

Jewish Whistleblower

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MONDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 2005

Israeli diplomat wanted in Rio for part in child porn ring, not going to Australia

posted by [jewishwhistleblower](#) @ 1:35 AM

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At 9:47 PM, [jewishwhistleblower](#) said...

courtesy of the Awareness Center Yahoogroup

<http://www.theawarenesscenter.org/networkinggroups.html>

also see: http://www.theawarenesscenter.org/Scher_Aryeh.html

1)

Pressure on new Israeli envoy builds

By Mark Forbes, Barney Zwartz

Age, Australia

February 18, 2005

<http://www.theage.com.au/news/National/Pressure-on-new-Israeli-envoy-builds/2005/02/17/1108609347221.html>

Israel is coming under increasing pressure to reconsider its latest diplomatic appointment to Australia after complaints that the official had been involved in a South American sex scandal.

This comes amid reports that the diplomat he is replacing, Amir Laty - allegedly expelled in December on national security grounds - believes he may have been forced out of Australia because of his close contact with Attorney-General Philip Ruddock's daughter.

In the latest of a series of controversies besetting Israel's Canberra embassy, some Australian Jewish leaders have protested at the appointment of Aryeh Scher as a senior consul. Israeli Foreign Ministry spokesman Mark Zegev confirmed Mr Scher had previously been censured for improper conduct in Brazil, but an inquiry determined he had not indulged in criminal behaviour.

Mr Zegev said concerns had been raised "from several quarters" about the appointment, "so we are having a second look at the appointment because we take these concerns very seriously".

About Me

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Mr Scher had been "a young single man in Brazil" five years ago. An Israeli Civil Service Commission hearing into sex ring allegations found "behaviour unbecoming of a diplomat, but there was no criminal conduct", Mr Zegev said.

He firmly rejected media reports that Mr Scher had been part of a child sex ring.

Graeme Leonard, president of the Executive Council of Australian Jewry, said he had not complained to Israel. "My executive took the view that it was best left to the Government to sort out, and we were confident they would," he told The Age.

Australian Jewish News editor Dan Goldberg said the Israeli Foreign Ministry had shown a "blatant disregard" for the spotlight shining on the embassy because of the Laty affair in deciding "to dispatch a diplomat who had been implicated by Brazilian police, rightly or wrongly, in a child sex scandal".

But Mr Goldberg has editorialised to defend Mr Laty, suggesting he was expelled in tit-for-tat diplomacy because one of two Israelis convicted in New Zealand last year for passport fraud had been living in Sydney.

A spokesman for Foreign Minister Alexander Downer said he had no comment.

A spokeswoman for Mr Ruddock said any link between his daughter and Mr Laty had no connection to his departure. Mr Ruddock is responsible for the ASIO spy agency. The Age has confirmed reports that Mr Laty had been invited to spend time at the Ruddock home at Christmas. It is believed the invitation was withdrawn after Australian authorities ordered his expulsion.

It is not believed that the relationship was close, but ASIO is believed to have had concerns about Mr Laty's motivations.

Caitlin Ruddock, 26, is an accounting lecturer at the University of NSW. She is believed to have met Mr Laty while studying in Beijing.

Ms Ruddock would not elaborate yesterday, saying only: "This issue has nothing to do with me. You should speak to my dad's office."

Mr Laty's expulsion has been linked to his visits to two Mossad agents convicted for attempting to fraudulently obtain passports in New Zealand. Government sources have also tried to claim that the move against Mr Laty was due to his personal relationships, and alleged pursuit of women, in Canberra - including Defence Department employees.

Tainted diplomat withdraws application

Age, Australia

February 18, 2005 - 12:16PM

<http://www.theage.com.au/news/National/Tainted-diplomat-withdraws-application/2005/02/18/1108609391191.html>

An Israeli diplomat allegedly involved in a sex scandal while serving in Brazil five years ago has voluntarily withdrawn his candidacy to serve in Israel's embassy in Canberra.

Aryeh Scher was to replace Amir Laty, the Israeli diplomat thrown out of Australia in December on national security grounds.

Both Israel and Australia have been tightlipped about Mr Laty's expulsion.

But it has been revealed that Mr Laty had rekindled a friendship with the daughter of Attorney-General Philip Ruddock and had been due to spend Christmas with the Ruddock family, before authorities ordered his expulsion.

An Israeli foreign ministry spokesman said Scher informed Israeli Foreign Minister Silvan Shalom that because of the negative "atmosphere" his appointment had created both in Israel and Australia, he has decided to forego the appointment, the Jerusalem Post reported today.

Although Shalom last week said he was going to take a "second look" at the appointment, ministry officials said Shalom did not ask Scher to turn down the post, but rather Scher took this step on his own volition, according to the report.

An Israeli Foreign Ministry spokesman Mark Zegev has said an Israeli Civil Service Commission hearing into sex ring allegations found "behaviour unbecoming of a diplomat, but there was no criminal conduct".

The alleged incident occurred when Scher was a young, single man in Brazil five years ago.

3)

Israeli spy's successor in disgrace

by John Kerin

Australian, Australia

February 19, 2005

http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/common/story_page/0,5744,12298880%25E2702,00.html

AN Israeli diplomat who was to be sent to Australia to replace expelled embassy consul Amir Lati has withdrawn his own candidacy after he was photographed naked with a group of women and children during a

previous posting.

