



U.S. Department of Justice

Federal Bureau of Investigation

Washington, D.C. 20535

September 9, 2009

MR. GRANT F. SMITH
IRMEP
CALVERT STATION
POST OFFICE BOX 32041
WASHINGTON, DC 20007

FOIPA Request No.: 1135944- 000
Subject: AMERICAN ISRAEL PUBLIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE (1999 OR EARLIER)

Dear Mr. Smith:

- ☒ This acknowledges receipt of your Freedom of Information-Privacy Acts (FOIPA) request to the FBI. The FOIPA number listed above has been assigned to your request.
- ☐ For an accurate search of our records, please provide the complete name, alias, date and place of birth for the subject of your request. Any other specific data you could provide such as prior addresses, or employment information would also be helpful. If your subject is deceased, please include date and proof of death.
- ☐ To make sure information about you is not released to someone else, we require your notarized signature or, in place of a notarized signature, a declaration pursuant 28 U.S.C. § 1746. For your convenience, the reverse side of this letter contains a form which may be used for this purpose.
- ☐ If you want the FBI's Criminal Justice Information System (CJIS) to perform a search for your arrest record, please follow the enclosed instructions in Attorney General Order 556-73. You must submit fingerprint impressions so a comparison can be made with the records kept by CJIS. This is to make sure your information is not released to an unauthorized person.
- ☒ We are searching the indices to our Central Records System for the information you requested, and will inform you of the results as soon as possible.
- ☐ Processing delays have been caused by the large number of requests received by the FBI. We will process your request(s) as soon as possible.

Your request has been assigned the number indicated above. Please use this number in all correspondence with us. Your patience is appreciated.

Very truly yours,

David M. Hardy
Section Chief,
Record/Information
Dissemination Section
Records Management Division



U.S. Department of Justice

Federal Bureau of Investigation

Washington, D.C. 20535

September 7, 2010

MR. GRANT F. SMITH
IRMEP
CALVERT STATION
POST OFFICE BOX 32041
WASHINGTON, DC 20007

Subject: FRANKLIN, LAWRENCE A. ET AL.

FOIPA No. 1135944- 002

Dear Mr. Smith:

The enclosed documents were reviewed under the Freedom of Information/Privacy Acts (FOIPA), Title 5, United States Code, Section 552/552a. Deletions have been made to protect information which is exempt from disclosure, with the appropriate exemptions noted on the page next to the excision. In addition, a deleted page information sheet was inserted in the file to indicate where pages were withheld entirely. The exemptions used to withhold information are marked below and explained on the enclosed Form OPCA-16a:

Section 552

☐ (b)(1)

☐ (b)(2)

☐ (b)(3) _____

☐ (b)(4)

☐ (b)(5)

☒ (b)(6)

☐ (b)(7)(A)

☐ (b)(7)(B)

☒ (b)(7)(C)

☐ (b)(7)(D)

☒ (b)(7)(E)

☐ (b)(7)(F)

☐ (b)(8)

☐ (b)(9)

Section 552a

☐ (d)(5)

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☐ (k)(1)

☐ (k)(2)

☐ (k)(3)

☐ (k)(4)

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☐ (k)(7)

405 page(s) were reviewed and **405 page(s)** are being released.

☐ Document(s) were located which originated with, or contained information concerning other Government agency(ies) [OGA]. This information has been:

☐ referred to the OGA for review and direct response to you.

☐ referred to the OGA for consultation. The FBI will correspond with you regarding this information when the consultation is finished.

☒ You have the right to appeal any denials in this release. Appeals should be directed in writing to the Director, Office of Information Policy, U.S. Department of Justice, 1425 New York Ave., NW, Suite 11050, Washington, D.C. 20530-0001. Your appeal must be received by OIP within sixty (60) days from the date of this letter in order to be considered timely. The envelope and the letter should be clearly marked "Freedom of Information Appeal." Please cite the FOIPA Number assigned to your request so that it may be easily identified.

☐ The enclosed material is from the main investigative file(s) in which the subject(s) of your request was the focus of the investigation. Our search located additional references, in files relating to other

individuals, or matters, which may or may not be about your subject(s). Our experience has shown, when ident, references usually contain information similar to the information processed in the main file(s). Because of our significant backlog, we have given priority to processing only the main investigative file(s). If you want the references, you must submit a separate request for them in writing, and they will be reviewed at a later date, as time and resources permit.

☒ See additional information which follows.

Sincerely yours,



David M. Hardy
Section Chief
Record/Information
Dissemination Section
Records Management Division

Enclosure(s)

Pursuant to Title 28, Code of Federal Regulations, Sections 16.11 and/or 16.49, there is a fee of ten cents per page for duplication. No fees are assessed for the first 100 pages, upon receipt of these documents, please submit a check or money order payable to the Federal Bureau of Investigation in the amount of **\$30.50** for released pages. To insure proper identification of your request, please return this letter or include the FOIPA number(s) with your payment. Failure to pay for this release within (30) days, will close any pending FBI FOIPA requests from you. Nonpayment will also cause an automatic denial of any future FOIPA requests. Please send payment to FBI, 170 Marcel Drive, Winchester, VA 22602-4843.

EXPLANATION OF EXEMPTIONS

SUBSECTIONS OF TITLE 5, UNITED STATES CODE, SECTION 552

- (b)(1) (A) specifically authorized under criteria established by an Executive order to be kept secret in the interest of national defense or foreign policy and (B) are in fact properly classified to such Executive order;
- (b)(2) related solely to the internal personnel rules and practices of an agency;
- (b)(3) specifically exempted from disclosure by statute (other than section 552b of this title), provided that such statute(A) requires that the matters be withheld from the public in such a manner as to leave no discretion on issue, or (B) establishes particular criteria for withholding or refers to particular types of matters to be withheld;
- (b)(4) trade secrets and commercial or financial information obtained from a person and privileged or confidential;
- (b)(5) inter-agency or intra-agency memorandums or letters which would not be available by law to a party other than an agency in litigation with the agency;
- (b)(6) personnel and medical files and similar files the disclosure of which would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy;
- (b)(7) records or information compiled for law enforcement purposes, but only to the extent that the production of such law enforcement records or information (A) could be reasonably be expected to interfere with enforcement proceedings, (B) would deprive a person of a right to a fair trial or an impartial adjudication, (C) could be reasonably expected to constitute an unwarranted invasion of personal privacy, (D) could reasonably be expected to disclose the identity of confidential source, including a State, local, or foreign agency or authority or any private institution which furnished information on a confidential basis, and, in the case of record or information compiled by a criminal law enforcement authority in the course of a criminal investigation, or by an agency conducting a lawful national intelligence investigation, information furnished by a confidential source, (E) would disclose techniques and procedures for law enforcement investigations or prosecutions, or would disclose guidelines for law enforcement investigations or prosecutions if such disclosure could reasonably be expected to risk circumvention of the law, or (F) could reasonably be expected to endanger the life or physical safety of any individual;
- (b)(8) contained in or related to examination, operating, or condition reports prepared by, on behalf of, or for the use of an agency responsible for the regulation or supervision of financial institutions; or
- (b)(9) geological and geophysical information and data, including maps, concerning wells.

SUBSECTIONS OF TITLE 5, UNITED STATES CODE, SECTION 552a

- (d)(5) information compiled in reasonable anticipation of a civil action proceeding;
- (j)(2) material reporting investigative efforts pertaining to the enforcement of criminal law including efforts to prevent, control, or reduce crime or apprehend criminals;
- (k)(1) information which is currently and properly classified pursuant to an Executive order in the interest of the national defense or foreign policy, for example, information involving intelligence sources or methods;
- (k)(2) investigatory material compiled for law enforcement purposes, other than criminal, which did not result in loss of a right, benefit or privilege under Federal programs, or which would identify a source who furnished information pursuant to a promise that his/her identity would be held in confidence;
- (k)(3) material maintained in connection with providing protective services to the President of the United States or any other individual pursuant to the authority of Title 18, United States Code, Section 3056;
- (k)(4) required by statute to be maintained and used solely as statistical records;
- (k)(5) investigatory material compiled solely for the purpose of determining suitability, eligibility, or qualifications for Federal civilian employment or for access to classified information, the disclosure of which would reveal the identity of the person who furnished information pursuant to a promise that his/her identity would be held in confidence;
- (k)(6) testing or examination material used to determine individual qualifications for appointment or promotion in Federal Government service the release of which would compromise the testing or examination process;
- (k)(7) material used to determine potential for promotion in the armed services, the disclosure of which would reveal the identity of the person who furnished the material pursuant to a promise that his/her identity would be held in confidence.

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Meetings With Iran-Contra Arms Dealer Confirmed

By Bradley Graham and Peter Slevin
Washington Post Staff Writers
Saturday, August 9, 2003; Page A01

Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld acknowledged yesterday that Pentagon officials met secretly with a discredited expatriate Iranian arms merchant who figured prominently in the Iran-contra scandal of the mid-1980s, characterizing the contact as an unexceptional effort to gain possibly useful information.

While Rumsfeld said that the contact occurred more than a year ago and that nothing came of it, his aides scrambled during the day to piece together more details amid other reports that Rumsfeld's account may have been incomplete.

Last night, a senior defense official disclosed that another meeting with the Iranian arms dealer, Manucher Ghorbanifar, occurred in June in Paris. The official said that, while the first contact, in late 2001, had been formally sanctioned by the U.S. government in response to an Iranian government offer to provide information relevant to the war on terrorism, the second one resulted from "an unplanned, unscheduled encounter."

A senior administration official said, however, that Pentagon staff members held one or two other meetings with Ghorbanifar last year in Italy. The sessions so troubled Secretary of State Colin L. Powell, the official said, that he complained to Rumsfeld and Condoleezza Rice, President Bush's national security adviser.

Powell maintained that the Pentagon activities were unauthorized and undermined U.S. policy toward Iran by taking place outside the terms defined by Bush and his top advisers. The White House instructed the Pentagon to halt meetings that do not conform to policy decisions, said the official, who requested anonymity.

The Defense Department personnel who met with Ghorbanifar came from the policy directorate. Sources identified them as Harold Rhode, a specialist on Iran and Iraq who recently served in Baghdad as the Pentagon liaison to Iraqi National Congress leader Ahmed Chalabi, and Larry Franklin, a Defense Intelligence Agency analyst.

State Department officials were surprised by news of the latest meeting with Ghorbanifar. Tension runs deep in the Bush administration between State and the Pentagon, which under Rumsfeld has aspired to a powerful role in foreign policy. The two agencies have sparred repeatedly over strategy toward Iran and Iraq.

The United States does not have formal relations with Iran, although a small number of sanctioned meetings between U.S. and Iranian officials have taken place, most notably to address U.S. war plans in Afghanistan and Iraq.

The Bush administration has struggled to develop a coherent and consistent approach to Iran. In his State of the Union address last year, Bush characterized Iran as being part of an axis of evil, along with Iraq and North Korea, and administration officials have repeatedly accused Iran of supporting terrorist

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groups and of seeking to acquire nuclear weapons. While broad agreement exists within the administration favoring changes in Iran's Islamic government, officials differ on how to accomplish them.

More than two years after the administration began drafting a national security presidential directive on Iran, the policy document remains unfinished. While the State Department favors increased dialogue and engagement with potential reformers inside Iran, prominent Pentagon civilians believe the policy should be more aggressive, including measures to destabilize the existing government in Tehran.

The Iran-contra scandal erupted over a decision by the Reagan administration to sell weapons to Iran in an effort to win the release of U.S. hostages in Lebanon. The proceeds of the arms sales were illegally funneled to contra fighters opposing Nicaragua's leftist Sandinista government.

Ghorbanifar was enlisted in the effort, helping to arrange the delivery by Israel of 508 TOW antitank missiles to Iran. The White House had drafted him as an intermediary despite warnings from the CIA that he was a cheat and had failed lie-detector tests.

The intelligence agency had instructed its operatives not to do business with him.

News of the Pentagon's contact with Ghorbanifar was first reported yesterday by Newsday, and Rumsfeld was asked about the story when he emerged with Bush from a meeting at the president's ranch in Crawford, Tex.

Saying he had just been told of the Newsday article by a senior aide and by Rice, Rumsfeld acknowledged that "one or two" Pentagon officials "were approached by some people who had information about Iranians that wanted to provide information to the United States government."

He said that a meeting took place "more than a year ago" and that the information received was circulated to various federal departments and agencies but did not lead to anything.

"That is to say, as I understand it, there wasn't anything there that was of substance or of value that needed to be pursued further," he said.

Asked if the Pentagon contact was intended to circumvent official U.S. exchanges with Iran, Rumsfeld replied: "Oh, absolutely not. I mean, everyone in the interagency process, I'm told, was apprised of it, and it went nowhere. It was just -- this happens, of course, frequently, that in -- people come in, offering suggestions or information or possible contacts, and sometimes they're pursued. Obviously, if it looks as though something might be interesting, it's pursued. If it isn't, it isn't."

Standing by Rumsfeld's side, Bush was asked if the meeting was a good idea and if his administration wants a change in government. "We support the aspirations of those who desire freedom in Iran," the president said, then took a question on a different subject.

According to the account given later by the senior Pentagon official, the contact in 2001 occurred after Iranian officials passed word to the administration that they had information that might be useful in the global war on terrorism. Two Pentagon officials met with the Iranians in several sessions over a three-day period in Italy. Ghorbanifar attended these meetings, "but he was not the individual who had approached the United States or the one with the information," the official said.

What his role was, however, the official did not know.

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The official said the June meeting involved one of the two Pentagon representatives who had been present at the 2001 meeting, but he declined to say which one.

Staff writer Dana Priest contributed to this report.

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Iraq War Planner Downplays Role

Conservative Strategist Denies Running Stealth Intelligence Operation

By Thomas E. Ricks
Washington Post Staff Writer
Wednesday, October 22, 2003; Page A27

In normal times, the chief of the Pentagon's office for Middle Eastern policy toils in obscurity, a third-level functionary hardly noticed inside the building, let alone outside it.

Not so Deputy Undersecretary William J. Luti. The day-to-day manager of the Defense Department's Iraq policy, he has the highest profile of anyone to ever hold his post.

A recent Google search uncovered 1,340 Internet hits mentioning him; many of them depicting him as a stealthy Svengali of Iraq policy, operating at the center of a network connecting Vice President Cheney, former House speaker Newt Gingrich (R-Ga.) and Undersecretary of Defense for Policy Douglas J. Feith -- all people for whom Luti has worked in the past seven years. Some Web sites associated with fringe political player Lyndon H. LaRouche Jr. attack him in lurid terms as an "ignoble liar" and "Satan."

The critics are especially suspicious of his Office of Special Plans, which was created last year. The purposely ambiguous title -- it was an office to work on policy for invading Iraq -- gave rise to speculation that Luti was running a shadowy intelligence operation intended to second-guess the CIA and provide the Pentagon with findings that supported its policies. The office has since been closed.

"The conspiracies out of this are quite stunning," Luti said in a recent interview in his crowded office in an unfashionable inner corridor of the Pentagon. "We are a consumer of intelligence rather than a provider."

He insists that he is not as influential as some of his critics suspect. "To paraphrase Mark Twain, the rumors of my power are greatly exaggerated," he said.

He has been attacked, he said, because "we work tough issues, we work controversial issues." But he insisted he does not preside over a secret miniature version of the CIA. "For the umpteenth time," he said, showing a bit of exasperation, "we do policy work." What that means, he said, is developing defense policy options and monitoring their implementation -- not collecting intelligence, planning wars or implementing policy.

But he also seems to have attracted attention because of his zealous manner. "I know he's a lightning rod," said Richard Shultz, Luti's doctoral thesis adviser at Tufts University. "That's partly because he is so passionate, and partly because he is so devoted to policies that have been divisive."

Defense intelligence experts say Bruce Hardcastle, a senior Defense Intelligence Agency official for Middle Eastern affairs, began avoiding meeting with Luti after sharply disagreeing with him over the past 12 months about the imminence of the threat posed by Saddam Hussein's Iraq.

"It's very difficult to inform people who already know it all," said one Pentagon official familiar with the strained relationship between Luti and Hardcastle.

"Basically, he [Luti] didn't like other people's information if it didn't agree with his opinion," a former DIA analyst agreed.

Hardcastle declined to comment for this article.

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Overall, Luti said of his critics, they are "either confused, malicious, or both."

He added, "Policy people and intelligence analysts perform different functions, but what's important is that they work together, not that they agree on everything."

Those critical views are hardly universal. John Trigilio, a former DIA official who works with Luti on defense policy issues, described him as "a straight shooter, professional, honorable," and called the notion that he manipulated intelligence "ridiculous." Adm. William J. Fallon, who commanded Luti when Luti was skipper of the USS Guam, remembers him as an extremely competent leader who did not skew data.

"I've heard the allegation, and I've kind of chuckled at it," said Fallon, who recently became commander of the Atlantic Fleet. "I never saw anything along those lines."

Luti's 26-year Navy career was an unusual mix of sea duty and high-level Washington policy positions. After serving as a weapons officer for EA-6B Prowlers -- aircraft that jam enemy electronics -- he studied strategy and diplomacy at Tufts University. He went there for a master's degree, "but he was such a damned good student that we admitted him to the doctoral program," recalled Shultz, an authority on international politics and military operations.

In the early 1990s, while deputy director of the chief of naval operations' executive panel, a civilian advisory group, Luti became interested in the views of one member, strategy guru Albert Wohlstetter. A mentor to Deputy Defense Secretary Paul D. Wolfowitz, Defense Policy Board member Richard N. Perle and several other prominent conservative defense thinkers, Wohlstetter became Luti's entree into their world.

From there, while still in the Navy, Luti became a congressional fellow in the office of then-Speaker Gingrich. His time there, in part spent working on legislation related to arming and training Bosnian Muslims, again brought him into contact with interventionist conservatives.

