saddam Hussein as a primary goal: Baghdad was depicted as the gateway to Damascus, a byway on the road to Tehran.

The strategic utility of invading Iraq as a means to combat "terrorism" as represented by al-Qaeda has always baffled war opponents, and even a few

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Justin Raimondo is the editorial director of Antiwar.com. He is the author of *An Enemy of the State: The Life of Murray N. Rothbard* (Prometheus Books, 2000). He is also the author of *Reclaiming American Right: The Legacy of the Conservative Movement* (with an Introduction by Patrick J. Buchanan), (Center for Libertarian Studies, 1993), and I

**reluctant supporters**, because it was so strikingly counterintuitive. Osama was forgotten: Saddam was the new demon figure, and Iraq, not al-Qaeda, the target. The invasion and subsequent occupation created a terrorist recruitment and training center in the Sunni triangle that soon extended outward, to the Shi'ite south. Only two leaders have been well-served by the American conquest, and George W. Bush is not one of them. CIA analyst **Michael Scheuer**, writing as "Anonymous," put it well in the opening paragraph of his recent book, *Imperial Hubris*:

*"U.S. forces and policies are completing the radicalization of the Islamic world, something Osama bin Laden has been trying to do with substantial but incomplete success since the early 1990s. As a result, I think it is fair to conclude that the United States of America remains bin Laden's only indispensable ally."*

If bin Laden is the chief beneficiary of American policies in the Middle East, then Ariel Sharon runs a close second. His government has been given a free hand to do what it wills in the occupied territories, including increased **settlement-building**, increased state terrorism, and even U.S. acquiescence on the "Wall of Separation." Israeli agents are **swarming over Kurdistan**, fomenting rebellion, and **threatening Iran**. The old Zionist dream of extending Israel's hegemony **from the**

**Nile to the Euphrates** suddenly seems close to realization.

Former Pentagon analyst **Karen Kwiatkowski**, who has firsthand experience with Franklin and his neocon comrades at the Office of Special Plans, described direct contacts with top-ranking Israeli officials. **Jason Vest and Robert Dreyfuss** also describe an Israeli component of the OSP, working in collaboration with their American counterparts. Stove-piping phony "intelligence," including forgeries such as the Niger uranium papers, and passing them off as "evidence" of Iraq's "weapons of mass destruction," what was essentially an Israeli covert action succeeded in lying us into war. Franklin is just a cog in a much bigger cabal.

We're not just dealing with an overzealous individual who somehow got confused that he shouldn't share sensitive intelligence with a good "ally" such as Israel. That's the line being put out by Franklin's defenders, who are even now **mobilizing** to support their new hero.

Franklin's defenders are moving quickly to **downplay his importance**: he's a "mid-level desk officer," supposedly in no position to make or even have much of an impact on American policy in the Middle East. But others point to his status as a favorite of his bosses, Feith and Paul Wolfowitz – both of whom are no doubt of interest to the FBI in the

sense that they will be questioned. What did Franklin's bosses know about their trusted underling's activities? In any case, one official cited by *Newsweek* described the Franklin inquiry as "the most significant Israeli espionage investigation in Washington since Jonathan Pollard."

The raid on Chalabi's headquarters in Iraq was a first strike in the war against the neocons. The coming arrest of Franklin, and perhaps some of his confederates, rumored for this week, will bring the war home.

The reaction of the Israelis, and their amen corner in the U.S., has been uniformly and unintentionally comic: **Who, us?** Spy on America? It never happens, at least not since Pollard.

But the reality of Israeli covert agents in America, far from being something out of a cheap paperback spy thriller, is certainly borne out by the Franklin affair. Not since Pollard? Tell that to Carl Cameron of Fox News, whose **four-part series** on Israeli **surveillance** of targets in the U.S., including Mohammed Atta and the 9/11 hijackers, cited anonymous law enforcement and government officials. In Part I, broadcast on December 17, 2001, **Cameron stated:**

*"There is no indication that the Israelis were involved in the 9/11 attacks, but investigators suspect that the Israelis may have gathered intelligence about the attacks in advance and not shared it. A*

*highly-placed investigator said there are – quote – 'tie-ins.' But when asked for details, he flatly refused to describe them, saying – quote – evidence linking these Israelis to 9/11 is classified. I cannot tell you about evidence that has been gathered. It's classified information."*

At the time, Cameron's report – and **my columns on the subject** – were derided as "conspiracy theories," and largely ignored. When Cameron's sources leaked **an interagency report** on the existence of an Israeli "art student" operation in the U.S. that was clearly an intelligence-gathering tool, a Justice Department spokeswoman described its thesis – that the Israelis had launched a massive covert action in on U.S. soil – as an "**urban myth**," and the Israel First crowd **took up the cry**. The respected German weekly news magazine, *Die Zeit*, **reported** that Israeli agents were living "next door to Mohammed Atta," but this, too, was ignored.