Israeli Foreign Ministry sources have confirmed that Aryeh Scher will not take up his post following the controversy over the incident in which he posed naked alongside several Brazilian women, and minors, during a posting five years ago.

Although cleared of any criminal wrongdoing, Mr Scher, who was vice-consul at the Israeli embassy in Rio de Janeiro at the time, was reprimanded for inappropriate behaviour and banned from travelling abroad for five years.

According to the Australian Jewish News, Israel's Foreign Minister Silvan Shalom "blew his top" over the Foreign Ministry's failure to inform him of Mr Scher's previous behaviour.

Some Jewish community leaders in Australia lobbied Jerusalem to stop Mr Scher coming to Australia, and even a 150-signature petition launched by Israeli Foreign Ministry staff could not save his posting.

The developments came as Attorney-General Philip Ruddock continued yesterday to reject suggestions that a friendship between his daughter Caitlin and Mr Lati had resulted in the Israeli diplomat's expulsion from Australia.

"I don't believe that it is appropriate to look at whether my daughter had relationships with anybody," Mr Ruddock told Brisbane radio 4BC.

"Any acquaintance she may or may not have had with this particular gentleman was totally irrelevant to his departure from Australia, and his departure is not something we're commenting on."

There was further speculation last night that Mr Lati had also pursued liaisons with a woman from the Defence Intelligence Organisation and another from the Prime Minister and Cabinet's international policy unit.

The Daily Telegraph reported intelligence experts claimed he used the "honeypot" method, faking a love interest to entrap women in middle-level intelligence organisations.

"It was an attempt at high-level espionage," the paper quoted a national security source as saying.

Ms Ruddock met Mr Lati six years ago when they were studying together in Beijing, and they renewed their friendship when he was posted to Canberra in late 2003.

Mr Lati claimed he was unable to attend a Christmas lunch at the Ruddocks's Sydney home last year because the Government had already begun moves to expel him.

Mr Ruddock did not deny that Mr Lati had been invited to the Christmas celebration, saying "it was a very big lunch". "This is an adult daughter, 26, who doesn't live at home, and I'm not commenting on matters relating to her acquaintances," he said. "It's totally irrelevant and I think she's entitled to some privacy."

4)

Spy who tried to steal secrets from the bedroom

By IAN McPHEDRAN in Canberra

Advertiser Adelaide, Australia

February 19, 2005

http://www.theadvertiser.news.com.au/common/story_page/0,5936,12298708%255E911,00.html

AN ISRAELI spy was expelled from Canberra for trying to seduce women employed by some of Australia's most sensitive national security, defence and spy agencies.

Amir Laty was kicked out of the country in late December after spending most of his 18 months in Canberra trying to bed female spies, diplomats, defence specialists and even journalists.

Such activity by a young, single male (even a spy) is not considered serious enough to warrant expulsion, but selecting well-placed female government officials for "careful cultivation" to obtain secret information is a different matter.

It is understood Laty had only limited success in his quest for companionship and secrets.

The shortish, lean and plain-looking man was a frequent visitor to the B-bar in Kingston, one of Canberra's upmarket venues frequented by young, upwardly mobile professionals.

The extraordinary tale of sex, spies and allies took a bizarre twist yesterday when Attorney-General Philip Ruddock was forced to rule out any link between Laty's expulsion and his long-time friendship with his 26-year-old daughter Caitlin.

Mr Ruddock, who is responsible for the domestic spy agency ASIO, demanded privacy for his daughter who first befriended the Israeli spy six years ago during their university studies in Beijing.

"Any acquaintance she may or may not have had with this particular gentleman was totally irrelevant to his departure from Australia, and his departure is not something we're commenting on," he said.

"It's totally irrelevant and I think she's entitled to some privacy," Mr Ruddock said.

Israel's spy agency Mossad enjoys close links with two of Australia's key spying organisations - the overseas network, the Australian Secret Intelligence Service and the prime minister's own spy agency, the Office of National Assessments.

The targets for Laty's advances worked for one of those agencies as well as the military spy agency, the Defence Intelligence Organisation.

"It was an attempt at high-level espionage," a well-placed national security source said.

The espionage is said to be linked to Australia's penetration of the Jemaah Islamiyah terrorist network which is the South-East Asian offshoot of al-Qaida.

Meanwhile, Laty's replacement as Consul at Israel's Canberra embassy, Aryeh Scher, yesterday had his appointment cancelled over a child-sex scandal in Brazil over photographs of the diplomat naked with young girls.

5)

Ruddock rejects daughter link in spy row

February 18, 2005 - 10:54AM

Age, Australia

<http://www.theage.com.au/news/Breaking-News/Ruddock-rejects-daughter-link-in-spy-row/2005/02/18/1108609385331.html>

Attorney-General Philip Ruddock says his daughter's friendship with an Israeli diplomat alleged to have been a spy was irrelevant to the man's departure from Australia.

Amir Laty, who was attached to the Israeli embassy, claimed he was expelled from Australia because of his friendship with Mr Ruddock's youngest daughter Caitlin.

Newspaper reports say Mr Laty, aged in his 30s, was thrown out of Australia after befriending Ms Ruddock.

It has not been explained why Mr Laty was expelled from his position but it is understood ASIO believed he had been involved in spying.

Mr Laty was due to have Christmas dinner at the Attorney-General's Sydney house just three days before his expulsion, according to the reports.

He told an Israeli newspaper it was his relationship with the 26-year-old Sydney accountancy lecturer that was behind the decision by then Israeli ambassador Gabby Levy to recall him home on December 23 last year.