"We were talking with people like Perle and Wolfowitz about doing the right thing in Bosnia," recalled Randy Schuenemann, who then was a foreign policy aide on the Hill, and later, as a lobbyist for an organization that advocated toppling Hussein, worked with Luti on Iraq issues.

Gingrich, who has stayed in touch with Luti through meetings of the Defense Policy Board, described his former employee as "very smart, very aggressive, slightly impatient, and . . . with a very deep feeling that the world is more dangerous than many of his colleagues in the Pentagon, in the services, understand."

Luti's last major Navy assignment was as captain of the USS Guam, an aging helicopter carrier with a crew of 700. "Guam was one of the oldest ships in the fleet," recalled Fallon, but Luti kept it in "marvelous condition."

When the Bush administration came into office, Luti was asked to work for Cheney on Middle East policy. A few months later, he retired from the Navy to take his current position.

He was in Cairo on Sept. 11, 2001, and, with commercial traffic stopped, got back to the United States aboard an Air Force KC-135 refueling jet. On the way home, he recalled, the plane flew over New York City, escorted by F-16 fighters, and the pilot lowered a wing so those aboard could get a full view of the smoke plume rising from the rubble of the World Trade Center.

When the jet finally landed, he recalled, "we had this war on our hands." Since then, he has had a total of 12 days off.

In Profile

Wednesday, October 22, 2003; Page A27

William J. Luti

Title: Deputy undersecretary of defense for Near Eastern and South Asian affairs.

Age: 49.

Education: Bachelor's degree in history, the Citadel; master's degree in national security and strategic studies, U.S. Naval War College; master's and doctorate in international relations, Tufts University.

Career highlights: Served aboard the USS John F. Kennedy during the 1991 Persian Gulf War; congressional fellow, office of House Speaker Newt Gingrich (R-Ga.), 1996-97; commander, USS Guam, 1997-98; special adviser to Vice President Cheney for national security affairs (Middle East), 2001.

Pastime: Golf.

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ON 02-29-2010

Mother Jones Magazine
January/February 2004

The Lie Factory

Only weeks after 9/11, the Bush administration set up a secret Pentagon unit to create the case for invading Iraq. Here is the inside story for how they pushed disinformation and bogus intelligence and led the nation to war.

By Robert Dreyfuss and Jason Vest

It's a crisp fall day in western Virginia, a hundred miles from Washington, D.C., and a breeze is rustling the red and gold leaves of the Shenandoah hills. On the weather-beaten wood porch of a ramshackle 90-year-old farmhouse, at the end of a winding dirt-and-gravel road, Lt. Colonel Karen Kwiatkowski is perched on a plastic chair, wearing shorts, a purple sweatshirt, and muddy sneakers. Two scrawny dogs and a lone cat are on the prowl, and the air is filled with swarms

So far, she says, no investigators have come knocking. Not from the Central Intelligence Agency, which conducted an internal inquiry into intelligence on Iraq, not from the congressional intelligence committees, not from the president's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board. All of those bodies are ostensibly looking into the Bush administration's prewar Iraq intelligence, amid charges that the White House and the Pentagon exaggerated, distorted, or just plain lied about Iraq's links to Al Qaeda terrorists and its possession of nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons. In her hands, Kwiatkowski holds several pieces of the puzzle. Yet she, along with a score of other career officers recently retired or shuffled off to other jobs, has not been approached by anyone.

Kwiatkowski, 43, a now-retired Air Force officer who served in the Pentagon's Near East and South Asia (NESA) unit in the year before the invasion of Iraq, observed how the Pentagon's Iraq war-planning unit manufactured scare stories about Iraq's weapons and ties to terrorists. "It wasn't intelligence-it was propaganda," she says. "They'd take a little bit of intelligence, cherry-pick it, make it sound much more exciting, usually by taking it out of context, often by juxtaposition of two pieces of information that don't belong together." It was by turning such bogus intelligence into talking points for U.S. officials-including ominous lines in speeches by President Bush and Vice President Cheney, along with Secretary of State Colin Powell's testimony at the U.N. Security Council last February-that the administration pushed American public opinion into supporting an unnecessary war.

Until now, the story of how the Bush administration produced its wildly exaggerated estimates of the threat posed by Iraq has never been revealed in full. But, for the first time, a detailed investigation by Mother Jones, based on dozens of interviews-some on the record, some with officials who insisted on anonymity-exposes the workings of a secret Pentagon intelligence unit and of the Defense Department's war-planning task force, the Office of Special Plans. It's the story of a close-knit team of ideologues who spent a decade or more hammering out plans for an attack on Iraq and who used the events of September 11, 2001, to set it into motion.

SIX MONTHS AFTER THE END of major combat in Iraq, the United States had spent \$300 million trying to find banned weapons in Iraq, and President Bush was seeking \$600 million more to extend the search. Not found were Iraq's Scuds and other long-range missiles, thousands of barrels and tons of anthrax and botulism stock, sarin and VX nerve agents, mustard gas, biological and chemical munitions, mobile labs for producing biological weapons, and any and all evidence of a reconstituted nuclear-arms program, all of which had been repeatedly cited as justification for the war. Also missing was evidence of Iraqi collaboration with Al Qaeda.

The reports, virtually all false, of Iraqi weapons and terrorism ties emanated from an apparatus that began to gestate almost as soon as the Bush administration took power. In the very first meeting of the Bush national-security team, one day after President Bush took the oath of office in January 2001, the issue of invading Iraq was raised, according to one of the participants in the meeting-and officials all the way down the line started to get the message, long before 9/11. Indeed, the Bush team at the Pentagon hadn't even been formally installed before Paul

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Wolfowitz, the deputy secretary of Defense, and Douglas J. Feith, undersecretary of Defense for policy, began putting together what would become the vanguard for regime change in Iraq.

Both Wolfowitz and Feith have deep roots in the neoconservative movement. One of the most influential Washington neoconservatives in the foreign-policy establishment during the Republicans' wilderness years of the 1990s, Wolfowitz has long held that not taking Baghdad in 1991 was a grievous mistake. He and others now prominent in the administration said so repeatedly over the past decade in a slew of letters and policy papers from neoconservative groups like the Project for the New American Century and the Committee for the Liberation of Iraq. Feith, a former aide to Richard Perle at the Pentagon in the 1980s and an activist in far-right Zionist circles, held the view that there was no difference between U.S. and Israeli security policy and that the best way to secure both countries' future was to solve the Israeli-Palestinian problem not by serving as a broker, but with the United States as a force for "regime change" in the region.

Called in to help organize the Iraq war-planning team was a longtime Pentagon official, Harold Rhode, a specialist on Islam who speaks Hebrew, Arabic, Turkish, and Farsi. Though Feith would not be officially confirmed until July 2001, career military and civilian officials in NESA began to watch his office with concern after Rhode set up shop in Feith's office in early January. Rhode, seen by many veteran staffers as an ideological gadfly, was officially assigned to the Pentagon's Office of Net Assessment, an in-house Pentagon think tank headed by fellow neocon Andrew Marshall. Rhode helped Feith lay down the law about the department's new anti-Iraq, and broadly anti-Arab, orientation. In one telling incident, Rhode accosted and harangued a visiting senior Arab diplomat, telling him that there would be no "bartering in the bazaar anymore.... You're going to have to sit up and pay attention when we say so."

Rhode refused to be interviewed for this story, saying cryptically, "Those who speak, pay."

According to insiders, Rhode worked with Feith to purge career Defense officials who weren't sufficiently enthusiastic about the muscular anti-Iraq crusade that Wolfowitz and Feith wanted. Rhode appeared to be "pulling people out of nooks and crannies of the Defense Intelligence Agency and other places to replace us with," says a former analyst. "They wanted nothing to do with the professional staff. And they wanted us the fuck out of there."

The unofficial, off-site recruitment office for Feith and Rhode was the American Enterprise Institute, a right-wing think tank whose 12th-floor conference room in Washington is named for the dean of neoconservative defense strategists, the late Albert Wohlstetter, an influential RAND analyst and University of Chicago mathematician. Headquartered at AEI is Richard Perle, Wohlstetter's prize protege, the godfather of the AEI-Defense Department nexus of neoconservatives who was chairman of the Pentagon's influential Defense Policy Board. Rhode, along with Michael Rubin, a former AEI staffer who is also now at the Pentagon, was a ubiquitous presence at AEI conferences on Iraq over the past two years, and the two Pentagon officials seemed almost to be serving as stage managers for the AEI events, often sitting in the front row and speaking in stage whispers to panelists and AEI officials. Just after September 11, 2001, Feith and Rhode recruited David Wurmser, the director of Middle East studies for AEI, to serve as a Pentagon consultant.

Wurmser would be the founding participant of the unnamed, secret intelligence unit at the Pentagon, set up in Feith's office, which would be the nucleus of the Defense Department's Iraq disinformation campaign that was established within weeks of the attacks in New York and Washington. While the CIA and other intelligence agencies concentrated on Osama bin Laden's Al Qaeda as the culprit in the 9/11 attacks, Wolfowitz and Feith obsessively focused on Iraq. It was a theory that was discredited, even ridiculed, among intelligence professionals. Daniel Benjamin, co-author of *The Age of Sacred Terror*, was director of counterterrorism at the National Security Council in the late 1990s. "In 1998, we went through every piece of intelligence we could find to see if there was a link between Al Qaeda and Iraq," he says. "We came to the conclusion that our intelligence agencies had it right: There was no noteworthy relationship between Al Qaeda and Iraq. I know that for a fact." Indeed, that was the consensus among virtually all anti-terrorism specialists.

In short, Wurmser, backed by Feith and Rhode, set out to prove what didn't exist.

IN AN ADMINISTRATION devoted to the notion of "Feith-based intelligence," Wurmser was ideal. For years, he'd been a shrill ideologue, part of the minority crusade during the 1990s that was beating the drums for war against Iraq. Along with Perle and Feith, in 1996 Wurmser and his wife, Meyrav, wrote a provocative strategy paper for Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu called "A Clean Break: A New Strategy for Securing the Realm." It called on Israel to work with Jordan and Turkey to "contain, destabilize and roll back" various states in the region, overthrow Saddam Hussein in Iraq, press Jordan to restore a scion of the Hashemite dynasty to the Iraqi throne, and, above all, launch military assaults against Lebanon and Syria as a "prelude to a redrawing of the map of the Middle East which would threaten Syria's territorial integrity."

In 1997, Wurmser wrote a column in the Wall Street Journal called "Iraq Needs a Revolution" and the next year co-signed a letter with Perle calling for all-out U.S. support of the Iraqi National Congress (INC), an exile group led by Ahmad Chalabi, in promoting an insurgency in Iraq. At AEI, Wurmser wrote *Tyranny's Ally: America's Failure to Defeat Saddam Hussein*, essentially a book-length version of "A Clean Break" that proposed an alliance between Jordan and the INC to redraw the map of the Middle East. Among the mentors cited by Wurmser in the book: Chalabi, Perle, and Feith.

The purpose of the unnamed intelligence unit, often described as a Pentagon "cell," was to scour reports from the CIA, the Defense Intelligence Agency, the National Security Agency, and other agencies to find nuggets of information linking Iraq, Al Qaeda, terrorism, and the existence of Iraqi weapons of mass destruction (WMD). In a controversial press briefing in October 2002, a year after Wurmser's unit was established, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld acknowledged that a primary purpose of the unit was to cull factoids, which were then used to disparage, undermine, and contradict the CIA's reporting, which was far more cautious and nuanced than Rumsfeld, Wolfowitz, and Feith wanted. Rumsfeld particularly enjoyed harassing the CIA staffer who briefed him every morning, using the type of data produced by the intelligence unit. "What I could do is say, 'Gee, what about this?'" Rumsfeld noted. "'Or what about that? Has somebody thought of this?'" Last June, when Feith was questioned on the same topic at a briefing, he acknowledged that the secret unit in fact looked at the connection between Iraq and terrorism, saying, "You can't rely on deterrence to deal with the problem of weapons of mass destruction in the hands of state sponsors of terrorism because [of] the possibility that those state sponsors might employ chemical weapons or biological weapons by means of a terrorist organization proxy...."

Though Feith, in that briefing, described Wurmser's unit as an innocent project, "a global exercise" that was not meant to put pressure on other intelligence agencies or create skewed intelligence to fit preconceived policy notions, many other sources assert that it did exactly that. That the White House and the Pentagon put enormous pressure on the CIA to go along with its version of events has been widely reported, highlighted by visits to CIA headquarters by Vice President Cheney and Lewis Libby, his chief of staff. Led by Perle, the neocons seethed with contempt for the CIA. The CIA's analysis, said Perle, "isn't worth the paper it's printed on." Standing in a crowded hallway during an AEI event, Perle added, "The CIA is status quo oriented. They don't want to take risks."

That became the mantra of the shadow agency within an agency.

Putting Wurmser in charge of the unit meant that it was being run by a pro-Iraq-war ideologue who'd spent years calling for a pre-emptive invasion of Baghdad and who was clearly predisposed to find what he wanted to see. Adding another layer of dubious quality to the endeavor was the man partnered with Wurmser, F. Michael Maloof. Maloof, a former aide to Perle in the 1980s Pentagon, was twice stripped of his high-level security clearances—once in late 2001 and again last spring, for various infractions. Maloof was also reportedly involved in a bizarre scheme to broker contacts between Iraqi officials and the Pentagon, channeled through Perle, in what one report called a "rogue [intelligence] operation" outside official CIA and Defense Intelligence Agency channels.

As the momentum for war began to build in early 2002, Wolfowitz and Feith beefed up the intelligence unit and created an Iraq war-planning unit in the Pentagon's Near East and South Asia Affairs section, run by Deputy Undersecretary of Defense William Luti, under the rubric "Office of Special Plans," or OSP; the new unit's director was Abram N. Shulsky. By then, Wurmser had moved on to a post as senior adviser to Undersecretary of State John Bolton, yet another neocon, who was in charge of the State Department's disarmament, proliferation, and WMD office and was promoting the Iraq war strategy there. Shulsky's OSP, which incorporated the secret intelligence unit, took control, banishing veteran experts-including Joseph McMillan, James Russell, Larry Hanauer, and Marybeth McDevitt-who, despite years of service to NESA, either were shuffled off to other positions or retired. For the next year, Luti and Shulsky not only would oversee war plans but would act aggressively to shape the intelligence product received by the White House.

Both Luti and Shulsky were neoconservatives who were ideological soulmates of Wolfowitz and Feith. But Luti was more than that. He'd come to the Pentagon directly from the office of Vice President Cheney. That gave Luti, a recently retired, decorated Navy captain whose career ran from combat aviation to command of a helicopter assault ship, extra clout. Along with his colleague Colonel William Bruner, Luti had done a stint as an aide to Newt Gingrich in 1996 and, like Perle and Wolfowitz, was an acolyte of Wohlstetter's. "He makes Ollie North look like a moderate," says a NESA veteran.

Shulsky had been on the Washington scene since the mid-1970s. As a Senate intelligence committee staffer for Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan, he began to work with early neoconservatives like Perle, who was then an aide to Senator Henry Jackson. Later, in the Reagan years, Shulsky followed Perle to the Pentagon as Perle's arms-control adviser. In the '90s, Shulsky co-authored a book on intelligence called *Silent Warfare*, with Gary Schmitt. Shulsky had served with Schmitt on Moynihan's staff and they had remained friends. Asked about the Pentagon's Iraq intelligence "cell," Schmitt-who is currently the executive director of the Project for the New American Century-says that he can't say much about it "because one of my best friends is running it."

According to Lt. Colonel Kwiatkowski, Luti and Shulsky ran NESA and the Office of Special Plans with brutal efficiency, purging people they disagreed with and enforcing the party line. "It was organized like a machine," she says. "The people working on the neocon agenda had a narrow, well-defined political agenda. They had a sense of mission." At NESA, Shulsky, she says, began "hot-desking," or taking an office wherever he could find one, working with Feith and Luti, before formally taking the reins of the newly created OSP. Together, she says, Luti and Shulsky turned cherry-picked pieces of uncorroborated, anti-Iraq intelligence into talking points, on issues like Iraq's WMD and its links to Al Qaeda. Shulsky constantly updated these papers, drawing on the intelligence unit, and circulated them to Pentagon officials, including Rumsfeld, and to Vice President Cheney. "Of course, we never thought they'd go directly to the White House," she adds.

Kwiatkowski recalls one meeting in which Luti, pressed to finish a report, told the staff, "I've got to get this over to 'Scooter' right away." She later found out that "Scooter" was none other than Lewis "Scooter" Libby, Vice President Cheney's chief of staff. According to Kwiatkowski, Cheney had direct ties through Luti into NESA/OSP, a connection that was highly unorthodox.

"Never, ever, ever would a deputy undersecretary of Defense work directly on a project for the vice president," she says. "It was a little clue that we had an informal network into Vice President Cheney's office."

Although Feith insists that the OSP did not seek to gather its own intelligence, Kwiatkowski and others sharply disagree. Staff working for Luti and Shulsky in NESA/OSP churned out propaganda-style intelligence, she says. As an example, she cited the work of a U.S. intelligence officer and Arabic specialist, Navy Lt. Commander Youssef Aboul-Enein, who was a special assistant to Luti. "His job was to peruse the Arabic-language media to find articles that would incriminate Saddam Hussein about terrorism, and he translated these." Such raw intelligence is usually subject to a thorough vetting process, tracked, verified, and checked by intelligence

professionals. But not at OSP-the material that it produced found its way directly into speeches by Bush, Cheney, and other officials.