Now that we have uncovered a pro-Israeli cabal engaged in espionage operating at the very highest levels of the U.S. government, does it all seem so improbable? The whole story is told in my short book, *The Terror Enigma: 9/11 and the Israeli Connection*, which presciently concludes as follows:

*"This burgeoning scandal underscores why the two-sided Manichean view*

*promoted by George W. Bush in his 'war on terrorism' is fundamentally false. 'You're either with us,' he intoned, 'or against us.' But what about the Israelis? When they were shadowing the hijackers and learning their secrets, were they with us – or against us?"*

**Israel's secret war against America** – which you could only read about here, in this space, up until now – is out in the open, exploding into the headlines. The reason is because it looks like the Americans, or at least some of them, are beginning to fight back.

The Franklin affair is already being compared to the **Pollard spy case**, but a more apt historical analogy is the case of **Alger Hiss**. Like Franklin, Hiss was a top U.S. government official who didn't sell out for money, but because he was a true believer in the cause. Hiss saw himself, and was seen by his numerous American supporters, not as a **traitor**, but as an idealist, the advocate of an ideology that would, in the end, make for a better America – a Sovietized America. Franklin and his neocon comrades are no less committed to their vision of a neoconized America.

At this point we are lacking some essential information, including the identities of the "**two or three**" AIPAC employees involved. How far up in the organization did knowledge of these illegal activities go? What else have the

feds got on AIPAC – after an extensive investigation, including electronic surveillance, ongoing for over two years?

We don't know the answers to these questions. But I do know that if this had been an Islamic or Arab group, they would have been **shut down**, their assets **impounded**, and their headquarters **bolted** shut. Will something even approaching that happen to AIPAC?

Of course not. But, if not, why not? Is Israel going to be allowed to openly operate a spy nest in Washington with impunity? It's an outrage, and it's time someone said so. Furthermore, those politicians who have **taken money from AIPAC** have a lot of 'splainin' to do, especially if they don't return the dough. As Israeli spies in Washington steal our secrets, and feed us lies, our politicians are pigging out at the trough of AIPAC campaign contributions, raking in cash while their patrons take in classified documents.

When the American people find out what is going on, God help the neocons, because they are going to need it. The arrest and trial of Israel's fifth column in the Pentagon is going to unleash a lot of anger, because it is going to make Americans understand the nature and extent of the treason that entrapped them in Iraq. The very word "neocon" will become a synonym for treason, like Quisling. Moreover, the complexity of this

war that we found ourselves in, as the smoke from the World Trade Center and the Pentagon began to clear, will perhaps begin to dawn on us.

The party line, coming out of Neocon Central, is that Israel has a *right* to classified material, **since we're such good buddies** and all: friends don't have any secrets from each other, now do they? This is all just a matter of a **faction fight** within the administration, between neocons and "old guard" Republican realists in the State Department.

That may well be true, but it may also be true that one of the factions has committed illegal acts – espionage – on behalf of a foreign power. The "AIPAC kerfluffle," as the *Jerusalem Post* smugly refers to it, is surely the result of an internecine struggle within the Bush administration, but that doesn't rule out the possibility that one side constitutes an axis of treason.

At any rate, grab some chips and dip, stock up on beer – heck, bring out the champagne! – put your feet up and get ready for the political trial of the new millennium, because it's going to be quite an entertaining and instructive show.

## **POSTSCRIPT**

**T**he *New York Times* is reporting that the CBS News story may have **derailed**

efforts by law enforcement to follow the investigative trail from Franklin all the way "back to the Israelis." The result is that "several areas of the investigation remain murky."

That's just what the Israelis and their apologists in this country are hoping for: traitors can only operate under cover of night, and the murkier the better.

There was a great suspicion, voiced by Pat Buchanan the other night on MSNBC, and by Laura Rozen on her excellent blog, [warandpiece.com](http://warandpiece.com), that this was a case of a "controlled burn," as Laura put it, and she was right. Friday night is the slowest news night of the week, and add to this the coverage eaten up by the Republican convention, and you have a classic tactic of bury-that-story. Add to that the usual victimological posturing and cries of "anti-Semitism," and the strategy of the Amen Corner is clear: deny everything, and go on the offensive. Will it work? I doubt it, but we shall see. Israel's fifth column in the U.S. government, and **especially within the Justice Department**, but the patriotic resistance is growing, both within the administration and the court of American public opinion. The axis of treason is fighting for its life, but the usual tactics – fear, smear, and obfuscation – may not be enough.

– Justin Raimondo



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