"I don't believe that it is appropriate to look at whether my daughter

had relationships with anybody," Mr Ruddock told Brisbane radio 4BC.

"Any acquaintance she may or may not have had with this particular gentleman was totally irrelevant to his departure from Australia, and his departure is not something we're commenting on."

Asked why Mr Laty was expelled from Australia, Mr Ruddock said:
"That's not a matter about which we're commenting.

"He was asked, well, he left and I think it's a matter of just simply acknowledging that he departed Australia."

The Attorney-General would not comment on the reported Christmas dinner plans.

"This is an adult daughter, 26, who doesn't live at home, and I'm not commenting on matters relating to her acquaintances," he said.

"It's totally irrelevant and I think she's entitled to some privacy."

Labor received a confidential briefing from spy agency ASIO on Mr Laty's case, but could not reveal what was said at the meeting.

Opposition foreign affairs spokesman Kevin Rudd said he would not comment on any details of the case or its broader implications.

"The problem that arises is that any question about diplomatic impact goes to the circumstances surrounding this individual's case and that's why I'm reluctant to comment more broadly as well," Mr Rudd told ABC radio.

"I'm not about to be in a position of breaching the undertakings we've given to ASIO."

Labor's defence spokesman Robert McClelland, who was also at the ASIO briefing, told ABC radio the opposition would not be pursuing the government over the matter.

The public was unlikely to hear any more about the case, he said.

According to the Sydney-based Australian Jewish News, Mr Laty also told Israeli Foreign Ministry officials his expulsion was linked to his relationship with Ms Ruddock.

The former consul had a reputation for pursuing women in high places, including Ms Ruddock, whom he first met six years ago while studying in Beijing, according to reports in News Ltd papers.

The two are said to have renewed their friendship in 2003 when Mr Laty was posted to Canberra.

But government sources deny the two were intimately involved, saying they were only acquaintances and their relationship "purely platonic".

Mr Ruddock also refused to comment on a newspaper report that Israel was reconsidering its latest diplomatic appointment to Australia following complaints the official was involved in a sex scandal in South America.

Jewish leaders in Australia have protested at the appointment of Aryeh Scher as a senior consul.

He was censured by Israel's Foreign Ministry for improper conduct in Brazil.

"I can't comment on overseas appointments," Mr Ruddock said.

"I'm not the foreign minister, but in any event appointments are made by foreign governments and unless people are persona non grata and are declined recognition, the decisions are up to their governments."

6)

Ruddock denies daughter's diplomat link

Age, Australia

February 18, 2005 - 5:04PM

<http://www.theage.com.au/news/Breaking-News/Ruddock-denies-daughters-diplomat-link/2005/02/18/1108609405665.html>

Attorney-General Philip Ruddock has denied his daughter's friendship with an Israeli diplomat led to his expulsion from Australia.

The denial came as another Israeli diplomat, allegedly involved in a sex scandal in Brazil five years ago, voluntarily withdrew his candidacy to serve in Canberra.

Expelled Israeli senior consul Amir Laty has told Israeli media that he believes his expulsion is linked to his contact with Caitlin Ruddock, the attorney-general's 26-year-old daughter who lectures at the University of NSW.

Mr Laty met Ms Ruddock six years ago when the two were studying in Beijing and they renewed their friendship when Mr Laty was posted to Canberra in late 2003, the Australian Jewish News reported.

It has not been publicly explained why Mr Laty was expelled from his position but it is understood ASIO believed he had been involved in spying.

Mr Ruddock, the key minister in charge of Australia's intelligence agencies, said any relationship his daughter may have had with Mr Laty was not relevant to him leaving.

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Advertisement "I don't believe that it is appropriate to look at whether my daughter had relationships with anybody," Mr Ruddock told Brisbane radio 4BC.

"Any acquaintance she may or may not have had with this particular gentleman was totally irrelevant to his departure from Australia, and his departure is not something we're commenting on."

Mr Ruddock also declined to comment on reports Mr Laty was due to have Christmas dinner at the minister's Sydney house just three days before his expulsion.

"This is an adult daughter, 26, who doesn't live at home, and I'm not commenting on matters relating to her acquaintances," Mr Ruddock said.

"It's totally irrelevant and I think she's entitled to some privacy."

Greens senator Bob Brown has called on Prime Minister John Howard to explain the background to Mr Laty's expulsion.

"There is enough concern about the stories that have emerged with Mr Ruddock for there to be a full public explanation from the prime minister," Senator Brown said.

But Opposition Leader Kim Beazley said he had been confidentially briefed on the situation and was satisfied with what the government had to say.

Mr Beazley said it was up to the government if they wanted to release any details.

Mr Laty reportedly had a reputation for pursuing women in influential places.

He was to be replaced in the Israeli embassy in Canberra by Aryeh Scher, previously censured by Israel's Foreign Ministry for behaviour unbecoming of a diplomat while in Brazil five years ago.

An Israeli foreign ministry spokesman said Scher had announced that because of the negative "atmosphere" his appointment had created both in Israel and Australia, he has decided to forego the appointment, the Jerusalem Post reported.

Mr Ruddock also refused to comment on Mr Scher.

"I'm not the foreign minister, but in any event appointments are made by foreign governments and unless people are persona non grata and are declined recognition, the decisions are up to their governments," Mr Ruddock said.