According to Melvin Goodman, a former CIA official and an intelligence specialist at the National War College, the OSP officials routinely pushed lower-ranking staff around on intelligence matters. "People were being pulled aside [and being told], 'We saw your last piece and it's not what we're looking for,'" he says. "It was pretty blatant." Two State Department intelligence officials, Greg Thielmann and Christian Westermann, have both charged that pressure was being put on them to shape intelligence to fit policy, in particular from Bolton's office. "The Al Qaeda connection and nuclear weapons issue were the only two ways that you could link Iraq to an imminent security threat to the U.S.," Thielmann told the New York Times. "And the administration was grossly distorting the intelligence on both things."

BESIDES CHENEY, key members of the Pentagon's Defense Policy Board, including Perle and ex-House Speaker Newt Gingrich, all Iraq hawks, had direct input into NESA/OSP. The offices of NESA were located on the Pentagon's fourth floor, seventh corridor of D Ring, and the Policy Board's offices were directly below, on the third floor. During the run-up to the Iraq war, Gingrich often came up for closed-door meetings with Luti, who in 1996 had served as a congressional fellow in Speaker of the House Gingrich's office.

As OSP got rolling, Luti brought in Colonel Bruner, a former military aide to Gingrich, and, together, Luti and Bruner opened the door to a vast flow of bogus intelligence fed to the Pentagon by Iraqi defectors associated with Chalabi's Iraqi National Congress group of exiles. Chalabi founded the Iraqi National Congress in 1992, with the help of a shadowy CIA-connected public-relations firm called the Rendon Group, one of whose former employees, Francis Brooke, has been a top aide to Chalabi ever since. A scion of an aristocratic Iraqi family, Chalabi fled Baghdad at the age of 13, in 1958, when the corrupt Iraqi Hashemite monarchy was overthrown by a coalition of communists and the Iraqi military. In the late 1960s, Chalabi studied mathematics at the University of Chicago with Wohlstetter, who introduced him to Richard Perle more than a decade later. Long associated with the heart of the neoconservative movement, Chalabi founded Petra Bank in Jordan, which grew to be Jordan's third-largest bank by the 1980s. But Chalabi was accused of bank fraud, embezzlement, and currency manipulation, and he barely escaped before Jordanian authorities could arrest him; in 1992, he was convicted and sentenced in absentia to more than 20 years of hard labor. After founding the INC, Chalabi's bungling, unreliability, and penchant for mismanaging funds caused the CIA to sour on him, but he never lost the support of Perle, Feith, Gingrich, and their allies; once, soon after 9/11, Perle invited Chalabi to address the Defense Policy Board.

According to multiple sources, Chalabi's Iraqi National Congress sent a steady stream of misleading and often faked intelligence reports into U.S. intelligence channels. That information would flow sometimes into NESA/OSP directly, sometimes through Defense Intelligence Agency debriefings of Iraqi defectors via the Defense Human Intelligence Service, and sometimes through the INC's own U.S.-funded Intelligence Collection Program, which was overseen by the Pentagon. The INC's intelligence "isn't reliable at all," according to Vincent Cannistraro, a former CIA chief of counterterrorism.

"Much of it is propaganda. Much of it is telling the Defense Department what they want to hear, using alleged informants and defectors who say what Chalabi wants them to say, [creating] cooked information that goes right into presidential and vice presidential speeches."

Bruner, the aide to Luti and Gingrich's former staffer, "was Chalabi's handler," says Kwiatkowski. "He would arrange meetings with Chalabi and Chalabi's folks," she says, adding that the INC leader often brought people into the NESA/OSP offices for debriefings. Chalabi claims to have introduced only three actual defectors to the Pentagon, a figure Thielmann considers "awfully low." However, according to an investigation by the Los Angeles Times, the three defectors provided by Chalabi turned up exactly zero useful intelligence. The first, an Iraqi engineer, claimed to have specific information about biological weapons, but his information didn't pan out; the second claimed to know about mobile labs, but that information, too, was worthless; and the third, who claimed to have data about Iraq's nuclear program, proved to be a fraud. Chalabi also

claimed to have given the Pentagon information about Iraqi support for Al Qaeda. "We gave the names of people who were doing the links," he told an interviewer from PBS'S Frontline. Those links, of course, have not been discovered. Thielmann told the same Frontline interviewer that the Office of Special Plans didn't apply strict intelligence-verification standards to "some of the information coming out of Chalabi and the INC that OSP and the Pentagon ran with."

In the war's aftermath, the Defense Intelligence Agency-which is not beholden to the neoconservative civilians at the Pentagon-leaked a report it prepared, concluding that few, if any, of the INC's informants provided worthwhile intelligence.

SO FAR, DESPITE ALL of the investigations underway, there is little sign that any of them are going to delve into the operations of the Luti-Shulsky Office of Special Plans and its secret intelligence unit. Because it operates in the Pentagon's policy shop, it is not officially part of the intelligence community, and so it is seemingly immune to congressional oversight.

With each passing day, it is becoming excruciatingly clearer just how wrong U.S. intelligence was in regard to Iraqi weapons and support for terrorism. The American teams of inspectors in the Iraq Survey Group, which has employed up to 1,400 people to scour the country and analyze the findings, have not been able to find a shred of evidence of anything other than dusty old plans and records of weapons apparently destroyed more than a decade ago. Countless examples of fruitless searches have been reported in the media. To cite one example: U.S. soldiers followed an intelligence report claiming that a complex built for Uday Hussein, Saddam's son, hid a weapons warehouse with poison-gas storage tanks. "Well," U.S. Army Major Ronald Hann Jr. told the Los Angeles Times, "the warehouse was a carport. It still had two cars inside. And the tanks had propane for the kitchen."

Countless other errors and exaggerations have become evident. The thousands of aluminum tubes supposedly imported by Iraq for uranium enrichment were fairly conclusively found to be designed to build noncontroversial rockets. The long-range unmanned aerial vehicles, allegedly built to deliver bioweapons, were small, rickety, experimental planes with wood frames. The mobile bioweapon labs turned out to have had other, civilian purposes. And the granddaddy of all falsehoods, the charge that Iraq sought uranium in the West African country of Niger, was based on forged documents-documents that the CIA, the State Department, and other agencies knew were fake nearly a year before President Bush highlighted the issue in his State of the Union address in January 2003.

"Either the system broke down," former Ambassador Joseph Wilson, who was sent by the CIA to visit Niger and whose findings helped show that the documents were forged, told Mother Jones, "or there was selective use of bits of information to justify a decision to go to war that had already been taken."

Edward Luttwak, a neoconservative scholar and author, says flatly that the Bush administration lied about the intelligence it had because it was afraid to go to the American people and say that the war was simply about getting rid of Saddam Hussein. Instead, says Luttwak, the White House was groping for a rationale to satisfy the United Nations' criteria for war. "Cheney was forced into this fake posture of worrying about weapons of mass destruction," he says. "The ties to Al Qaeda? That's complete nonsense."

In the Senate, Senator Jay Rockefeller (D-W.Va.) is pressing for the Intelligence Committee to extend its investigation to look into the specific role of the Pentagon's Office of Special Plans, but there is strong Republican resistance to the idea.

In the House, Rep. Henry Waxman (D-Calif.) has introduced legislation calling for a commission to investigate the intelligence mess and has collected more than a hundred Democrats-but no Republicans-in support of it. "I think they need to be looked at pretty carefully," Waxman told Mother Jones when asked about the Office of Special Plans. "I'd like to know whether the political people pushed the intelligence people to slant their conclusions."

Congressman Waxman, meet Lt. Colonel Kwiatkowski.

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HEADLINE: Pressure Builds for President to Declare Strategy on Iran

BYLINE: Michael Dobbs, Washington Post Staff Writer

BODY:

Soon after George W. Bush took office in January 2001, his advisers began drafting a strategy for dealing with Iran, a radical Islamic state long suspected by Washington of supporting international terrorism and pursuing weapons of mass destruction.

More than two years later, the national security presidential directive on Iran has gone through several competing drafts and has yet to be approved by Bush's senior advisers, according to well-placed sources. In the meantime, experts in and outside the government are focusing on Iran as the United States' next big foreign policy crisis, with some predicting that the country could acquire a nuclear weapon as early as 2006.

Critics on the left and the right point to the unfinished directive as evidence the administration lacks a coherent strategy toward a country Bush described as a key member of the "axis of evil," along with North Korea and Saddam Hussein's Iraq.

"Our policy toward Iran is neither fish nor fowl, neither engagement nor regime change," said Flynt L. Leverett, a Bush adviser on the Middle East who left the National Security Council staff in March and is now with the Brookings Institution.

The Bush administration has yet to formulate a true Iran policy, agreed Michael A. Ledeen, a Middle East expert with the American Enterprise Institute. With other neoconservative intellectuals, Ledeen has founded the Coalition for Democracy in Iran, which is looking for ways to foment a democratic revolution to sweep away the mullahs who came to power in 1979.

Senior administration officials refused to talk about the status of the Bush policy directive on Iran, on the grounds that it is classified, but they say they have had some success in mobilizing international opinion against Iran's nuclear weapons program. As evidence, they cite recent threats by Russia to cut off nuclear assistance to Tehran and moves by the International Atomic Energy Agency to censure Iran for failing to report the processing of nuclear materials.

While the officials have stopped short of embracing a policy of "regime change" in Iran, U.S. officials from Bush down have talked about providing moral support to the "reform movement" in Iran in its struggle against an unelected government. As defined by Secretary of State Colin L. Powell, the U.S. goal is to speak directly to the Iranian people "over the heads of their leaders to let them know that we agree with them."

The internal and external debate about what to do about Iran has been brought to a head by recent revelations suggesting the Iranian nuclear weapons program is much further along than many suspected. Tomorrow, the IAEA Board of Governors in Vienna is to discuss findings showing that Iran has a wide range of options for producing fissile material for a nuclear bomb, from using heavy water reactors to produce plutonium to experiments in uranium enrichment.

U.S. officials have also accused Iran of harboring members of the al Qaeda terrorist network who escaped from Afghanistan after the fall of the Taliban in December 2001. They say some al Qaeda supporters hiding in Iran appear to have known in advance about recent terrorist attacks in Saudi Arabia, although there is no direct evidence of operational ties between the Iranian government and al Qaeda.

The escalating Iranian nuclear threat and suspicions of Iranian ties to terrorists have sharpened long-standing divisions in the administration over how to deal with Tehran. In the past, the State Department has put the emphasis on opening a dialogue with reformist elements in the Iranian leadership while the Pentagon has been more interested in looking for ways to destabilize the authoritarian Islamic government.

Bureaucratic tensions have reached the level where each side has begun accusing the other of leaking unfavorable stories to the media to block policy initiatives. "The knives are out," said a Pentagon official, who criticized national security adviser Condoleezza Rice for failing to end the dispute by issuing clear policy guidelines.

Powell, meanwhile, insisted to journalists that there has been no change in policy on Iran, despite what he depicted as frenzied media speculation "about what this person in that department might think or that person in another department might think."

The Iran debate goes back to a failed attempt by the Clinton administration to open an "unconditional dialogue" with Tehran. Even though the Iranians rejected the U.S. offer of unconditional talks, some Bush administration officials led by the State Department's director for policy planning, Richard N. Haass, favored making renewed overtures.

The proposals for a dialogue with Iran were partly inspired by the 1994 framework agreement with North Korea under which the North Korean government agreed to accept international controls over its nuclear program in return for economic assistance, including the construction of a civilian nuclear reactor. But the State Department approach ran into strong opposition from the Pentagon and Vice President Cheney's office, and was shot down in interagency meetings at the end of 2001.

While there would be no "grand bargain" with the Iranian leadership, the Bush administration agreed to a more limited diplomatic dialogue, focusing on specific areas such as the war in Afghanistan or cooperation over Iraq. Several rounds of such talks took place in Geneva and Paris, with the involvement of a special presidential envoy, Zalmay Khalilzad, but were suspended after the bombings in Saudi Arabia on May 12.

The administration debate has been echoed by a much more public debate among Middle East analysts, nuclear proliferation experts, and leaders of the Iranian diaspora. Congress has also weighed in with legislation sponsored by Sen. Sam Brownback (R-Kan.) that would funnel more than \$ 50 million to Iranian pro-democracy initiatives, including private California-based satellite television and radio stations set up by Iranian exiles.

"We are not calling for a military attack on Iran," said Brownback, whose proposed Iran Democracy Act has drawn bipartisan support but is opposed by the leadership of the Foreign Relations Committee. The goal, he said, is to support Iranian democracy activists, including students who took to the streets of Tehran again last week to protest the closure of opposition newspaper and the jailing of dissidents.

Just how far the United States should go in supporting the protests is the subject of heated argument inside and outside the government, even among conservatives. Some argue Iran is ripe for revolution. Others contend there is little guarantee of radical change in Tehran in the three-year period some independent proliferation experts estimate it will take before Iran could acquire nuclear weapons, and the United States should be thinking about other options, including preemptive action against suspected nuclear sites.

"The internal democratic forces in Iran are real and growing, but they're not going to save us from having to think about what we are going to do about the Iranian nuclear program and support for terrorism," said Reuel Marc Gerecht, a CIA case officer for Iran now with the American Enterprise Institute.

Some analysts say that U.S. financial and propaganda support for the Iranian democracy movement could be counterproductive. "It allows the hardliners to argue that there is an external threat, and they must crack down in the name of national unity," said Kaveh Ehsani, an editor of the pro-reform journal Dialogue in Iran, now visiting the United States. "There is a kind of an unholy alliance between the Bush administration and the Iranian hardliners."

"We have tried appeasement, we have tried containment, and we have tried engagement," countered S. Rob Sobhani, a co-founder of the Coalition for Democracy in Iran and adjunct professor of government at Georgetown University. "All these policies have failed. What have we got to lose by empowerment?"

The White House has avoided taking a position on the Brownback legislation and has restricted its encouragement of democracy in Iran to verbal broadsides against the mullahs. In comments Thursday, Rice described Iran's pursuit of weapons of mass destruction as "not acceptable" and said that the United States "cannot tolerate circumstances in which al Qaeda operatives come in and out of Iran." She also accused Iran of stirring up trouble among Shiite communities in southern Iraq.

"We have to stand with the aspirations of the Iranian people which have been clearly expressed," she told a meeting in Los Angeles, as thousands of Iranians took to the streets of Tehran in anti-government protests.

LOAD-DATE: June 15, 2003

Pentagon Shadow Loses Some Mystique

Feith's Shops Did Not Usurp Intelligence Agencies on Iraq, Hill Probers Find

By DANA PRIEST
Washington Post Staff Writer

In February 2002, Christina Shelton, a career Defense Intelligence Agency analyst, was combing through old intelligence on Iraq when she stumbled upon a small paragraph in a CIA report from the mid-1990s that stopped her.

It recounted a contact between some Iraqis and al Qaeda that she had not seen mentioned in current CIA analysis, according to three defense officials who work with her. She spent the next couple of months digging through 12 years of intelligence reports on Iraq and produced a briefing on alleged contacts Shelton felt had been overlooked or underplayed by the CIA.

Her boss, Douglas J. Feith, undersecretary of defense for policy, and the point man on Iraq, was so impressed that he set up a briefing for Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld, who was so impressed he asked her to brief CIA Director George J. Tenet in August 2002. By summer's end, Shelton had also briefed deputy national security adviser Stephen J. Hadley and Vice President Cheney's chief of staff, Lewis "Scooter" Libby.

Shelton's analysis, and the White House briefings that resulted, are new details about a small group of Pentagon analysts whose work has cast a large shadow of suspicion and controversy as Congress investigates how the administration used intelligence before the Iraq war.

Congressional Democrats contend that two Pentagon shops—the Office of Special Plans and the Policy Counterterrorism Evaluation Group—were established by Rumsfeld, Feith and other defense hawks expressly to bypass the CIA and other intelligence agencies. They argue that the offices supplied the administration with information, most of it discredited by the regular intelligence community, that President Bush, Cheney and others used to exaggerate the Iraqi threat.

But interviews with senior defense officials, White House and CIA officials, congressional sources and others yield a different portrait of the work done by the two Pentagon offices.

Neither the House nor Senate intelligence committees, for example, which have been investigating pre-war intelligence for eight months, have found support for allegations that Pentagon analysts went out and collected their own intelligence, congressional officials from both parties say. Nor have investigators found that the Pentagon analysis about Iraq significantly shaped the case the administration made for going to war.

At the same time, the Pentagon operation was created, at least in part, to provide a more hard-line alternative to the official intelligence, according to interviews with cur-

rent and former defense and intelligence officials. The two offices, overseen by Feith, concluded that Saddam Hussein's Iraq and al Qaeda were much more closely and conclusively linked than the intelligence community believed.

In this sense, the offices functioned as a pale version of the secret "Team B" analysis done by administration conservatives in the mid-1970s, who concluded the intelligence community was underplaying the Soviet military threat. Rumsfeld, in particular, has a history of skepticism about the intelligence community's analysis, including assessments of the former Soviet Union's military ability and of threats posed by ballistic missiles from North Korea and other countries.

Rumsfeld's known views—and his insistence before the war that overthrowing Hussein was part of the war on terrorism—only enhanced suspicion about the aims and role played by Feith's offices.

Sen. Carl M. Levin (D-Mich.), a member of the intelligence panel, charged that Feith's work "reportedly involved the review, analysis and promulgation of intelligence outside of the U.S. intelligence community."

Levin pressed Tenet on Tuesday before the Senate Armed Services Committee: "Is it standard operating procedure for an intelligence analysis such as that to be presented at the NSC [National Security Council] and the office of the vice president without you being part of the presentation? Is that typical?"

"My experience is that people come in and may present those kinds of briefings on their views of intelligence," responded Tenet, who said he had not known about the briefings at the time. "But I have to tell you, senator, I'm the president's chief intelligence officer; I have the definitive view about these subjects. From my perspective, it is my view that prevails."

Hussein's Role

Feith, who worked on the NSC staff in the Reagan administration, is a well-known conservative voice on Israel policy who once urged the Israeli prime minister to repudiate

the Oslo peace accords. His views are a source of tension between him and foreign policy officials at the State Department and elsewhere who advocate concessions be made by Palestinians and Israel to achieve a peace settlement.

No sooner had Bush announced that the United States was at war on terrorism than it became Feith's job to come up with a strategy for executing such a war.

"We said to ourselves, 'We are at war with an international terrorist network that includes organizations, state supporters and non-state supporters. What does that mean to be at war with a network?'" Feith said in an interview.

But Feith felt he needed to bring on help in the Pentagon for another reason, too, said four other senior

current and former Pentagon civilians: the belief that the CIA and other intelligence agencies dangerously undervalued threats to U.S. interests.

"The strategic thinking was the Middle East is going down the tubes. It's getting worse, not better," said one former senior Pentagon official who worked closely with Feith's offices. "I don't think we thought there was objective evidence that could be got from CIA, DIA, INR," he added, referring to the Defense Intelligence Agency, the Pentagon's main intelligence office, and the State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research.

Feith's office worked not only on "how to fight Saddam Hussein but also how to fight the NSC, the State Department and the intelligence community," which were not convinced of Hussein's involvement in terrorism, said the official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity.

Feith set up the first of his two shops, the Policy Counterterrorism Evaluation Group, to "study al Qaeda worldwide suppliers, chokepoints, vulnerabilities and recommend strategies for rendering terrorist networks ineffective," according to a January 2002 document sent to DIA.

The group never grew larger than two people, said Feith and William J. Luti, who was director of the Office of Special Plans and deputy undersecretary of defense for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs.

The evaluation group's largest project was what one participant called a "sociometric diagram" of links between terrorist organizations and their supporters around the world, mostly focused on al Qaeda, the Islamic Resistance Movement (or Hamas), Hezbollah and Islamic Jihad. It was meant to challenge the "conventional wisdom," said one senior defense official, that terrorist groups did not work together.

It looked "like a college term paper," said one senior Pentagon official who saw the analysis. It was hundreds of connecting lines and dots footnoted with binders filled with signals, intelligence, human source reporting and even third-hand intelligence accounts of personal meetings between terrorists.

One of its key, and most controversial findings was that there was a connection between secular states and fundamentalist Islamic terrorist groups such as al Qaeda.

If anything, the analysis reinforced the view of top Pentagon officials, including Rumsfeld, Deputy Secretary Paul N. Wolfowitz and Feith, that Hussein's Iraq had worrisome contacts with al Qaeda over the last decade that could only be expected to grow.

The evaluation group's other job was to read through the huge, daily stream of intelligence reporting on terrorism and "highlight things of interest to Feith," said one official involved in the process. "We were looking for connections" between terrorist groups.

From time to time, senior defense officials called bits of intelligence to the attention of the White House, they said.

Feith said the worldwide threat study itself never left the Pentagon. It helped inform the military strategy on the war on terrorism, but it was only one small input into that process, he said.

Mainly, the work of the evaluation group, Luti said, went into the corporate memory.

'Very Helpful'

In the summer of 2002, Shelton, who had been working virtually on her own, was joined by Christopher Carney, a naval reservist and associate professor of political science at the University of Pennsylvania. Together they completed their study on the links between al Qaeda and



Douglas J. Feith wanted a more hard-line alternative.

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Shagon Shadow Loses Some Mystique Shops Did Not Usurp Intelligence Agencies on Iraq, Hill Probers Find

By Staff Writer

2002, Christina Shelton, a Pentagon intelligence official, was combining intelligence on Iraq muddled upon a small CIA report from the staff stopper. She had a contact between al Qaeda that she mentioned in current according to three de- who work with her. he next couple of g through 12 years of sports on Iraq and iding on alleged con- fect had been over- played by the CIA.

Douglas J. Feith, a defense for policy man on Iraq, was to- he set up a briefing secretary, Donald H. was a disgraced in- brief CIA Director in August 2002. By l, Shelton had also "national security ad- J. Hickey and Vice- ny's chief of staff, I. r. Libby, alyria, and the White a that resulted, are out a small group of sts whose work has shadow of suspicion y as Congress in- the administration ace before the Iraq

al Democrats' con- tagon shops—the al Plans and the Pol- rrorism Evaluation estabished by Rums- old defense hawkia ypress the CIA and not agencies. They offices supplied the with information, edited by the regu- munity, that Presi- dent's chief intelligence officer I have the definitive view about these subjects. From my perspective, it is my view that pre- vail."

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Very Helpful

In the summer of 2002, Shelton, who had been working virtually on her own, was joined by Christopher Carney, a naval reservist and assoc- iate professor of political science at the University of Pennsylvania. To- gether they completed their study on the links between al Qaeda and

Iraq. "It was interesting enough that I brought it to Secretary Rumsfeld because Secretary Rumsfeld is well known for being a particularly in- telligent reader of intelligence," Feith said.

Rumsfeld told Feith, "Call George and tell him we have some- thing for him to see," Feith said. On Aug. 15, 2002, a delegation from Pentagon was buzzed through the guard station at CIA head- quarters for the Tinet meeting. Shelton and Carney were the brief- ers; Feith and DIA Director Vice Adm. Lowell B. Jacoby accompa- nied them.

"The feedback that I got from George right after the briefing was, 'That was very helpful, thank you,'" Feith said.

CIA officials who sat in the brief- ing were nonplused. The briefing was all "inductive analysis," accord- ing to one participant's notes from the meeting. The data pointed to "complexity and support," nothing more. "Much of it, we had dis- cussed already," said another par- ticipant.

Tenet, according to agency offi- cials, never incorporated any of the particulars from the briefing into his subsequent briefing to Con- gress. He asked some CIA analysts to go together with Shelton for fur- ther discussions.

Feith also arranged for Shelton to brief deputy national security ad- viser Douglas M. Liddy, Cheney's chief of staff.

"His work did not change (Hick- ley) thinking because his source for intelligence information are the products produced by the CIA," White House spokesman Sean Mc- Cormack said.

Not did the briefing's content reach national security adviser Condoleezza Rice, Cheney or Bush, according to McCormack and Cheney spokesman Kevin Kelleys. (In November 2003, a written version of her PowerPoint briefing, a ver- sion submitted to the intelligence committees investigating prewar intelligence, was published in the conservative Weekly Standard mag- azine.) The briefing openly chal- lenged the prevailing CIA view that a religion-based terrorism, Osama bin Laden, would not seek to work with a secular state such as Iraq. "They were the ones who were in- telligently unwilling to rethink this issue," one defense official said. "But they were not willing to shoot it down, either."

Whatever the agency really thought of Shelton's analysis, on Oct. 7, 2002, CIA Deputy Director John R. McLaughlin sent a letter to the Senate Intelligence committee

which, in a general sense, support- ed her conclusion: "We have solid evidence of senior level contacts be- tween Iraq and al-Qaida going back a decade," it said. "... Growing in- dications of a relationship with al- Qaeda suggest that Baghdad's link to terrorism will increase, even al- though U.S. military action."

A Non-descript Name

In August 2002, as the possibility of war with Iraq grew more likely, Lutz's Office of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs (NESAA) was re- organized into the Office of Special Plans and NESAA. Its job, according to Feith and Lutz, was to propose strategies for the war on terrorism and Iraq.

It was given a nondescript name to purposefully hide the fact that, al- though the administration was pub- licly emphasizing diplomacy with the United Nations, the Pentagon was actively engaged in war planning and postwar planning.

The office staff never num- bered more than 15, including rostered and people temporarily assigned.

"There are stories that we had hun- dreds of people hovering away at this stuff," Feith said. "... They're just not true."

The office's job was to devise Pentagon policy recommendations for the larger interagency decision- making on every conceivable issue: troop deployment planning, ex- ition, building, oil sector main- tenance, war-crimes prosecution, ministry organization, training an Iraqi police force, media strategy and "rewards, incentives and intimid- ation" for former Baath Party sup- porters, according to a chart hang- ing in the special plans office, Room 1A239, several months ago.

The insider nature of Lutz's of- fice, and his outspoken personal conviction that the United States should remove Hussein, spurred re- mors at the Pentagon that the office was collecting intelligence on its own, that it had hired its own in- telligence agents. Even disloyal Bush supporters, some of whom were critical of Feith's and Lutz's management style, were repel- led by the rumors.

Yesterday, Rumsfeld address- ed the controversy, saying critics of the Office of Special Plans had a "conspiratorial view of the world." Shelton's analysis, he emphasized, was shared with the CIA, and White House briefings were not un- usual.

"We brief the president. We brief the vice president. We brief the [CIA director]. We brief the sec- retary of state. ... That is not only not a bad thing, it's a good thing."

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DATE 07-29-2010 BY 60324 uc baw/sab/lsgPeriscope**Regime Change In Iran? One Man's Secret Plan.***Iran's Chalabi? Manucher Ghorbanifar says he talked secretly with Pentagon officials about plans for regime change in Iran*

By Mark Hosenball

What was international man of mystery Manucher Ghorbanifar up to when he met with top Pentagon experts on Iran? In a NEWSWEEK interview in Paris last month, Ghorbanifar, a former Iranian spy who helped launch the Iran-contra affair, says one of the things he discussed with Defense officials Harold Rhode and Larry Franklin at meetings in Rome in December 2001 (and in Paris last June with only Rhode) was regime change in Iran. Ghorbanifar says there are Iranians capable of organizing a peaceful revolution against the ruling theocracy. He says his contacts know where Saddam Hussein hid \$340 million in cash. With American help, he says, this money could be retrieved and half used to overthrow the ayatollahs. (The other half would be turned over to the United States.) Ghorbanifar says he told his U.S. interlocutors that ousting the mullahs would be a breakthrough in the war on terror because top Qaeda leaders, including Osama bin Laden, are in Iran. ("You won't be surprised if you find that Saddam Hussein is on one of the Iranian islands.") Among other intel Ghorbanifar says he and associates gave the Pentagon: a warning that terrorists in Iraq would attack hotels. He also says he had advance info about Iranian nukes and a terrorist plot in Canada. Financial gain was never his objective, he says: "We wanted to give them the money, not to take the money."

The Pentagon cut off contact with Ghorbanifar, whom the CIA years ago labeled as a fabricator, after news about the talks broke last summer. But controversy about the Iranian still reverberates in Washington. Administration sources say that when White House officials OK'd what they believed was a Pentagon effort to gather info about Iranian terrorist activity in Afghanistan, they didn't know Ghorbanifar was involved. When senior officials learned in 2002 about Ghorbanifar—and that regime change was on his agenda—they decided further contacts were "not worth pursuing." But Ghorbanifar says he continued to communicate with Rhode, and sometimes Franklin, by phone and fax five or six times a week until shortly after the Paris meeting last summer. (The Pentagon says any such contacts were sporadic and not authorized by top officials.) In Congress, investigations into the Ghorbanifar story have sparked partisan tensions. Democrats want to know if the Ghorbanifar contacts are evidence of "rogue" espionage by a secretive Pentagon unit that allegedly dealt with controversial Iraqi exile Ahmad Chalabi; Republicans want to know whether the CIA refused to meet with potential informants merely because the middleman—Ghorbanifar—was someone the agency distrusted. A Defense official says any discussion that Ghorbanifar had with Pentagon experts about regime change was a "one-way conversation."

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U.S. Intelligence in Iraq

CONNIE BROD: Robert Dreyfuss is a contributing editor for Mother Jones and the January-February edition of Mother Jones has the hit cover story by him called, "The Lie Factory." What is the lie factory?

ROBERT DREYFUSS [Contributing Editor, Mother Jones]: Well, I called the lie factory. It's kind of broader than that. There was lies, but also distortions and exaggerations. I'm referring to the unit inside the Pentagon that prepared intelligence reports and talking papers for senior U.S. officials in the period going up to the war with Iraq.

Now, that the war is over and we know that we found exactly zero evidence of ties between Iraq and al Qaeda and zero evidence of ties between Iraq and weapons of mass destruction, it's way past time that we went back and looked at how did they get this so wrong? The administration is already trying to change the subject, as you know, they're saying, well, it wasn't about weapons of mass destruction, Saddam was a bad guy and the world is safer now. I guess I'm amazed that he's been able to get away with that so far, the President.

BROD: You went all the way back to the day after the President took office to begin this story about this office. What happened that day?

DREYFUSS: Well, one day after the President was sworn in they had a meeting of their national security team. And one of the top items on the agenda of that meeting -- this was nine months before 9/11 was regime change in Iraq. And of course there's a reason for that, many of the senior officials who took up places in the Bush administration have long been on record, some of them for as long as a decade going back to the first Gulf War that the United States had a responsibility to go in militarily and get rid of Saddam Hussein.

So there had been a drumbeat from a fairly small but well organized group of former U.S. officials, many of them intelligence people, and, of course, the Iraqi exile groups that they were associated with to bring about regime change. And that meeting that you referred to

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really was the first of many efforts to start to focus this administration on Iraq. And they started to putting into place the people in various parts of the Pentagon, especially who would undertake that. And of course it wasn't until after 9/11 that the political will suddenly materialized and they realized that they could sell this policy, first of all to the President and then second of all to the American people.

BROD: Some of the figures who you talk about in here are very well known -- Newt Gingrich, Paul Wolfowitz, Richard Perle, but you also concentrate a lot on a gentleman who may not be as well known, Douglas Feith. Who is he? And what was his role in this office -- secret office set up?

DREYFUSS: Well, Doug Feith works directly under Paul Wolfowitz as the person at the Pentagon in charge of policy. He's a senior official at the Pentagon, a civilian, not a military person. And he and Wolfowitz both have long roots in the neo-conservative movement. Doug Feith's law firm, Feith and Zell, which had been around for the years before the administration took power, has a big Israeli office and a lot of ties to the right wing Israeli government, the settler movement in Israel, and so forth. And Feith was a leading advocate in the 1990s for going to war in Iraq long before the Bush administration took office.

So he was kind of an ideologue and it was his job to put together the team that would undertake the actual war planning inside the Pentagon and not just war planning in a technical sense, but also the policy and propaganda aspects of how to justify that war.

BROD: Now, you talk -- this office, was it physically an office? Could people go there?

DREYFUSS: Well, it was physically an office. What happened was under Doug Feith there is a second office which is sort of the regional planning components of the Pentagon, there's one for each part of the world, and the Near East and South Asian affairs office, which is called NESAs, was headed up by a man named Bill Lookey, who is a former Newt Gingrich aide who is also a longtime neoconservative and a U.S. Navy captain, former captain. And Bill Lookey headed up the office called NESAs. And that was because Iraq is located in Near East, or Middle East. That was the office that Feith used to build up and create as the Office of Special Plans. They gave that name to it in 2002 because they didn't want to tip their hand that they were definitely planning a war, so they gave it a meaningless name, special plans. But it was really the office for Iraq plans.

BROD: And how did the office work?

DREYFUSS: Well, it started out actually as an intelligence group of just two or three people and it expanded to four or five people, but it started out right after 9/11 in 2001 when Doug Feith and a man named Harold Rhode, who is another Pentagon official and a neoconservative Middle East expert who speaks many languages from the region. And some others started putting together a team to try to link Iraq to what happened on 9/11. As we all know now, there was no connection between Iraq and 9/11. But they brought in a man named David Wormser who was at the time the head of Middle East Policy at the American Enterprise Institute.

Now, AEI, American Enterprise Institute is where people like Newt Gingrich and Richard Perle and many other neoconservatives and other conservatives sort of hang out and use as their exile foreign policy shop. Wormser was brought in along with a guy named Mike Maloof and they were the first two people who set up this little intelligence unit in the Pentagon that eventually grew and expanded and started churning out all of the misleading and distorted and exaggerated efforts -- pieces of information that were then handed to the various U.S. officials to run the propaganda to justify the war.

They wanted to go into Iraq for grand strategic reasons, but they couldn't just say that and get the public behind them and certainly not Congress behind them. So they had to create the idea that Iraq was an imminent threat and the only way to do that was to say that Iraq was tied to terrorists who were planning to strike us and that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction that could strike us.

So Wormser and Maloof and then some of the other people who were brought into this job under Bill Lookey, under a guy named Abe Shulsky who was later brought in to run the Office of Special Plans, not only started picking and choosing among all the intelligence that's available, you know, there are tens of thousands of bits of intelligence that go into a conclusion. Well, they discarded the ones they didn't like and they seized on the ones that justified the cause that they were trying to pursue. And they would write up talking points in papers and so forth, which were not real intelligence, in fact, none of these people were intelligence professionals; they were ideologues, they were people who had a mission. And there's no disputing this, in other words, you can dispute whether the war was a good thing or a bad thing and you can dispute whether Bush is kind of a dunce or a genius. But you can't dispute the fact that this office was made of people who were first of all not intelligence professionals and who purged -- fired, transferred a number of people who were intelligence professionals because they disagreed with the conclusions that these ideologues were coming to.

They brought into this office as it expanded into probably a couple of dozen people with maybe 50 or 100 people who would pass in and out of it as contractors and helpers and supporters, they brought into people who were committed ideologically to the cause and who would come up with the conclusion they wanted. So all of the information that we later heard from people like Vice President Cheney and even the President about the aluminum tubes, about the uranium from Niger, about the unmanned aerial vehicles that could strike the United States, about thousands of tons of terrible gasses and chemicals that were stored in Iraq, about its reconstituted nuclear program, about biological mobile labs, none of this existed. It was all a complete mythology.

BROD: This is a complicated story and you have laid out the kind of the flow chart for this office in your piece and if our camera could just go down you'll see some of the names of the people that you have talked about. Our phone lines are also open. You can start dialing now if you're interested in talking with Mr. Dreyfuss.