7)

Spook courted crucial contacts

Ian McPhedran

February 19, 2005

http://www.thecouriermail.news.com.au/common/story_page/0,5936,12295027%255E953,00.html

A SLEAZY Israeli spy was expelled from Canberra for trying to seduce women employed by some of Australia's most sensitive national security, defence and spy agencies.

Amir Laty was kicked out of the country in late December after spending most of his 18 months in Canberra trying to bed female spies, diplomats, defence specialists and even journalists.

Such activity by a young, single male - even a spy - is not considered serious enough to warrant expulsion, but selecting well-placed female government officials for "careful cultivation" to obtain secret information is a different matter.

It is understood the lovelorn spook had only limited success in his quest for companionship and secrets.

"It was an attempt at high-level espionage," a well-placed national security source said.

Meanwhile, Mr Laty's replacement as consul at Israel's Canberra embassy, Aryeh Scher, yesterday had his appointment cancelled over a child sex scandal in Brazil during a posting there five years ago. It related to photos of the diplomat naked with young girls.

Israeli Foreign Ministry spokesman Mark Zegev has said an Israeli Civil Service Commission hearing into sex ring allegations found "behaviour unbecoming of a diplomat, but there was no criminal conduct".

The extraordinary tale of sex, spies and allies took a bizarre twist yesterday when Attorney-General Philip Ruddock was forced to rule out any link between Mr Laty's expulsion and his long-time friendship with his 26-year-old daughter Caitlin.

Mr Ruddock, who is responsible for the domestic spy agency ASIO, demanded privacy for his daughter who befriended the Israeli spy six years ago during their university studies in Beijing.

They rekindled their friendship when he was posted to Canberra in late 2003. He was due to join the Ruddocks for Christmas lunch, but was unable to make it as he was asked to leave the country.

"Any acquaintance she may or may not have had with this particular gentleman was totally irrelevant to his departure from Australia, and

his departure is not something we're commenting on," Mr Ruddock said.

"This is an adult daughter, 26, who doesn't live at home, and I'm not commenting on matters relating to her acquaintances. It's totally irrelevant and I think she's entitled to some privacy."

8)

Jews protest new consul

National News

by HENRY BENJAMIN AND MICHAEL CAVANAGH

The Australian Jewish News

<http://www.ajn.com.au/pages/current-paper/national-01.html>

AUSTRALIAN Jewish leaders have weighed in against a decision by Israel's Foreign Ministry to send a diplomat to Canberra who was allegedly involved in a child-sex scandal in Brazil five years ago.

The protest against Aryeh Scher by at least three Jewish leaders – conveyed through Israeli Ambassador Nati Tamir directly to Jerusalem – appears to have gained traction in Jerusalem, with Foreign Minister Silvan Shalom this week agreeing to review the appointment of Scher.

Foreign Ministry sources said that although the appointment has yet to be formally cancelled, it is, to all intents and purposes, “dead in the water”.

The sources added that Shalom “blew his top” when apprised of Scher's previous scandal, fuming at top Foreign Ministry officials who had failed to bring the matter up during the formal deliberation on Scher's posting to Canberra.

Scher was a former Israeli vice-consul at the Israeli Embassy in Rio De Janeiro, Brazil, who was implicated by Brazilian police in a child-sex scandal in 2000. Although he was cleared by an internal government committee of any criminal wrong-doing, he was censured for “inappropriate behaviour” and barred from going abroad for five years.

He was selected to replace Amir Laty, the Israeli consul who was dismissed under mysterious circumstances at the end of last year.

The scandals surrounding both Scher and Laty come just two weeks before Israeli President Moshe Katsav becomes the first Israeli head of state in 18 years – and only the second in history – to land on Australian soil.

Scher, Laty's proposed replacement, was exposed in Israel's Ma'ariv newspaper last week for his involvement in the sex scandal five years ago. Sources close to the Foreign Ministry told the AJN this week that Scher is considering withdrawing his appointment due to the

unfavourable headlines it has generated.

Mark Regev, an Australian-born spokesman for the Israeli Foreign Ministry, told the AJN that a thorough investigation of Scher's activities in Brazil had been concluded a long time ago. "He was a single man then but has now been married for over a year. We have full confidence in Scher. He is a professional diplomat."

When asked about Laty, who is in his early 30s, Regev said: "He did nothing wrong. He will get another overseas posting soon."

Another Foreign Ministry spokesperson, David Saranga, told the AJN: "Regarding Scher's professionalism, he is an excellent diplomat, contrary to what was published in Israel. There is no reason for not sending him abroad."

Scher's review has also prompted more than 150 employees of Israel's Foreign Ministry to sign a petition protesting the "defamation" of Scher and attacking the ministry for not defending him.

Israel's newly-appointed ambassador to Australia, Nati Tamir, said: "I have passed on to Jerusalem submissions from Australian Jewish leaders questioning the suitability of the new consul. However, no-one in diplomatic circles has brought up the issue of Amir Laty. I just want to get on with maintaining the wonderful relationship Australia has with Israel. I have never before been welcomed in any country as warmly as the welcome I received from Prime Minister John Howard."

The Israeli Embassy in Canberra should be representing Israel's affairs in New Zealand, but the sanctions imposed by Prime Minister Helen Clark in the wake of the Mossad-passport affair currently preclude Tamir from being accredited. "I would like to see a breakthrough at any time, at any moment," he said.

When asked about the Scher scandal, Executive Council of Australian Jewry president Grahame Leonard said: "This is not our business to fix. We have to leave it to the correct authorities in Israel."