My question to you is: Who are your sources for this?

DREYFUSS: Well, many of the people we talked to, we talked to on the record and they are quoted in there. I think the most courageous person of all is Lieutenant Colonel Karen Ketkowsky who is now retired, but she served in the Office of NESAs, the Near East and South Asian affairs office for about a year and saw this up close. And she described to me in detail sitting on a wood porch in her farm now, she lives out in western Virginia. She described to me in detail how people she knew were purged and forced into retirement in this office and how people were encouraged to come up with the kind of conclusions that the President and the Vice President seemed to want. She talked about how Vice President Cheney had his staff working directly with this Pentagon office, which is highly unusual. In other words, this office was four levels down in the Pentagon. Normally its work would go to Bill Lookey, and then to Doug Feith, and then to Paul Wolfowitz, and then to Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld. But, in fact, you had people like Newt Gingrich coming in constantly, people like Richard Perle and people like Vice President Cheney and his office, who were tasking this unit, saying what about this and what about that? And getting reports from them. I mean it's highly unusual for the Vice President's office, which is not part of the Pentagon, as we know to have a direct working relationship with an office in the bowels of the Pentagon's civilian bureaucracy.

BROD: Let's get to some phone calls for you, first off, Westwood, New Jersey, Republican. Good morning.

CALLER: Connie, happy New Year to you and Robert.

DREYFUSS: Thank you.

CALLER: I'm very, very interested in your flow chart and I'm a veteran of World War II. My parents taught me never to lie. And so lies are very important to me. The big lie at the present time, I think, is that judges have the right to make laws and I think you should be more interested in that because that has more far-reaching effects on everything, including what you're talking about. The big lie is that, for example, in *Roe v. Wade*.

BROD: Caller, I'm sorry, but this is really way off the subject of what we're talking about this morning. We're going to let you go and try to stay on topic this morning. Burlington, Massachusetts, Democrat.

CALLER: Hi, good morning, Robert Dreyfuss.

DREYFUSS: Good morning.

CALLER: Fantastic subject this morning. Very similar to really an awesome chapter in the Al Franken book about lies and how that was -- when that administration came in it seemed like they were really trying to warn them about terrorist activities and they were trying to ignore it and ignore it and put their own thing into place and I'm sorry I don't have the book in front of me, but it's a fantastic chapter right next to which you're talking about and I think everybody should read it.

BROD: Have you read it, Mr. Dreyfuss?

DREYFUSS: I haven't read Al's book yet, but it's on my list of New Year's reading.

BROD: Greenville, South Carolina. Republican.

CALLER: Good morning, how are you?

BROD: Great.

CALLER: I think that his whole premise is a joke. And I think that you're just trying to grasp with straws to put down President Bush who is doing a great job by the way I might add.

BROD: Grasping at straws, Mr. Dreyfuss?

DREYFUSS: That's a silly comment. The President may be doing a great job or not doing a great job. This is a story about whether there were weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, which was the main rationale for mobilizing our entire nation to go to war. And the things weren't there and I think we're going to ask why and what happened and why was the President so wrong? I mean Senator Bill Nelson from Florida said the other day that he was told in a closed briefing that Iraq had unmanned aerial vehicles that can carry chemical weapons and biological weapons to the East Coast of the United States. Things like this are simply not true. When we finally got there we found these rickety old Wright brothers looking planes that couldn't have gotten out of Baghdad airport, which were not really military by the way at all.

So the kinds of exaggerations and distortions that got into the President's speeches, he said that in Cincinnati in a modified way about these vehicles that could attack the United States are ludicrous. And I'm just stunned at the fact that even supporters of the President and Republicans in Congress just dismissed this and say, well, Iraq is better off, so why are we bothering even to talk about these weapons when that was hammered and hammered and hammered for months that Iraq was an urgent threat to the United States.

BROD: Besides writing for Mother Jones as a contributing editor, Mr. Dreyfuss is also a contributing editor for The Nation magazine and a contributing writer for The American Prospect and a frequent contributor to Rolling Stone.

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The Lie Factory

Only weeks after 9/11, the Bush administration set up a secret Pentagon unit to create the case for invading Iraq. Here is the inside story for how they pushed disinformation and bogus intelligence and led the nation to war.

By Robert Dreyfuss and Jason Vest

It's a crisp fall day in western Virginia, a hundred miles from Washington, D.C., and a breeze is rustling the red and gold leaves of the Shenandoah hills. On the weather-beaten wood porch of a ramshackle 90-year-old farmhouse, at the end of a winding dirt-and-gravel road, Lt. Colonel Karen Kwiatkowski is perched on a plastic chair, wearing shorts, a purple sweatshirt, and muddy sneakers. Two scrawny dogs and a lone cat are on the prowl, and the air is filled with swarms

So far, she says, no investigators have come knocking. Not from the Central Intelligence Agency, which conducted an internal inquiry into intelligence on Iraq, not from the congressional intelligence committees, not from the president's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board. All of those bodies are ostensibly looking into the Bush administration's prewar Iraq intelligence, amid charges that the White House and the Pentagon exaggerated, distorted, or just plain lied about Iraq's links to Al Qaeda terrorists and its possession of nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons. In her hands, Kwiatkowski holds several pieces of the puzzle. Yet she, along with a score of other career officers recently retired or shuffled off to other jobs, has not been approached by anyone.

Kwiatkowski, 43, a now-retired Air Force officer who served in the Pentagon's Near East and South Asia (NESA) unit in the year before the invasion of Iraq, observed how the Pentagon's Iraq war-planning unit manufactured scare stories about Iraq's weapons and ties to terrorists. "It wasn't intelligence-it was propaganda," she says. "They'd take a little bit of intelligence, cherry-pick it, make it sound much more exciting, usually by taking it out of context, often by juxtaposition of two pieces of information that don't belong together." It was by turning such bogus intelligence into talking points for U.S. officials-including ominous lines in speeches by President Bush and Vice President Cheney, along with Secretary of State Colin Powell's testimony at the U.N. Security Council last February-that the administration pushed American public opinion into supporting an unnecessary war.

Until now, the story of how the Bush administration produced its wildly exaggerated estimates of the threat posed by Iraq has never been revealed in full. But, for the first time, a detailed investigation by Mother Jones, based on dozens of interviews-some on the record, some with officials who insisted on anonymity-exposes the workings of a secret Pentagon intelligence unit and of the Defense Department's war-planning task force, the Office of Special Plans. It's the story of a close-knit team of ideologues who spent a decade or more hammering out plans for an attack on Iraq and who used the events of September 11, 2001, to set it into motion.

SIX MONTHS AFTER THE END of major combat in Iraq, the United States had spent \$300 million

trying to find banned weapons in Iraq, and President Bush was seeking \$600 million more to extend the search. Not found were Iraq's Scuds and other long-range missiles, thousands of barrels and tons of anthrax and botulism stock, sarin and VX nerve agents, mustard gas, biological and chemical munitions, mobile labs for producing biological weapons, and any and all evidence of a reconstituted nuclear-arms program, all of which had been repeatedly cited as justification for the war. Also missing was evidence of Iraqi collaboration with Al Qaeda.

The reports, virtually all false, of Iraqi weapons and terrorism ties emanated from an apparatus that began to gestate almost as soon as the Bush administration took power. In the very first meeting of the Bush national-security team, one day after President Bush took the oath of office in January 2001, the issue of invading Iraq was raised, according to one of the participants in the meeting-and officials all the way down the line started to get the message, long before 9/11. Indeed, the Bush team at the Pentagon hadn't even been formally installed before Paul Wolfowitz, the deputy secretary of Defense, and Douglas J. Feith, undersecretary of Defense for policy, began putting together what would become the vanguard for regime change in Iraq.

Both Wolfowitz and Feith have deep roots in the neoconservative movement. One of the most influential Washington neoconservatives in the foreign-policy establishment during the Republicans' wilderness years of the 1990s, Wolfowitz has long held that not taking Baghdad in 1991 was a grievous mistake. He and others now prominent in the administration said so repeatedly over the past decade in a slew of letters and policy papers from neoconservative groups like the Project for the New American Century and the Committee for the Liberation of Iraq. Feith, a former aide to Richard Perle at the Pentagon in the 1980s and an activist in far-right Zionist circles, held the view that there was no difference between U.S. and Israeli security policy and that the best way to secure both countries' future was to solve the Israeli-Palestinian problem not by serving as a broker, but with the United States as a force for "regime change" in the region.

Called in to help organize the Iraq war-planning team was a longtime Pentagon official, Harold Rhode, a specialist on Islam who speaks Hebrew, Arabic, Turkish, and Farsi. Though Feith would not be officially confirmed until July 2001, career military and civilian officials in NESA began to watch his office with concern after Rhode set up shop in Feith's office in early January. Rhode, seen by many veteran staffers as an ideological gadfly, was officially assigned to the Pentagon's Office of Net Assessment, an in-house Pentagon think tank headed by fellow neocon Andrew Marshall. Rhode helped Feith lay down the law about the department's new anti-Iraq, and broadly anti-Arab, orientation. In one telling incident, Rhode accosted and harangued a visiting senior Arab diplomat, telling him that there would be no "bartering in the bazaar anymore.... You're going to have to sit up and pay attention when we say so."

Rhode refused to be interviewed for this story, saying cryptically, "Those who speak, pay."

According to insiders, Rhode worked with Feith to purge career Defense officials who weren't sufficiently enthusiastic about the muscular anti-Iraq crusade that Wolfowitz and Feith wanted. Rhode appeared to be "pulling people out of nooks and crannies of the Defense Intelligence Agency and other places to replace us with," says a former analyst. "They wanted nothing to do with the professional staff. And they wanted us the fuck out of there."

The unofficial, off-site recruitment office for Feith and Rhode was the American Enterprise Institute, a right-wing think tank whose 12th-floor conference room in Washington is named for the dean of neoconservative defense strategists, the late Albert Wohlstetter, an influential RAND analyst and University of Chicago mathematician. Headquartered at AEI is Richard Perle, Wohlstetter's prize protege, the godfather of the AEI-Defense Department nexus of neoconservatives who was chairman of

the Pentagon's influential Defense Policy Board. Rhode, along with Michael Rubin, a former AEI staffer who is also now at the Pentagon, was a ubiquitous presence at AEI conferences on Iraq over the past two years, and the two Pentagon officials seemed almost to be serving as stage managers for the AEI events, often sitting in the front row and speaking in stage whispers to panelists and AEI officials. Just after September 11, 2001, Feith and Rhode recruited David Wurmser, the director of Middle East studies for AEI, to serve as a Pentagon consultant.

Wurmser would be the founding participant of the unnamed, secret intelligence unit at the Pentagon, set up in Feith's office, which would be the nucleus of the Defense Department's Iraq disinformation campaign that was established within weeks of the attacks in New York and Washington. While the CIA and other intelligence agencies concentrated on Osama bin Laden's Al Qaeda as the culprit in the 9/11 attacks, Wolfowitz and Feith obsessively focused on Iraq. It was a theory that was discredited, even ridiculed, among intelligence professionals. Daniel Benjamin, co-author of *The Age of Sacred Terror*, was director of counterterrorism at the National Security Council in the late 1990s. "In 1998, we went through every piece of intelligence we could find to see if there was a link between Al Qaeda and Iraq," he says. "We came to the conclusion that our intelligence agencies had it right: There was no noteworthy relationship between Al Qaeda and Iraq. I know that for a fact." Indeed, that was the consensus among virtually all anti-terrorism specialists.

In short, Wurmser, backed by Feith and Rhode, set out to prove what didn't exist.

IN AN ADMINISTRATION devoted to the notion of "Feith-based intelligence," Wurmser was ideal. For years, he'd been a shrill ideologue, part of the minority crusade during the 1990s that was beating the drums for war against Iraq. Along with Perle and Feith, in 1996 Wurmser and his wife, Meyrav, wrote a provocative strategy paper for Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu called "A Clean Break: A New Strategy for Securing the Realm." It called on Israel to work with Jordan and Turkey to "contain, destabilize and roll back" various states in the region, overthrow Saddam Hussein in Iraq, press Jordan to restore a scion of the Hashemite dynasty to the Iraqi throne, and, above all, launch military assaults against Lebanon and Syria as a "prelude to a redrawing of the map of the Middle East which would threaten Syria's territorial integrity."

In 1997, Wurmser wrote a column in the *Wall Street Journal* called "Iraq Needs a Revolution" and the next year co-signed a letter with Perle calling for all-out U.S. support of the Iraqi National Congress (INC), an exile group led by Ahmad Chalabi, in promoting an insurgency in Iraq. At AEI, Wurmser wrote *Tyranny's Ally: America's Failure to Defeat Saddam Hussein*, essentially a book-length version of "A Clean Break" that proposed an alliance between Jordan and the INC to redraw the map of the Middle East. Among the mentors cited by Wurmser in the book: Chalabi, Perle, and Feith.

The purpose of the unnamed intelligence unit, often described as a Pentagon "cell," was to scour reports from the CIA, the Defense Intelligence Agency, the National Security Agency, and other agencies to find nuggets of information linking Iraq, Al Qaeda, terrorism, and the existence of Iraqi weapons of mass destruction (WMD). In a controversial press briefing in October 2002, a year after Wurmser's unit was established, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld acknowledged that a primary purpose of the unit was to cull factoids, which were then used to disparage, undermine, and contradict the CIA's reporting, which was far more cautious and nuanced than Rumsfeld, Wolfowitz, and Feith wanted. Rumsfeld particularly enjoyed harassing the CIA staffer who briefed him every morning, using the type of data produced by the intelligence unit. "What I could do is say, 'Gee, what about this?'" Rumsfeld noted. "Or what about that? Has somebody thought of this?" Last June, when Feith was questioned on the same topic at a briefing, he acknowledged that the secret unit in fact looked at the connection between Iraq and terrorism, saying, "You can't rely on deterrence to deal with the problem of weapons of mass destruction in the hands of

state sponsors of terrorism because [of] the possibility that those state sponsors might employ chemical weapons or biological weapons by means of a terrorist organization proxy...."

Though Feith, in that briefing, described Wurmser's unit as an innocent project, "a global exercise" that was not meant to put pressure on other intelligence agencies or create skewed intelligence to fit preconceived policy notions, many other sources assert that it did exactly that. That the White House and the Pentagon put enormous pressure on the CIA to go along with its version of events has been widely reported, highlighted by visits to CIA headquarters by Vice President Cheney and Lewis Libby, his chief of staff. Led by Perle, the neocons seethed with contempt for the CIA. The CIA's analysis, said Perle, "isn't worth the paper it's printed on." Standing in a crowded hallway during an AEI event, Perle added, "The CIA is status quo oriented. They don't want to take risks."

That became the mantra of the shadow agency within an agency..

Putting Wurmser in charge of the unit meant that it was being run by a pro-Iraq-war ideologue who'd spent years calling for a pre-emptive invasion of Baghdad and who was clearly predisposed to find what he wanted to see. Adding another layer of dubious quality to the endeavor was the man partnered with Wurmser, F. Michael Maloof. Maloof, a former aide to Perle in the 1980s Pentagon, was twice stripped of his high-level security clearances-once in late 2001 and again last spring, for various infractions. Maloof was also reportedly involved in a bizarre scheme to broker contacts between Iraqi officials and the Pentagon, channeled through Perle, in what one report called a "rogue [intelligence] operation" outside official CIA and Defense Intelligence Agency channels.

As the momentum for war began to build in early 2002, Wolfowitz and Feith beefed up the intelligence unit and created an Iraq war-planning unit in the Pentagon's Near East and South Asia Affairs section, run by Deputy Undersecretary of Defense William Luti, under the rubric "Office of Special Plans," or OSP; the new unit's director was Abram N. Shulsky. By then, Wurmser had moved on to a post as senior adviser to Undersecretary of State John Bolton, yet another neocon, who was in charge of the State Department's disarmament, proliferation, and WMD office and was promoting the Iraq war strategy there. Shulsky's OSP, which incorporated the secret intelligence unit, took control, banishing veteran experts-including Joseph McMillan, James Russell, Larry Hanauer, and Marybeth McDevitt-who, despite years of service to NESAs, either were shuffled off to other positions or retired. For the next year, Luti and Shulsky not only would oversee war plans but would act aggressively to shape the intelligence product received by the White House.

Both Luti and Shulsky were neoconservatives who were ideological soulmates of Wolfowitz and Feith. But Luti was more than that. He'd come to the Pentagon directly from the office of Vice President Cheney. That gave Luti, a recently retired, decorated Navy captain whose career ran from combat aviation to command of a helicopter assault ship, extra clout. Along with his colleague Colonel William Bruner, Luti had done a stint as an aide to Newt Gingrich in 1996 and, like Perle and Wolfowitz, was an acolyte of Wohlstetter's. "He makes Ollie North look like a moderate," says a NESAs veteran.

Shulsky had been on the Washington scene since the mid-1970s. As a Senate intelligence committee staffer for Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan, he began to work with early neoconservatives like Perle, who was then an aide to Senator Henry Jackson. Later, in the Reagan years, Shulsky followed Perle to the Pentagon as Perle's arms-control adviser. In the '90s, Shulsky co-authored a book on intelligence called *Silent Warfare*, with Gary Schmitt. Shulsky had served with Schmitt on Moynihan's staff and they had remained friends. Asked about the Pentagon's Iraq intelligence "cell," Schmitt-who is currently the executive director of the Project for the New American Century-says that he can't say much about it "because one of my best friends is running it."

According to Lt. Colonel Kwiatkowski, Luti and Shulsky ran NESA and the Office of Special Plans with brutal efficiency, purging people they disagreed with and enforcing the party line. "It was organized like a machine," she says. "The people working on the neocon agenda had a narrow, well-defined political agenda. They had a sense of mission." At NESA, Shulsky, she says, began "hot-desking," or taking an office wherever he could find one, working with Feith and Luti, before formally taking the reins of the newly created OSP. Together, she says, Luti and Shulsky turned cherry-picked pieces of uncorroborated, anti-Iraq intelligence into talking points, on issues like Iraq's WMD and its links to Al Qaeda. Shulsky constantly updated these papers, drawing on the intelligence unit, and circulated them to Pentagon officials, including Rumsfeld, and to Vice President Cheney. "Of course, we never thought they'd go directly to the White House," she adds.

Kwiatkowski recalls one meeting in which Luti, pressed to finish a report, told the staff, "I've got to get this over to 'Scooter' right away." She later found out that "Scooter" was none other than Lewis "Scooter" Libby, Vice President Cheney's chief of staff. According to Kwiatkowski, Cheney had direct ties through Luti into NESA/OSP, a connection that was highly unorthodox.

"Never, ever, ever would a deputy undersecretary of Defense work directly on a project for the vice president," she says. "It was a little clue that we had an informal network into Vice President Cheney's office."

Although Feith insists that the OSP did not seek to gather its own intelligence, Kwiatkowski and others sharply disagree. Staff working for Luti and Shulsky in NESA/OSP churned out propaganda-style intelligence, she says. As an example, she cited the work of a U.S. intelligence officer and Arabic specialist, Navy Lt. Commander Youssef Aboul-Enein, who was a special assistant to Luti. "His job was to peruse the Arabic-language media to find articles that would incriminate Saddam Hussein about terrorism, and he translated these." Such raw intelligence is usually subject to a thorough vetting process, tracked, verified, and checked by intelligence professionals. But not at OSP-the material that it produced found its way directly into speeches by Bush, Cheney, and other officials.

According to Melvin Goodman, a former CIA official and an intelligence specialist at the National War College, the OSP officials routinely pushed lower-ranking staff around on intelligence matters. "People were being pulled aside [and being told], 'We saw your last piece and it's not what we're looking for,'" he says. "It was pretty blatant." Two State Department intelligence officials, Greg Thielmann and Christian Westermann, have both charged that pressure was being put on them to shape intelligence to fit policy, in particular from Bolton's office. "The Al Qaeda connection and nuclear weapons issue were the only two ways that you could link Iraq to an imminent security threat to the U.S.," Thielmann told the New York Times. "And the administration was grossly distorting the intelligence on both things."

BESIDES CHENEY, key members of the Pentagon's Defense Policy Board, including Perle and ex-House Speaker Newt Gingrich, all Iraq hawks, had direct input into NESA/OSP. The offices of NESA were located on the Pentagon's fourth floor, seventh corridor of D Ring, and the Policy Board's offices were directly below, on the third floor. During the run-up to the Iraq war, Gingrich often came up for closed-door meetings with Luti, who in 1996 had served as a congressional fellow in Speaker of the House Gingrich's office.

As OSP got rolling, Luti brought in Colonel Bruner, a former military aide to Gingrich, and, together, Luti and Bruner opened the door to a vast flow of bogus intelligence fed to the Pentagon by Iraqi defectors associated with Chalabi's Iraqi National Congress group of exiles. Chalabi founded the Iraqi National Congress in 1992, with the help of a shadowy CIA-connected public-relations firm called the

Rendon Group, one of whose former employees, Francis Brooke, has been a top aide to Chalabi ever since. A scion of an aristocratic Iraqi family, Chalabi fled Baghdad at the age of 13, in 1958, when the corrupt Iraqi Hashemite monarchy was overthrown by a coalition of communists and the Iraqi military. In the late 1960s, Chalabi studied mathematics at the University of Chicago with Wohlstetter, who introduced him to Richard Perle more than a decade later. Long associated with the heart of the neoconservative movement, Chalabi founded Petra Bank in Jordan, which grew to be Jordan's third-largest bank by the 1980s. But Chalabi was accused of bank fraud, embezzlement, and currency manipulation, and he barely escaped before Jordanian authorities could arrest him; in 1992, he was convicted and sentenced in absentia to more than 20 years of hard labor. After founding the INC, Chalabi's bungling, unreliability, and penchant for mismanaging funds caused the CIA to sour on him, but he never lost the support of Perle, Feith, Gingrich, and their allies; once, soon after 9/11, Perle invited Chalabi to address the Defense Policy Board.

According to multiple sources, Chalabi's Iraqi National Congress sent a steady stream of misleading and often faked intelligence reports into U.S. intelligence channels. That information would flow sometimes into NESA/OSP directly, sometimes through Defense Intelligence Agency debriefings of Iraqi defectors via the Defense Human Intelligence Service, and sometimes through the INC's own U.S.-funded Intelligence Collection Program, which was overseen by the Pentagon. The INC's intelligence "isn't reliable at all," according to Vincent Cannistraro, a former CIA chief of counterterrorism.

"Much of it is propaganda. Much of it is telling the Defense Department what they want to hear, using alleged informants and defectors who say what Chalabi wants them to say, [creating] cooked information that goes right into presidential and vice presidential speeches."

Bruner, the aide to Luti and Gingrich's former staffer, "was Chalabi's handler," says Kwiatkowski. "He would arrange meetings with Chalabi and Chalabi's folks," she says, adding that the INC leader often brought people into the NESA/OSP offices for debriefings. Chalabi claims to have introduced only three actual defectors to the Pentagon, a figure Thielmann considers "awfully low." However, according to an investigation by the Los Angeles Times, the three defectors provided by Chalabi turned up exactly zero useful intelligence. The first, an Iraqi engineer, claimed to have specific information about biological weapons, but his information didn't pan out; the second claimed to know about mobile labs, but that information, too, was worthless; and the third, who claimed to have data about Iraq's nuclear program, proved to be a fraud. Chalabi also claimed to have given the Pentagon information about Iraqi support for Al Qaeda. "We gave the names of people who were doing the links," he told an interviewer from PBS's Frontline. Those links, of course, have not been discovered. Thielmann told the same Frontline interviewer that the Office of Special Plans didn't apply strict intelligence-verification standards to "some of the information coming out of Chalabi and the INC that OSP and the Pentagon ran with."

In the war's aftermath, the Defense Intelligence Agency—which is not beholden to the neoconservative civilians at the Pentagon—leaked a report it prepared, concluding that few, if any, of the INC's informants provided worthwhile intelligence.

SO FAR, DESPITE ALL of the investigations underway, there is little sign that any of them are going to delve into the operations of the Luti-Shulsky Office of Special Plans and its secret intelligence unit. Because it operates in the Pentagon's policy shop, it is not officially part of the intelligence community, and so it is seemingly immune to congressional oversight.

With each passing day, it is becoming excruciatingly clearer just how wrong U.S. intelligence was in regard to Iraqi weapons and support for terrorism. The American teams of inspectors in the Iraq Survey Group, which has employed up to 1,400 people to scour the country and analyze the findings, have not

been able to find a shred of evidence of anything other than dusty old plans and records of weapons apparently destroyed more than a decade ago. Countless examples of fruitless searches have been reported in the media. To cite one example: U.S. soldiers followed an intelligence report claiming that a complex built for Uday Hussein, Saddam's son, hid a weapons warehouse with poison-gas storage tanks. "Well," U.S. Army Major Ronald Hann Jr. told the Los Angeles Times, "the warehouse was a carport. It still had two cars inside. And the tanks had propane for the kitchen."

Countless other errors and exaggerations have become evident. The thousands of aluminum tubes supposedly imported by Iraq for uranium enrichment were fairly conclusively found to be designed to build noncontroversial rockets. The long-range unmanned aerial vehicles, allegedly built to deliver bioweapons, were small, rickety, experimental planes with wood frames. The mobile bioweapon labs turned out to have had other, civilian purposes. And the granddaddy of all falsehoods, the charge that Iraq sought uranium in the West African country of Niger, was based on forged documents-documents that the CIA, the State Department, and other agencies knew were fake nearly a year before President Bush highlighted the issue in his State of the Union address in January 2003.

"Either the system broke down," former Ambassador Joseph Wilson, who was sent by the CIA to visit Niger and whose findings helped show that the documents were forged, told Mother Jones, "or there was selective use of bits of information to justify a decision to go to war that had already been taken."

Edward Luttwak, a neoconservative scholar and author, says flatly that the Bush administration lied about the intelligence it had because it was afraid to go to the American people and say that the war was simply about getting rid of Saddam Hussein. Instead, says Luttwak, the White House was groping for a rationale to satisfy the United Nations' criteria for war. "Cheney was forced into this fake posture of worrying about weapons of mass destruction," he says. "The ties to Al Qaeda? That's complete nonsense."

In the Senate, Senator Jay Rockefeller (D-W.Va.) is pressing for the Intelligence Committee to extend its investigation to look into the specific role of the Pentagon's Office of Special Plans, but there is strong Republican resistance to the idea.

In the House, Rep. Henry Waxman (D-Calif.) has introduced legislation calling for a commission to investigate the intelligence mess and has collected more than a hundred Democrats-but no Republicans-in support of it. "I think they need to be looked at pretty carefully," Waxman told Mother Jones when asked about the Office of Special Plans. "I'd like to know whether the political people pushed the intelligence people to slant their conclusions."

Congressman Waxman, meet Lt. Colonel Kwiatkowski.

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The United States and Shi'ite Religious Factions in Post-Ba'thist Iraq

Juan Cole

In post-Saddam Husayn Iraq, Shi'ite militias rapidly established their authority in East Baghdad and other urban neighborhoods of the south. Among the various groups which emerged, the Sadr Movement stands out as militant and cohesive. The sectarian, anti-American Sadrists wish to impose a puritanical, Khomeinist vision on Iraq. Their political influence is potentially much greater than their numbers. Incorporating them into a democratic Iraq while ensuring that they do not come to dominate it poses a severe challenge to the US Administration.

In planning the war on Iraq, the American Defense Department and intelligence organizations appear to have been unaware that millions of Iraqi Shi'ites had joined a militant and puritanical movement dedicated to the establishment of an Iran-style Islamic Republic in Iraq, even though these developments had been detailed in many Arabic-language books and articles. On February 18, 2003, Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz gave an interview on National Public Radio in which he maintained that "The Iraqis are . . . by and large quite secular. They are overwhelmingly Shi'a which is different from the Wahabis of the peninsula, and they don't bring the sensitivity of having the holy cities of Islam being on their territory."¹ Even more disturbingly, this quote shows that Wolfowitz did not realize that religious Iraqi Shi'ites are extremely sensitive about foreigners in their shrine cities such as Najaf and Karbala, or that these cities are religious power centers of great symbolic potency.

US Defense Department leaders such as Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld and his deputies, Wolfowitz and Douglas Feith, mistakenly thought that the middle and lower strata of the Ba'th bureaucracy, police, and army would survive the war, and that they could simply hand it over to secular expatriate figure Ahmad Chalabi and his Iraqi National Congress. Although from a Shi'ite background, Chalabi was largely unknown in Iraq and was wanted in Jordan on embezzlement charges. The CIA and the State Department broke with Chalabi late in 2002 when he proved unable

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1. "Deputy Secretary Wolfowitz Interview with National Public Radio," February 19, 2003 at <http://www.washingtonfile.net/2003/Feb/Feb21/EUR509.HTM>.
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to account for about \$2 million of the \$4 million they had given his Iraqi National Congress. The major religious Shi'ite groups with which the Americans were negotiating were part of Chalabi's group and included the Tehran-based Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq, the London branch of the al-Da'wa Party, and the Khoei Foundation, of which only al-Da'wa had much popularity on the ground in Iraq. The US was ignorant of the Sadr Movement, the main indigenous Shi'ite force. This ignorance was to cost the US great political capital in the first months of the occupation.

When the Ba'th fell on April 9, 2003, Shi'ite militias seemed suddenly to emerge and take control of many urban areas in the south of the country, as well as in the desperately poor slums of East Baghdad. The moral authority of Grand Ayatollah Ali Sistani and his more quietist colleagues in Najaf had been known to the US, but it transpired that other ayatollahs and leaders had more political clout. The rank and file of Iraqi Shi'ites in the urban areas was far more radicalized by the last decade of Ba'th rule than anyone on the outside had realized. These developments alarmed Washington, given that some 60% to 65% of Iraqis are Shi'ites, and this group would therefore predominate in a democratic Iraq. The religious groups constitute only one section of the Shi'ite population, perhaps a third or more, but they are well organized and armed.

My thesis here is that the Sadr Movement is at the moment the most important tendency among religious Shi'ites in post-Ba'thist Iraq, and that it is best seen as a sectarian phenomenon in the "sociology of religions" sense. It is primarily a youth movement and its rank and file tend to be poor. It is highly puritanical and xenophobic, and it is characterized by an exclusivism unusual in Iraqi Shi'ism. To any extent that it emerges as a leading social force in Iraq, it will prove polarizing and destabilizing. In spring and summer of 2003 its leadership had decided not to challenge actively the coalition military. In contemporary theories of the sociology of religion, a "sect" is characterized by a high degree of tension with mainstream society, employing a rhetoric of difference, antagonism, and separation.² The "high-tension" model of the sect predicts that it will attempt strongly to demarcate itself off from the mainstream of society. It will also cast out those members who are perceived to be too accommodating of non-sectarian norms. That is, it demands high levels of loyalty and obedience in the pursuit of exclusivism.

IRAQI SHI'ISM IN HISTORY

Under the Ottomans, a Sunni political elite flourished in what is now Iraq, with political ties to Istanbul. Shi'ism remained vigorous, however. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, many tribespeople of the south converted to the Shi'ite branch of Islam, under the influence of missionaries sent out from the shrine cities of Najaf and Karbala, where Shi'ite holy figures Imam 'Ali and Imam Husayn were interred.

2. Rodney Stark and William Sims Bainbridge, *The Future of Religion* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1985), pp. 19-34, 135.

'Ali was the son-in-law and cousin of the Prophet Muhammad, and Husayn was the prophet's grandson. This tribal conversion movement appears to have been a protest of the weak, a way of using religion to resist the power of the Sunni Ottoman bureaucracy. Over time, it created a Shi'ite majority in what was to become Iraq. This region also witnessed the victory among Shi'ites in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries of the Usuli school of jurisprudence, which held that all lay believers must follow or "emulate" a learned Shi'ite jurisprudent with seminary training. They are to implement the rulings of this "object of emulation" (*marja' al-taqlid*) with regard to disputed points of Islamic law. They can only follow a living jurisprudent or *mujtahid*, however, with regard to any new issues that arise after the old one's death. The Usuli school gave to Shi'ite clerics a leadership position much more powerful and central than typically was bestowed by Sunni Muslims on their clerics.³

The British conquered Mesopotamia during World War I, and created out of Mosul, Baghdad, and Basra provinces (Arabic *wilayat*) a colonial state they called Iraq, which became formally independent in 1932. They cobbled together a big Kurdish community in the north, some Turkmen tribespeople, Sunni townspeople of the center, and the Shi'ite tribes and settled urban and rural groups of the south, into a new state. The Shi'ite majority probably grew larger in the course of the 20th century, but Sunnis remained in control politically and economically, under the monarchy, then the officers-ruled republic of 1958-1968, and then the Ba'th (Arab nationalist) regime of 1968-2003. The Ba'th massively persecuted the religious Shi'ites of the south. It especially feared the al-Da'wa al-Islamiyya Party, founded around 1958, which aimed at establishing a Shi'ite-dominated Islamic state.⁴ The rise of the Islamic Republic of Iran in 1978-79 frightened the Ba'th, which launched a war against the Khomeinist state there, and simultaneously, cracked down hard on the radical Shi'ite clerics in Iraq such as Muhammad Baqir al-Sadr (d. 1980), who theorized an Islamic state. Muhammad Baqir al-Sadr, "Sadr I," was executed along with many

3. For the historical background of modern Iraqi Shi'ism, see Pierre-Jean Luizard, *La formation de l'Irak contemporain [The Formation of Contemporary Iraq]* (Paris: Editions du Centre national de la recherche scientifique, 1991); Yitzhak Nakash, *The Shi'is of Iraq* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994); Meir Litvak, *Shi'ite Scholars of Nineteenth Century Iraq* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Juan Cole, *Sacred Space and Holy War: The Politics, Culture, and History of Shi'ite Islam* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2002), and Faleh Abdul-Jabar, ed., *Ayatollahs, Sufis and Ideologues* (London: Saqi Books, 2002).

4. Salah al-Khursan, *Hizb al-Da'wa al-Islamiyya: Haqa'iq wa watha'iq [The Islamic Da'wa Party: Facts and Documents]* (Damascus: al-Mu'assassa al-'Arabiyya li'l-Dirasat wa'l-Buhuth al-Istratijiyya, 1999); Ruhaimi, "The Da'wa Islamic Party," in Abdul-Jabar, *Ayatollahs*, pp. 149-161; Keiko Sakai, "Modernity and tradition in the Islamic movements in Iraq," *Arab Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 23, No. 1 (Winter 2001), pp. 37-52; Mahan Abedin, "Dossier: Hezb al-Daawa al-Islamiyya: Islamic Call Party," *Middle East Intelligence Bulletin*, Vol. 5, No. 6 (June 2003) at: http://www.meib.org/articles/0306_iraqd.htm; Hanna Batai, "Shi'ite Organizations in Iraq: Al-Da'wah al-Islamiyah and al-Mujahidin," In Juan R. I. Cole and Nikki R. Keddie, eds., *Shi'ism and Social Protest* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), pp. 179-200; Joyce N. Wiley, *The Islamic Movement of Iraqi Shi'ites* (Boulder, Co.: Lynne Rienner, 1992).

other activists.⁵ The al-Da'wa Party gave birth to splinter groups like the Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq (founded by expatriates in Tehran in 1982) and the Sadr Movement, while remaining a separate party in its own right. In contrast, the mainstream Najaf clerical tradition in Iraq, exemplified by Abu al-Qasim al-Khu'i (d. 1992), tended to be quietist and to reject Khomeini's theory that the clergy should rule (*vilayat-e faqih*).⁶ But unbeknownst to the outside world, many Iraqi Shi'ites, inspired by al-Sadr and his successors, were being radicalized by the example of Iran and by the brutality of the Ba'th persecution.