The tale of two diplomats

October 1, 2003: Amir Laty is posted to Canberra as Israeli consul.

2004: Laty is believed, as part of his job, to have made contact with Eli Cara (pictured) and Uriel Kelman following their arrest. The two alleged Mossad spies who were convicted and imprisoned for trying to fraudulently obtain a New Zealand passport. Cara had been living in Sydney operating a travel agency whose name was not registered.

December 22-23: Australia asks then acting Israeli ambassador Gabby Levy to order Laty to return to Israel or he will be made persona non

grata. Neither government is willing to comment on the reason for Laty's departure from Australia.

Saturday, December 25: Laty misses Christmas lunch at Attorney-General Philip Ruddock's house in Sydney. He had been invited as a friend of Ruddock's daughter Caitlin, whom he had met several years earlier in China.

Tuesday, December 28: Laty returns to Israel.

February 8, 2005: Ma'ariv publishes the story of Aryeh Scher, Laty's proposed replacement, who was a diplomat who had been implicated by Brazilian police in a child-sex scandal while he was serving in Rio De Janeiro. Scher was cleared by an internal government committee of any criminal wrongdoing, but censured for "inappropriate behaviour" and barred from going abroad for five years.

February 9-12: Israeli Foreign Minister Silvan Shalom agrees to review the appointment of Scher following pressure from Australian Jewish leaders.

February 14: Some 150 Israeli Foreign Ministry employees sign a petition demanding that the ministry defend Scher in public.

9)

Sex scandal sinks diplomatic posting

JTA Breaking News

February 18, 2005

<http://www.jta.org/brknews.asp?id=136561>

Israel's consul-designate to Australia withdrew his candidacy after reports resurfaced of a sex scandal during a previous posting. Though Arie Scher was never charged with a crime, Australian Jewish leaders let Israel's ambassador in Australia know that they were uncomfortable about the posting. When Scher's posting was made public, Israel's Ma'ariv newspaper dredged up his involvement in the sex scandal several years ago when he was a consul in Brazil.

JTA reported at the time that police searched Scher's Rio de Janeiro apartment after he was photographed naked in the company of underage girls, reportedly finding pornographic videos and more than 100 pictures of young girls in compromising positions.

Mark Regev, a spokesman for the Israeli Foreign Ministry, told JTA that Scher had been reprimanded for inappropriate behavior.

10)

THE SPYING GAME Secret affair to remember

by Ken Vernon

The Gold Coast Bulletin

February 19, 2005

Australians were given a peek into the cloak and dagger world of spy v spy this week as revelations surfaced of an alleged Israeli secret agent seducing a high-level female Defence Department employee. Attorney-General Philip Ruddock's daughter was also dragged into the fray. Ken Vernon reports.

THE revelation that a Jewish 'James Bond' has been schmoozing his way into the hearts, minds and more of Canberra girls

in search of secrets will hardly come as a surprise in spying circles.

But Australian intelligence agencies were thoroughly shaken, and stirred themselves into action.

Amir Lati was kicked out of the country in late December after spending most of his 18 months in Canberra trying to bed female spies, diplomats, defence specialists and even journalists.

Such extracurricular activities are, on their own, hardly enough to warrant expulsion. Many Canberra girls have been seduced by the political and financial power that comes with working in ministerial offices and the offices of prominent department heads.

More than a few have been the willing mistresses of high-profile political figures while others have, quite literally, worked their way through the corridors of power.

Of course, many young men have done the same thing, but their conquests, on the whole, have been far more discreet.

In a city where sexual politics plays a significant role, the actions of Lati would, on the surface, barely raise an eyebrow.

Selecting well-placed female government officials for 'careful cultivation' to obtain secret information is a 'game' as old as politics itself. But the sordid tale of Amir Lati took an even more bizarre turn when the spy's long-term friendship with Attorney General Philip Ruddock's 26-year-old daughter, Caitlin, came to light.

Mr Ruddock, who is responsible for the domestic spy agency ASIO - the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation -

demanding privacy for his daughter, who befriended the Israeli spy six years ago at a university in Beijing.

The highly public case of the alleged Israeli spy stunned Australians this week when it was announced that the Australian Government had demanded the young diplomat leave the country immediately or be declared 'persona non grata'.

It is confidently being suggested that Lati was a Mossad spy detailed to penetrate Australia under a diplomatic cover, possibly in an effort to ferret out operational US military secrets known to Australia.

Israel also uses Australia as a base to monitor the activities of Islamic terrorists in the region according to American security expert Paul Buchanan, a New Zealand-based academic who has worked for the US military and Defence Department.

He believes these organisations might also have been Lati's target.

Whatever the reason, the episode has lifted the heavy veil of secrecy that usually cloaks the operations of intelligence agencies, revealing the juicy titbits beneath. `Bond' and `M' would not be amused.

The Israeli Institute for Intelligence and Special Tasks, more commonly known as Mossad - arguably the best intelligence service in the world - is well known for using sex to loosen tongues and beguile unwary targets into compromising situations that can then be exploited by unscrupulous secret agents.

It's called the `honeypot trap' and intelligence agencies worldwide utilise it - just ask James Bond. What is unusual, is for the ploy to become public.

One case in which it did was that of Israeli nuclear whistle-blower Mordechai Vanunu. Beautiful Israeli spy Cheryl Hanin, known as `Cindy', seduced the innocent Vanunu and lured him to Rome where he could be captured by an Israeli team and spirited to Israel, later spending almost 20 years in jail.