THE POLITICAL GEOGRAPHY OF IRAQI SHI'ISM

The Iraqi Shi'ites come from a number of distinct social niches. Over two million dwell in the poor neighborhoods of East Baghdad, constituting some 8% of the total Iraqi population (est. at 24 million in 2003) and 13% of the Shi'ites. This quarter was called al-Thawra ("Revolution") Township when it was founded by military dictator 'Abd al-Karim al-Qasim in the early 1960s, and was renamed Saddam City by the Ba'th. It was settled by Shi'ite villagers who emigrated from the hardscrabble farms of the South, often retaining their tribal identities, customs, rituals and ties in their new environment. Some young people there even go back to their villages to consult with their tribal chieftains from time to time.⁷ The new generation quickly became in important senses urban in outlook. As soon as the Ba'th fell in spring of 2003, its inhabitants renamed it Sadr City, a reference to Ayatollah Muhammad Sadiq al-Sadr ("Sadr II"), who had been assassinated by Saddam's agents in 1999. The residents of East Baghdad live under appalling social and economic conditions, with little access to basic necessities such as sewerage, clean water, and decent housing. Unemployment is high. The quarter suffered dreadfully from Ba'th party repression, with many killed in uprisings in 1977, 1991 and 1999. East Baghdad is thus a fertile ground for Shi'ite radicalism and populism, and its residents seem largely to favor the Sadr II Movement.

Shi'ites predominate in Basra, Iraq's second largest city, which has a population of about 1.3 million. Basra is often said to be more cosmopolitan and secular than other Shi'ite areas, and its mayor under the British administration in the post-Ba'th period, Wa'il 'Abd al-Latif, is a secular court judge. Still, religious factions are organizing there, and eyewitness accounts suggest that by summer of 2003 even Christian women felt forced to veil when they went out of the house because of pressure from hard line Shi'ites.⁸ Basra has been a center of a breakaway faction of the al-Da'wa Party, Tanzim al-Da'wa, which rejected Khomeini's theory of clerical rule. It also has

5. Talib Aziz, "The Political Theory of Muhammad Baqir Sadr," in Abdul-Jabar, pp. 231-244; Chibli Mallat, *The Renewal of Islamic Law: Muhammad Baqir al-Sadr, Najaf, and the Shi'i International* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

6. Yusuf Al-Kho'i, "Grand Ayatollah Abu al-Qasim al-Kho'i," in Abdul-Jabar, pp. 224-230; Jawdat al-Qazwini, "The School of Najaf," in Abdul-Jabar, pp. 243-264.

7. Hazim al-Amin, "*Baghdad allati lam taf'al bi 'asha'iriha ma taf'aluhu al-mudun bi'l-'asha'ir*" ["Baghdad which Has Not Dealt with its Tribes as Other Cities Do"], *Al-Hayat*, July 10, 2003.

8. "Christians Under More Pressure in Postwar Iraq: Interview with Marie Angel Siebrecht of Aid to the Church in Need," Zenit News Agency, July 4, 2003 at <http://www.zenit.org/english/visualizza.phtml?sid=38309>.

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substantial numbers of followers of the Sadr Movement, and of the Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq, about which more below.

A little over a fifth of Iraqi Shi'ites therefore live in the big cities. Another important stratum lives in important towns in the south. These towns average populations between 100,000 and about 600,000 persons. They include al-Zubayr (174,000), Samawah (128,000), Nasiriyya (560,000), 'Amara (351,000), Kut (400,000), Diwaniyya (443,000), Hillah (548,000), Kufa (119,000), Najaf (585,000), Karbala (572,000), and Baquba (295,000). Samarra' (207,000), a northern town with a Shi'ite quarter, can also be listed here.⁹ These substantial towns accounted for nearly 4.5 million residents in 2003, largely Shi'ites, and therefore for about a third of the Iraqi Shi'ite population. Many Shi'ites living in them are merchants and shopkeepers, insofar as government employment was often denied to them or seen as undesirable by them under the Ba'th.¹⁰ The towns differ among themselves in character. Najaf, Karbala and Samarra stand out in being shrine cities, where Imams are buried that Shi'ites consider rightful heirs and successors to the prophet Muhammad. They also have seminary establishments, training clerics. The clerics of Najaf in particular enjoy great prestige in Iraq and throughout the Shi'ite world, and in the twentieth century outside Iran the convention has been that the most senior grand ayatollah in Najaf is the chief legal and religious authority for lay Shi'ites.

Each town has a different religious and political orientation. The al-Da'wa Party seems particularly strong in Nasiriyya. Baquba and Kut, in the east near Iran, are under the influence of the Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI).¹¹ This group had its origins in the al-Da'wa Party but became a separate organization in 1982. In 1984, Muhammad Baqir al-Hakim came to head it, and he remained at the helm thereafter, until his assassination in the car bombing outside the Shrine of 'Ali in Najaf on August 29, 2003.¹² SCIRI was based in Tehran for two decades. Kufa, like East Baghdad, is a stronghold of the Sadr Movement. Some other substantial towns are more tied to the tribes and the rural areas, and have seen recent large influxes of marsh Arabs and other political refugees from the countryside. These relatively newly settled townspeople are used to being armed, and so for them, the Anglo-American troops' attempts to confiscate their rifles have produced a great deal of tension.

Another large proportion of Shi'ites lives in small towns and villages in the countryside. The rural Shi'ites are now a minority. They tend to be organized by tribe though few are any longer pastoral nomads, and to practice a folk Shi'ism at variance

9. Population statistics are from Stefan Helder, "World Gazetteer," at http://www.world-gazetteer.com/fr/fr_iq.htm; an important recent overview of Shi'ite currents in Samarra' is Hazim al-Amin, "Samarra' wa Ikhwatuha," ["Samarra' and its Sisters"] *Al-Hayat*, 15 July 2003.

10. Ma'd Fayyad, "Shahid 'ala Rihlat al-Khu'i ila al-'Iraq," [Witness to the Journey of al-Khu'i to Iraq], *Al-Sharq al-Awsat*, April 28, 2003.

11. Juan Cole, "Mariage mal assorti entre les radicaux chiites irakiens et les Etats-Unis," ["Mismatched Marriage Between Radical Shi'ites and the US"], *Le Monde Diplomatique* (July 2003).

12. Mukhtar al-Asadi, *Al-Taqsir al-Kabir bayna al-Salah wa al-Islah* [Mere Passive Goodness Falls Far Short of Active Reform] (Beirut: Dar al-Furat, 2001).

with the more scholastic and bookish Shi'ism of the seminary cities. They invest their tribal shaykhs with great authority, and often with some religious charisma, as well (the shaykhs often claim to be Sayyids or Sharifs, i.e., descendants of the prophet.) On July 8, a convention was held by Iraqi tribal leaders, representing the rural Shi'ite tribes of the center and south of Iraq called "The Bloc of Democratic Iraqi tribes." They aimed at ensuring they have a voice in the governance of Iraq. The convention chair, Ghalib al-Rikabi, insisted that Iraqis themselves draft the new constitution and demanded early elections for an Iraqi government.¹³

A subset of the rural Shi'ites is the so-called marsh Arabs, said to be about 500,000 strong. They once dwelled in the swamps of southern Iraq, working as fishermen, hunters, farmers and smugglers. In the 1990s, the swamps were used by Iran-based paramilitary organizations of Iraqi expatriates to infiltrate into Iraq and strike at Ba'th targets, and the marsh Arabs themselves often resisted Ba'th rule. They were organized politically and militarily by the Iraqi Hizbu'llah, a radical group that fought a guerrilla war against the Iraqi state. The Ba'th found it difficult to operate in the marshes and therefore drained them. The marsh Arabs were forced to settle in poor southern towns such as Majar al-Kabir, or to go to small cities like Amara, where they largely subsisted in poverty, having lost their livelihoods.

In the aftermath of the second Gulf War, 'Abd al-Karim Mahmud al-Muhammadawi, a marsh Arab who had fought guerrilla actions against the Ba'th under the nom de guerre of Abu Hatim, emerged as an important civic leader in Amara. He provided security with the help of his tribal militia (presumably Hizbullah). Although an observant Shi'ite, he decries "religious fanaticism" and urges toleration. In early July 2003, he was also insisting on the quick formation of an indigenous Iraqi government and an early end to what he called American occupation.¹⁴ The tragic clash between British troops and residents of Majar al-Kabir on June 23 and 24, in which six British troops were killed, came about in large part because the British insisted on disarming the population. Arab tribesmen originally from the marshes saw this step as a way of dishonoring them and rendering them defenseless. For people who had lost everything, being without arms to protect their families was a frightening prospect.¹⁵ Muhammadawi himself played an important role in calming tensions after the clash.¹⁶

Of all these groups, the urban religious Shi'ites are the most highly networked for political and crowd action. Najaf, the chief shrine city, provides much of the leadership and organization, whereas the slum dwellers of East Baghdad can easily be bused as foot soldiers to the center of Baghdad for rallies. Other urban populations

13. *Al-Hayat*, July 8, 2003.

14. Patrice Claude, "Dans le sud de l'Irak, le 'Seigneur des marais', héros de la résistance contre Saddam, aspire à la paix," ["In southern Iraq, the 'Lord of the Marshes', Hero of the Resistance against Saddam, Hopes for Peace"], *Le Monde*, July 3, 2003.

15. Patrick Cockburn in Majar al-Kabir, "Marsh Arabs threaten to resist 'Army of Occupation,'" *The Independent* (London), June 27, 2003, at http://news.independent.co.uk/world/middle_east/story.jsp?story=419367.

16. Michael Howard and Jamie Wilson, "British forces try to mend fences in town where six soldiers died," *The Guardian*, June 28, 2003.

have also demonstrated a potential for crowd action. Some 10,000 demonstrated in Basra against the US occupation in June. As many as 20,000 demonstrated in Nasiriyah in late April, and there have also been demonstrations in Baquba.

THE AFTERMATH OF THE 1991 UPRISING

The religious movements of contemporary Iraqi Shi'ites today have important roots in the failed rebellion against the Ba'th of spring, 1991.¹⁷ During the first Gulf War, President George H. W. Bush called upon the Iraqis to rise up and overthrow Saddam Husayn. When Saddam was forced to withdraw from Kuwait and seemed weakened, the people did just that. It is alleged that 17 of 19 provinces were lost to the Ba'th government in the popular uprisings of March and April, 1991. In major Shi'ite population centers such as Basra, Nasiriyah, and Najaf, local Shi'ite religious figures emerged as popular political leaders supplanting Ba'th authority. The leaders were aware that the uprising could succeed only if it received US support. But the request for assistance by Grand Ayatollah Khu'i on March 11 was rejected by the US. The Ba'th military, seeing that the US had decided to remain neutral, massacred tens of thousands. It also rounded up the prominent clerics of Najaf and Karbala, seen as ringleaders of the southern revolt, and over 200 were executed or made to disappear. Others escaped into exile in Tehran or London. The property of many clerics was also expropriated by the regime. The major scholars who remained lived under virtual house arrest, their movements and statements closely watched by the Ba'th secret police. How many persons were killed and buried in mass graves may never be known, but it certainly ran into the tens of thousands. Iraqi Shi'ites have for the most part never forgiven the US for its callous policy of standing by during these massacres.

Najaf's seminary establishment was gutted and its student body shrank precipitously. The preeminent Grand Ayatollah in Najaf in the 1970s through his death in 1992 at the age of 93 was Iranian-born quietist Abu al-Qasim al-Khu'i. After his death, one of his sons, Taqi, garnered respect as an ayatollah in Najaf, but died under suspicious circumstances in an automobile accident in 1994. His remaining son, 'Abd al-Majid al-Khu'i, had relocated to London, where Khu'i senior had in 1989 established the Khoei Foundation (that is how the family spells the name in English). 'Abd al-Majid, then only 40, was too young to become the object of emulation for Iraqi Shi'ites, but he did become involved with Iraqi expatriates aiming for the overthrow of Saddam Husayn.

The repression of the Shi'ite establishment was so severe in the aftermath of the crushed uprising that Najaf became a shadow of its former self, and its twentieth century position as a center of Shi'ite leadership and learning was threatened with oblivion. In 1900, Nakash estimates that there had been 8,000 seminary students in Najaf, but the shrine cities declined under the British Mandate and the Sunni monar-

17. Keiko Sakai, "The 1991 Intifadah in Iraq: Seen through Analyses of the Discourses of Iraqi Intellectuals," in Keiko Sakai, ed., *Social Protests and Nation-Building in the Middle East and Central Asia* (Chiba, Japan: Institute of Developing Economies, 2003), pp. 156-172.

chy, so that by 1957 there were only about 2,000 students there. There may have been a slight rebound during the "golden age" of intellectual activities in the shrine cities during the 1960s and 1970s. But after the Ba'th crushed the movement of the late 1970s and began deporting Iraqis of Iranian heritage, Najaf's student body shrank once again, to only a few hundred.¹⁸ In the 1990s the decline became even more steep. Clerics pulled back from teaching anything but the most basic classes in Shi'ite law and practice, lest their teachings be viewed by the secret police as seditious. Friday prayers were for the most part banned, and clerics often declined to hold them in public.¹⁹ Qom, in Iran, emerged as the intellectual center of Shi'ism, as Najaf's campuses became a virtual ghost town. Najaf the city continued to flourish, as a provincial capital, growing to over 500,000 residents in the late 1990s from 134,000 in 1965. Reversing the historical situation that had obtained for two or three centuries, "town" thus became substantially more important than "gown."

Even in the tense and repressed circumstances of the 1990s, religious leadership did emerge in the shrine cities. Grand Ayatollahs 'Ali Sistani, 'Ali al-Gharawi, and Shaykh 'Ali Muhammad Burujirdi were among the more prominent, though Ayatollah Muhammad Sadiq al-Sadr also began to become respected for his small symbolic acts of defiance against the regime. Sistani, who was born around 1930 in Mashhad, had come to Najaf in 1952. He came to have the largest reputation outside Iraq, gradually succeeding to the position al-Khu'i had enjoyed, of chief legal and religious authority for many Shi'ites in Lebanon and elsewhere outside Iran and Iraq. He also garnered support from the older generation of Iraqi Shi'ites that had followed al-Khu'i. His growing reputation worried the Ba'th regime, which in 1996 launched an unsuccessful assassination attempt against him, in which two employees of his office were killed and two others wounded.²⁰ He was not the only target, or the only post-uprising leader to enjoy new prominence. In April of 1998, Grand Ayatollah Murtada Burujirdi was shot down by an unknown assailant, who escaped. In June of the same year, gunmen sprayed Kalashnikov fire at the car of Grand Ayatollah Ali Gharawi, killing him and three others in the car. The regime attempted to imply that the deaths were the result of internecine fighting within the clerical establishment, and executed several minor Shi'ite clerics whom it accused of the assassinations.²¹ No one inside the Shi'ite community doubted that these were the actions of Ba'th Party death squads.

THE SADR MOVEMENT IN THE 1990s

An up-and-coming figure in the 1990s was Muhammad Sadiq al-Sadr. His rival, Sistani, enjoyed the greatest reputation as a scholar and a jurist, especially outside

18. Nakash, *The Shi'is of Iraq*, pp.256, 259; he gives only 150 as the number of Najaf seminarians in the 1980s; this seems low for that period; see a higher number cited in Footnote 19.

19. Mukhtar Asadi, *Al-Sadr al-Thani: al-shahid wa'l-shahid, al-zahira wa-rudud al-fi'l* [Sadr II: The Witness and the Martyr; the Phenomenon and the Reaction], ([Iran]: Mu'assasat al-A'raf, 1999), pp. 53-54; he says in the 1980s the number of students fell to 700. See the preceding footnote for another estimate.

20. *Al-Hayat*, Dec. 3, 1996, via BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, Dec. 4, 1996.

21. *Al-Thawra*, March 14, 1999, via BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, March 17, 1999.

Iraq. Sistani's cautiousness about getting involved in politics, however, appears to have made many local Iraqis impatient with him. The more militant younger generation of Iraqi Shi'ites turned to Muhammad Sadiq, a cousin of the martyred revolutionary Muhammad Baqir al-Sadr, who was executed in 1980. Muhammad Sadiq was born March 23, 1943, into a prominent clerical family. He married the daughter of his paternal uncle, who bore to him four sons, Mustafa, Muqtada, Mu'ammal, and Murtada. The first three of these married daughters of Muhammad Baqir al-Sadr. He also had two daughters. Educated in the seminary founded by Muhammad Baqir al-Sadr, he received his certificates of independent legal reasoning (*ijazat al-ijtihad*) in 1977, when he was only 34. The diplomas were granted by Muhammad Baqir al-Sadr and Abu al-Qasim al-Khu'i. He studied law with Ruhullah Khomeini (who labored in exile in Najaf 1964-1988). Muhammad Sadiq had a wide-ranging intellect. He not only excelled in the Islamic branches of knowledge, but also learned fluent English, and studied psychology and history. Al-Asadi says that his history tutor, Dr. Fadil Husayn, considered him his best student and presented him with a rare copy of *The Paris Commune* (presumably the one authored by Karl Marx).²² This anecdote suggests the way in which leftist and Marxist influences circulated even in clerical circles in the shrine cities, a phenomenon that went back at least to the 1950s. Muhammad Sadiq wrote a Shi'ite commentary on the 1789 "Rights of Man" issued by the French revolutionaries.