The case of Amir Lati is a little different. He was posted as a second secretary at the Israeli Embassy in Canberra, although the wags are already suggesting the he could have been called the `charge d'affaires' because of the scope of his extra-diplomatic activities.

It has emerged that the diplomat was having an affair with a young female Defence Department employee, who had high security clearance, and that ASIO was instrumental in unmasking the Israeli spy and having him expelled from Australia.

ASIO's main role is to gather information and produce intelligence that will enable it to warn the Government about activities or

situations that might endanger Australia's national security.

Since being unmasked, the young Israeli might have attempted to cloud the water over his public humiliation by suggesting that a friendship - and there is no real suggestion that it was anything more than that - with Caitlin Ruddock was responsible for his sudden expulsion.

Adding more intrigue to the pot is the fact that ASIO falls under Mr Ruddock's control.

In reports leaked to the Hebrew language newspaper Ma'ariv, after he arrived back in Israel, Lati is said to have told Foreign Ministry officials in Jerusalem that he had been in close contact with Caitlin, who is a lecturer in accounting at the University of New South Wales.

He said he had even been invited to the Ruddock house for Christmas, hinting that his friendship with Ms Ruddock, rather than his affair with the Defence Department employee, was the cause of his expulsion.

The two had renewed their initial Beijing friendship when Lati was posted to Canberra in late 2003.

Foreign Ministry sources confirmed that Lati had been invited to Ruddock's Sydney home for Christmas lunch, but was barred from attending after Australian authorities summoned then acting Israeli Ambassador Gabby Levy to demand Lati's ejection.

According to reports in Ma'ariv, Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade summoned Levy and requested the immediate recall of the diplomat or steps would be taken to declare him 'persona non grata' and start deportation proceedings.

Israel's Foreign Ministry instructed Lati to head home immediately. An official later said the expulsion of the 'professional and devoted worker' was a 'complete mystery'.

However, in a sign that Lati was acting under orders in initiating the affair, Mark Regev - an Australian-born spokesman for the Israeli Foreign Ministry - defended Lati, saying that the diplomat, who is in his early 30s, had done 'nothing wrong'.

"He will get another overseas posting soon," Regev reportedly said.

Other official sources in Australia revealed that Lati also pestered a number of other young women after his normal working hours. Some complained about his unwanted attentions and his persistent phone calls, saying they put his behaviour down to what they called 'cultural differences'.

Lati was also described as an 'extrovert' who frequented bars in the Kingston area of Canberra, in particular those frequented by politicians.

During an inquiry conducted by the Australian department of Foreign Affairs, Lati reportedly denied working for any intelligence agency, saying he worked according to the rules specified by the ministry.

It is believed that Lati first caused a blip on ASIO's radar when he went to New Zealand to visit two Israeli spies jailed for trying to illegally obtain a NZ passport (pictured above).

New Zealand passports are in high demand across the world because they are normally accepted without a visa.

New Zealand Foreign Affairs Minister Phil Goff said that Lati had visited the country in his official capacity to visit alleged Mossad spies Uriel Kelman and Eli Cara while they were in Mt Eden Prison, serving a six-month jail term for attempting to obtain a New Zealand passport. It is probable that ASIO has been keeping close tabs on the man since.

However, intelligence expert Paul Buchanan suggested that Lati's visits to the two alleged Israeli spies suggested he might have been their 'handler'.

In the wake of Lati's expulsion, another embarrassing storm has broken over the man Israel selected to replace him. Aryeh Scher was reportedly involved in a sex scandal in Brazil five years ago and it was Jewish leaders in Australia who first protested the

decision by the Israeli Foreign Ministry to send Scher to replace Lati.

They fired off a complaint through Israeli Ambassador Nati Tamir directly to Jerusalem and their tactic seems to have worked, with Foreign Minister Silvan Shalom immediately agreeing to review the appointment of Scher.

According to reports at the time in Israeli newspapers, Scher fled Brazil five years ago after being implicated in child pornography - before police were able to question him.

Scher, who was the Israeli vice-consul in Rio de Janeiro, was reportedly to be charged with running an illegal child pornography and prostitution business. A search of Scher's apartment after he fled is said to have turned up child porn, according to Roberto Costa, a chief investigator for the Brazilian police.

Scher fled the country after Brazilian authorities notified the Israeli Embassy of plans to revoke his diplomatic immunity.

According to Israeli press reports, he was cleared by an internal government committee of any criminal wrong-doing, but was censured for inappropriate behaviour and barred from going abroad for five years.

The five years may be up, but Israeli Foreign Ministry sources say that although the appointment has yet to be formally cancelled, it is, to all intents and purposes, dead in the water.

The sources added that Mr Shalom blew his top when apprised of Scher's previous scandal, fuming at top foreign ministry officials who had failed to bring the matter up during the formal deliberation on Scher's posting.

Mark Regev said a thorough investigation of Scher's activities in Brazil had been concluded a long time ago.

The scandals come just two weeks before Israeli President Moshe Katsav visits Australia, the first visit by an Israeli head of state in 18 years - and only the second in history.

11)

Accused diplomat's replacement canned
Daily Telegraph
February 19, 2005

AN Israeli diplomat who allegedly was involved in a child-sex scandal five years ago has withdrawn his application to serve in Israel's Embassy in Canberra.

Israel's Australian diplomatic crisis continued yesterday with confirmation Aryeh Scher would not replace Amir Laty as second secretary.

Laty was expelled from Australia two months ago amid allegations that he was a spy who was ingratiating himself with Federal Government bureaucrats.

The move comes less than a fortnight before the historic visit by Israeli President Moshe Katsav for private talks with Prime Minister John Howard.

The Israeli Foreign Ministry yesterday confirmed that Mr Scher had informed Israeli Foreign Minister Silvan Shalom that because of the negative "atmosphere" his appointment had created in both countries, that he would be withdrawing his application for the appointment.

Australian Jewish leaders protested to Canberra and to Jerusalem over Mr Scher's proposed appointment.

Mr Scher was serving as vice-consul in Rio de Janeiro in Brasil in 2000 when he was implicated by local police in a child-sex scandal.

The incident allegedly involved the discovery of pornographic photographs of teenaged girls posing nude allegedly on the roof of a car traced to Mr Scher.

He was censured and his file marked that he not be posted overseas for five years.

12)

Israeli rejects diplomatic post over controversy
Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) News
February 18, 2005

Jewish leaders in Australia say the man who was to replace an expelled Israeli diplomat has decided against taking up the position because of the controversy over his appointment.

The has reported that Jewish leaders opposed the appointment of Aryeh Scher, to replace expelled diplomat Amir Laty, because of his alleged involvement in a scandal in Brazil five years ago.

Vic Alhadeff from the Jewish Board of Deputies says Mr Scher no longer wants the job.

"We have just learnt that Ayreh Scher, the Israeli diplomat in question, has just withdrawn his candidacy, quote unquote, because of the negative atmosphere which his appointment has caused both in Israel and Australia and he's decided to withdraw his appointment," he said.

Mr Laty's departure has not been explained by the Federal Government.

He has reportedly said he may have been asked to leave Australia because of his friendship with the Federal Attorney-General Philip Ruddock's 26-year-old daughter.

Mr Ruddock says any relationship his daughter had a former Israeli diplomat is not relevant to the man's departure.

The matter has prompted a political row over the reasons behind the Mr Laty's expulsion.

13)

Plot thickens as choice of envoy to Australia from Israel put on hold
By Henry Benjamin
JTA
February 20, 2005

http://www.jta.org/page_view_story.asp?strwebhead=Israel's%20diplomatic%20trouble%20in%20Australia&intcategoryid=2&SearchOptimize=Jewish%20News

SYDNEY, Australia, Feb. 18 (JTA) — A sex scandal during a previous posting has sunk the candidacy of Israel's designated consul in Canberra, Australia. Arie Scher withdrew his candidacy after reports resurfaced that he had been involved several years ago in an under-age sex scandal in Rio de Janeiro.

Though Scher was never charged with a crime, Australian Jewish leaders let the new Israeli ambassador, Nati Tamir, know that they were uncomfortable about the posting.

The snafu arose shortly after the old Israeli consul in Australia was asked to leave the country Dec. 28 for reasons that are still unclear. Scher had been chosen to replace Amir Lati, who returned to Israel following a request from Australia's Department for Foreign Affairs.

When Scher's posting was made public, Israel's Ma'ariv newspaper dredged up his involvement in the sex scandal during Scher's time as a consul in Brazil.

JTA reported at the time that Rio police searched Scher's apartment after he was photographed naked in the company of underage girls, reportedly finding pornographic videos and more than 100 pictures of young girls in compromising positions. Scher was recalled to Israel.

Mark Regev, a spokesman for the Israeli Foreign Ministry, told JTA that a thorough investigation of Scher's activities in Brazil had been concluded a long time ago. According to Ha'aretz, Scher was reprimanded for inappropriate behavior but was not found to have committed any crime.

"He was a single man then but has now been married for over a year," Regev added. "We have full confidence in Scher. He is a professional diplomat."

Meanwhile, the Israeli and Australian governments remain tight-lipped about Lati's late December expulsion. Media reports have focused on two main theories.

Speculation was rife that Lati might have been connected to the case of two Israelis arrested and imprisoned in New Zealand for fraudulently attempting to obtain a New Zealand passport. New Zealand parliamentarians accused Uriel Kelman and Eli Cara of being Mossad members.

The two completed short prison sentences and returned to Israel, but sanctions imposed by New Zealand Prime Minister Helen Clark remain in place, banning high-level Israeli diplomats from visiting the country until Israel issues a formal apology for the incident. Israel, which has not said if the men were indeed intelligence agents, has not issued an apology.

The focus of the rumors shifted to Canberra when The Australian newspaper reported that Lati, 32, had had an affair with a staff member of the Australian Defense Ministry.

While that was never proven, Lati did confirm that he was friends

with Caitlin Ruddock, 26, the daughter of Australian Attorney General Philip Ruddock.

They met six years ago in Beijing, where both were students. Lati resumed his friendship with Caitlin Ruddock when he arrived in Australia in 2003.

Sources close to Lati told the Australian Jewish News that following a request for his repatriation in mid-December, Lati was forced to remain in Canberra and passed up an invitation to join the Ruddock family for Christmas lunch at their Sydney home.

Lati says his friendship with Caitlin Ruddock may have been connected to his expulsion.

Philip Ruddock's department is responsible for Australia's intelligence organization, which would have been involved in any investigation concerning the Israelis captured in New Zealand. Cara allegedly ran a business in Sydney and lived there with his wife and children, though no one has been able to locate the business.

Charlie McKillop, a spokesman for Ruddock, told JTA, "The association between Caitlin and Mr. Lati concerns the Ruddock family personally and not diplomatically. Consequently, as it is a private affair, the minister has no comment to make. Lati's friendship with a member of Mr. Ruddock's family has no relevance on his departure from the country."

Regev, the Israeli Foreign Ministry spokesman, said Lati "did nothing wrong. He will get another overseas posting soon."

Meanwhile, Tamir, the new ambassador, arrived in Australia.

"I just want to get on with maintaining the wonderful relationship Australia has with Israel and put these incidents behind us," he told JTA.

Tamir also is responsible for Israeli affairs in Papua New Guinea and Fiji. There remains no ambassadorial link with New Zealand because of Clark's demand for an Israeli apology.

But Tamir may find himself in Wellington sooner rather than later: The New Zealand National Business Review reported that Clark's office said Israeli officials were working on an apology.

Negotiations are said to be taking place in Ankara between the Israeli government and New Zealand Ambassador Jan Henderson, who, though based in Turkey, also is responsible for Israel.

14)

Australia agog with tale of the playboy 'diplomat' and a minister's

daughter

By Kathy Marks in Sydney

Independent, UK

February 20, 2005

<http://news.independent.co.uk/world/australasia/story.jsp?story=612862>

Was he a spy who courted women in high places to gain access to top-secret intelligence, or a would-be Casanova who pestered his way around the Canberra social circuit? And was it Amir Laty's friendship with a senior Australian minister's daughter that prompted the expulsion of this Israeli diplomat and notorious party animal?

Mr Laty left Australia late last year, 18 months into his posting, but the news was hushed up until last week. Both Australia and Israel have refused to discuss the reasons for his abrupt departure, fuelling lurid media reports linking him with high-level espionage and painting him as a male Mata Hari. Most intriguingly, it has emerged that he was a friend of Caitlin Ruddock, whose father, Philip, is the Australian Attorney General. Indeed, the young and single Mr Laty was invited to the Ruddock household for Christmas lunch, but found himself unable to attend as a result of moves to expel him.

The story, featuring headlines such as "The spy and the minister's daughter" and "The strange case of the disappearing diplomat", has Australians agog.

The government dismisses the friendship with Ms Ruddock as irrelevant, but the affair - which has blown up on the eve of a visit by Moshe Katsav, the first Israeli President to come to Australia for 18 years - is causing it severe embarrassment.

To make matters worse, it has been confirmed that the man appointed to replace Mr Laty was embroiled in a child sex scandal in Brazil five years ago. Aryeh Scher, who was allegedly photographed in the nude with young girls, has been forced to withdraw his candidacy.

Mr Laty, in his early 30s, was a second secretary, with responsibility for consular matters in Australia and New Zealand. He lived in a fashionable Canberra suburb and was a well-known bar-hopper, favouring venues patronised by journalists, political aides and civil servants. One acquaintance, it's true, described him as "a bit of a dork". And the Sydney Morning Herald reported that some women were "unnerved" by his behaviour. One woman told The Daily Telegraph that he pursued her relentlessly, telephoning her for a month and offering her gifts.

But government sources have hinted at darker motives behind his alleged womanising. Mr Laty is said to have cultivated liaisons with women in the Defence Department and the Department of Prime

Minister

and cabinet. The implication is that he was using the "honey-pot" method, feigning a love interest in the hope of picking up classified information that the US and Britain share with Australia.

There have also been suggestions of links with a spy scandal that led to two alleged Mossad agents, Uriel Kelman and Eli Cara, being jailed in New Zealand last year for passport fraud. Mr Laty visited the pair, who served three months before being deported. Relations between New Zealand and Israel remain strained, and the Prime Minister, Helen Clark, has refused to allow Mr Katsav to visit.

Israel was reportedly ordered to recall Mr Laty or have him declared persona non grata. He has blamed his friendship with Ms Ruddock, a 26-year-old accountancy lecturer, for the expulsion. The pair met while

they were studying together in Beijing six years ago. Opposition politicians who demanded an explanation for the departure were told to consult the domestic spy agency, ASIO. Mr Ruddock, a former Immigration minister, has responsibility for ASIO.

His other daughter, Kirsty, created a stir in 2002 when she publicly denounced his hardline policy on asylum-seekers.

Pressed about the reason why Mr Laty left, Mr Ruddock gave an answer reminiscent of Monty Python's "Dead Parrot" sketch. He said: "Somebody has left Australia. Diplomats come and go. He has left Australia. He departed Australia."

The Australian government claims that relations with Israel remain warm and cordial.

15)

Diplomat linked to porn

By Brendan Nicholson

Age, Australia

February 19, 2005

<http://www.theage.com.au/news/National/Diplomat-linked-to-porn/2005/02/18/1108709431523.html>

Diplomats, Israeli diplomats in particular, are generally masters of tact and discretion - but not Aryeh Scher.

In July 2000 the Israeli consulate in Rio de Janeiro was surrounded by Brazilian police who wanted to arrest Mr Scher, the vice-consul, on suspicion of being involved in a child pornography ring.

The Jerusalem Post said Mr Scher, who had served as consul-general in Rio, was declared a fugitive by Brazilian authorities after police searched his apartment and found what they said was material used to manufacture pornography. Police were investigating a complaint by a

girl, 17, that a teacher, Georges Schteinberg, used her as a pornographic model.

The Israeli Foreign Ministry investigated and censured Mr Scher for improper conduct while concluding he had not indulged in criminal behaviour.

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