Muhammad Sadiq was briefly imprisoned by the Ba'th in 1972 and again (with over two dozen others) in 1974. The second time, he was tortured, though he escaped the fate of five of his colleagues who were secretly executed.²³ On his release in 1975, he turned to Shi'ite mysticism (*al-'irfan*), and engaged in ascetic practices. His self-denial went to the extent that Muhammad Baqir al-Sadr advised him to be more moderate. *'Irfan* is a Shi'ite form of individualistic Sufism, and although some clerics have been attracted by it, it is unusual for someone so centrally located in the seminaries to pursue it (though Khomeini also had a keen interest in the works of medieval Sufis). Muhammad Sadiq studied the subject with a common wage-earner in Najaf, provoking astonishment. When pressed on the issue, he explained that closeness to God does not depend on knowledge, but rather on the goodness of the self, and he cited the prophetic saying, "God has hidden his saints among his servants."²⁴ He remained a mystic all his life, and the egalitarian ethical and spiritual outlook it fostered appears to have made him especially beloved by the poor and the common people.

Under the influence of Khomeini and of Muhammad Baqir al-Hakim, Muhammad Sadiq came to believe in the necessity to establish an Islamic state. Indeed, he main-

22. Al-Asadi, *Al-Sadr al-Thani*, pp. 28-29.

23. 'Adil Ra'uf, *Muhammad Muhammad Sadiq al-Sadr: marja'iyat al-maydan: mashru'a al-thaghayyiri wa-waqa'i' al-ighthiyal* [Muhammad Muhammad Sadiq al-Sadr: *The Religious Leadership of the Arena: His Transformational Plan and the Facts of the Assassination.*] (Damascus: Markaz al-'Iraqi li'l-'Ilam wa-al-Dirasat, 1999), p. 92; Phebe Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq* (Boulder, Co.: Westview Press, 1985), p. 237.

24. Al-Asadi, *al-Sadr al-Thani*, pp. 29-30.

tained that Islamic law could not be fully implemented without such a state. In 1984, four years after the execution of his cousin, "Sadr I" (Muhammad Baqir al-Sadr), he began functioning as an object of emulation for lay Shi'ites. He was imprisoned for a third time after the 1991 uprising, for having issued a strong statement in its support.²⁵ On his release, he threw himself into organizing the Shi'ite community, especially in populous East Baghdad. He established informal Shi'ite courts that would adjudicate issues among Shi'ites outside the secular Ba'thist legal system. He also gained wide influence among the settled tribes. Unlike most clerics, he worked with tribal leaders to find ways of addressing clan customs and law in the framework of Shi'ite jurisprudence.²⁶

He took increasingly controversial stances as the 1990s progressed, forbidding membership in the ruling Ba'th Party and forbidding Iraqis to hold Friday prayers in the name of the secular authority, "The Leader-President" (i.e. Saddam Husayn). He forbade cooperation with the Mujahidin-e Khalq, an anti-Khomeinist Iranian guerrilla group that was given bases in Iraq by the Ba'th. He accepted Khomeini's theory of the guardianship of the jurispudent, which required ultimate clerical control of society, and called upon his students and congregations to establish a state like it in Iraq. He condemned women for coming in public unveiled, saying that for even one hair of her head to show is religiously prohibited.²⁷ He is also said to have ruled that even Christian women living in Muslim societies must veil.

He took hard line stances against Israel and the United States, maintaining that if only the Shi'ite clerics would unite; they could easily defeat Israel. A recording of his Friday sermon for December 25, 1998, reveals his congregants chanting, "No, no to falsehood; No, no to America; No, no to Israel; No, no to imperialism; No, no to arrogance; No, no to Satan!" He made war against the influence of American popular culture, and discouraged his followers from wearing clothing with American labels. He scolded one couple who had put their toddler in American clothes, saying words to the effect that "Why do you imitate the West, when they try to subject you to their monopoly! Think! Analyze!"²⁸

Muhammad Sadiq al-Sadr criticized Grand Ayatollah Sistani for locking the outer door of his office, thus barring casual visitors, after the assassinations of Gharawi and Burujirdi. He said that if this were done as a sign of mourning and as a protest, it was understandable, but if it was done out of fear, there was nothing to fear. He also developed a theory of the "silent jurisprudent" and the "speaking jurisprudent," saying that quietist Shi'ite leaders implicitly upheld the oppressive status quo, and insisting that the only ethical course for an object of emulation was to speak out against tyranny. This harsh condemnation of Sistani and other quietist clerics in Najaf provoked a severe split in the Shi'ite population. He appointed as his successor Sayyid Kazim al-Ha'iri. An Iraqi cleric resident in Qom, Iran, and associated with the al-

25. Ra'uf, *Sadiq al-Sadr*, p. 92.

26. Ra'uf, pp. 113 ff.

27. Al-Asadi, *Al-Sadr al-Thani*, p. 64

28. Ra'uf, *Sadiq al-Sadr*, pp. 207, 217.

Da'wa Party, al-Ha'iri had also embraced Khomeini's theory of *vilayat-e faqih* or the rule of the clerical jurist and had attempted to subordinate the Iranian branch of al-Da'wa to the authority of the Supreme Jurist (Khomeini and then Khamenei) in Iran.²⁹

Despite the Ba'th prohibition on the holding of Friday prayers, Muhammad Sadiq insisted on trying to revive them, giving moving and defiant sermons at his mosque in Kufa on social issues that thrilled his congregations. He sent representatives (*wukala'*) to mosques throughout Iraq, but especially in East Baghdad, who opened the mosques on Fridays and preached to crowds as large as 2,000, despite Ba'th opposition. His representatives were tightly networked and had the reputation of being young, upright and highly competent. Unlike those of other Objects of Emulation, his representatives were forbidden to represent anyone but him, an exclusivism that clashed with pluralistic Najaf tradition.³⁰ He considered holding Friday prayers to be an unambiguous duty, even though this was a minority position in Shi'ite legal thought, because they were a symbol of Islam at a time and place where it was under attack. Crowds began chanting slogans at the prayers such as "Our Prophet is Muhammad, our leader is Muhammad, our messiah is Muhammad," and "Our first is Muhammad, our middle is Muhammad, and our end is Muhammad." The middle term, their leader, was of course Muhammad Sadiq al-Sadr himself. This adulation seems to have gone well beyond the typical veneration for an "object of emulation." In one of his last sermons, he compared Saddam Husayn to the medieval Umayyad Caliph al-Mutawakkil, who is vilified by Shi'ites for his persecution of them.³¹ The Ba'th regime was extremely disturbed by these sentiments, and by Muhammad Sadiq's defiance in holding the Friday prayers and in establishing a dense network of activist mosques. One of his fatwas is said to have stipulated that it was not wrong to kill a Ba'thist persecutor, and he met with some members of the paramilitary Badr Corps, based in Iran, which snuck across the border to strike at Ba'thist targets in Iraq.³²

Al-Hayat newspaper reported that Ba'th internal security warned Muhammad Sadiq about his defiance in early 1999, but was rebuffed.³³ On February 18, 1999, he was gunned down in his car with sons Mustafa and Mu'ammal as he was driving home from his office on the outskirts of Najaf. Southern Iraq erupted in demonstrations and riots, which were brutally put down. Over 100 were killed in Najaf, and 54 more in East Baghdad, while demonstrations spread to provincial cities. The total death toll was put at 200.

After Muhammad Sadiq's death, Iraqis were divided on to whom to pledge their religious allegiance. Some followed Sistani, while others turned to Muhammad Sadiq's appointed successor, Sayyid Kazim al-Ha'iri.³⁴ The latter, however, had the disadvan-

29. Al-Asadi, *Al-Sadr al-Thani*, pp. 11 ff., 94, 99-100, 109, 221-222; Khursan, *Hizb al-Da'wa*, pp. 411-420.

30. Ra'uf, *Sadiq al-Sadr*, pp. 142 ff., pp. 160-161.

31. Al-Asadi, *Al-Sadr al-Thani*, 57-63.

32. Ra'uf, *Sadiq al-Sadr*, pp. 216-217.

33. *Al-Hayat*, February 22, 1999 (Arabic text).

34. *Al-Hayat*, March 9, 1999, BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, March 11, 1999.

tage of residing in Qom and of being somewhat distant from the daily realities in Iraq. The young Muqtada al-Sadr (born in the early to mid-1970s), one of Muhammad Sadiq's surviving sons, now went underground, using his father's networks to establish a tight, clandestine organization among the poor and repressed Shi'ites of Kufa and East Baghdad. He had not finished his studies and so was not a legitimate Object of Emulation for the laity in his own right. But he won their hearts as a leader. He retained the loyalty of many of his father's devotees and agents, and, unbeknownst to the outside world, established the most effective religious opposition movement in Iraq. His followers became known as al-Sadriyyun, or the Sadrists, and their organization was Jama'at al-Sadr al-Thani, the Sadr II Movement. They were characterized by a Puritanism, militancy and intolerance that was very different from the genteel Najaf tradition. They held that only the legal rulings of Muhammad Sadiq al-Sadr could be followed, rejecting any other religious authority. They insisted that the leadership of Iraqi Shi'ites be invested in Iraqis, a slam at Iranian-born Sistani. The strict code of moral conduct to which they aspired, their opposition to movie theaters, the serving of alcohol, and the appearance of women unveiled in public, on the other hand, simply reflected the social and religious milieu of Najaf itself.³⁵ For the moment, they constituted a proscribed and clandestine movement, but political events would soon allow them to make claims on local power.

THE SADR MOVEMENT AFTER THE FALL OF THE BA'TH

Muqtada al-Sadr, underground in Najaf, saw the fall of the Ba'th coming in the spring of 2003, and arranged for the extensive mosque network of the Sadr Movement to be reactivated as soon as the government collapsed under the weight of the Anglo-American invasion. He was aided in this endeavor by the quietism of his rivals, who had acquiesced in the Ba'th prohibition on Friday prayers, and so had not been running mosques. Even before the Saddam regime fell on April 9, Sadr Movement militias rose against the Ba'th and expelled its police and soldiers from al-Thawra (Saddam City), which they promptly renamed Sadr City. (Accounts differ as to whether this uprising began on April 7 or April 8.) The mosques were immediately reopened, at least for organizational purposes, by Sadr Movement preachers such as Shaykhs Muhammad al-Fartusi and 'Ala' al-Mas'udi. On April 8, Sayyid Kazim al-Ha'iri, the appointee of Sadr II living in Qom, Iran, issued a fatwa calling on Iraq's Shi'ites to ignore the Americans and simply take control of Iraq themselves, fighting against the cultural corruption the US would bring with it. He also made Muqtada his representative in Iraq, more or less giving him authority to do as he pleased in al-Ha'iri's name. Muqtada sent money around, made appointments of followers to take over public institutions, and signed numerous decrees posted on walls throughout Iraq.³⁶

35. Fayyad, "Shahid.," April 28, 2003.

36. Craig Smith, "Shiite Clerics Make Bid for Power," *New York Times*, April 26, 2003.

The mosques and their Sadr Movement preachers became centers of power. They organized private militias of young men to go out and take control of the major hospitals in East Baghdad.³⁷ They organized neighborhood patrols to reestablish security with the disappearance of the Ba'th police. The Sadr Movement militias raided old Ba'th weapons depots and came away with stockpiles of Kalashnikov machine guns and rocket propelled grenade launchers, along with massive quantities of ammunition. They stored these arms in mosques and safe houses.

THE BATTLE FOR NAJAF AND THE DEATH OF AL-KHU'I

Muqtada faced three challengers for authority in the post-Ba'th environment. One was Grand Ayatollah Sistani and his colleagues at the Najaf seminaries, with their quietist political tradition and their rejection of clerical rule. Another was the Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI), which had been based in Tehran since 1982, and the members of which began returning to Iraq even before the Ba'th had fallen. SCIRI maintained a paramilitary wing, the Badr Corps, of about 10,000 trained men, and these began infiltrating back into Iraq. A third was a new force, 'Abd al-Majid al-Khu'i (or al-Khoei), mentioned earlier in this article. He was flown to Kuwait by the Anglo-American Coalition that had invaded Iraq, and then given resources to go to Najaf around April 3. It has been alleged that al-Khu'i had been given \$13 million by the CIA, and began spreading money around Najaf in order to line up clients and begin taking over the city politically.³⁸ It has also been said that he was accompanied by a CIA field officer and some Iraqi-American aides detailed to him, and sometimes by Coalition troops.³⁹ His family and admirers dispute the CIA connection, but even his companions admit that he came to Najaf with American help. Now 50, and the son of the former Object of Emulation who had dominated Najaf for two decades until his death in 1992, al-Khu'i had the credentials to make a serious bid to become the chief religious and political authority among the Shi'ites.

Muqtada's rougher followers in Najaf viewed al-Khu'i's activities with extreme suspicion and anger. He was everything they stood against. They rejected the religious authority of anyone but Sadr II and his successors. They rejected clerics from Iranian lineages as leaders of Iraqi Shi'ites (conveniently ignoring the Iranian antecedents of the al-Sadrs themselves). They rejected Western influence, and saw al-Khu'i as little more than an American puppet. Al-Khu'i was attempting to get control of the shrine of Imam 'Ali, among the holiest sites in Iraq. Saddam's Fida'iyun had established themselves in the shrine and stockpiled grenades and ammunition there, firing at US

37. Lara Marlowe, "Islamic Radicals Ready to Reach for Power," *Irish Times*, April 17, 2003; Juan Cole, "Shiite Religious Parties Fill Vacuum in Southern Iraq," *Middle East Report Online*, April 22, 2003, at <http://www.merip.org/mero/mero042203.html>.

38. Knut Royce with Muhammad Bazzi, "Cleric's Killing a Setback to US: CIA Lost an Ally and \$13 Million," *Newsday*, May 3, 2003.

39. David Ignatius, "Omens of Trouble in Iraq," *Washington Post*, April 29, 2003.

troops from it in hopes of tricking them into harming the shrine and enraging the Shi'ite public. The US military declined to fall for the trick. Eventually Saddam's forces became so exposed that they departed the shrine. The Sadr Movement militia immediately replaced them and claimed the weapons stockpile there.⁴⁰

One of al-Khu'i's companions, Ma'd Fayyad, an Iraqi journalist, described what happened next in an eyewitness account.⁴¹ His account is largely corroborated by the narrative of Jabar Khani Ja'far, the deputy keeper of Imam 'Ali's shrine.⁴² Al-Khu'i decided that the easiest way to assert control over the shrine, wresting it from the Sadr Movement, was to rehabilitate the shrine keeper, Haydar Rafi'i Kalidar. The Kalidars had overseen the shrine for generations, and so al-Khu'i seems to have believed they would have legitimacy. But Kalidar had allowed himself to be co-opted by the Ba'th department of religious affairs, and had gained the reputation among many Najaf Shi'ites as a collaborator with Saddam Husayn as a result. The Sadr Movement, which mourned the martyrdom of Sadr II at the hands of Ba'th assassins, was particularly bitter about prominent Shi'ites who they felt had secured their lives by collaborating. On April 9, al-Khu'i told Kalidar to start coming back to his office at the shrine, an attempt to install him there. Kalidar was there on April 10 when al-Khu'i and his companions performed the rites of "visitation" or pilgrimage to the shrine.

Fayyad says that an angry crowd gathered in the square outside the shrine, chanting slogans in favor of Muqtada al-Sadr. Determined to prevent Kalidar from becoming established at the shrine, they demanded that he be surrendered to them. They were also enraged that al-Khu'i was accompanied by Mahir al-Yasiri, an Iraqi Shi'ite settled in Dearborn, Michigan, who was part of an expatriate group helping the US forces and who was wearing a US flack jacket. The encounter became a firefight when someone in al-Khu'i's party, perhaps al-Khu'i himself, fired a pistol over the heads of the Sadr Movement mob. They replied with gunfire, and killing al-Yasiri. Eyewitness Ma'd Fayyad says that after an hour-long standoff, al-Khu'i and his party surrendered. He then maintains that al-Khu'i and others were bound and taken to Muqtada al-Sadr's house, but that the latter declined to admit them and that the word came back out that they should be killed in the square. Fayyad admits, however, that he had loosened his ropes and escaped before this point, so that he may have had this story second hand. Other accounts suggest a more spontaneous mob action, in which the crowd closed on al-Khu'i and Kalidar and stabbed them to death. If the Anglo-American Coalition had in fact entertained hope that al-Khu'i could exercise a moderating influence in Najaf, the attempt died with him. There seems little doubt that al-Khu'i fell to angry members of the Sadr Movement.

40. Fayyad, "*Shahid 'ala Rihlat al-Khu'i ila al-'Iraq*," ["Witness to the Journey of al-Khu'i to Iraq"], *Al-Sharq al-Awsat*, April 30, 2003. (Second Part of a two-part story previously cited.)

41. Ma'd Fayyad, "*Ighthiyal al-Za'im al-Shi'i 'Abd al-Majid al-Khu'i fi Najaf*," [Assassination of the Shi'ite Leader 'Abd al-Majid al-Khu'i in Najaf], *Al-Sharq al-Awsat*, April 11, 2003.

42. Meg Laughlin and Soraya Sarhaddi Nelson, "Shiite Killing Described," Knight Ridder News Service, April 27, 2003.

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Crowds from the Jama'at al-Sadr al-Thani, including 50 armed men, now surrounded the houses of Grand Ayatollah 'Ali Sistani and his colleague Ayatollah Muhammad Sa'id al-Hakim, both of whom had been rivals of Sadr II and both of whom he had criticized by name. They gave the two 48 hours to leave Najaf, demanding that the Iraqi Shi'ite leadership be solely in the hands of Iraqis.⁴³ Sistani had, however, already left his home and gone into hiding, which was one reason al-Khu'i had never been able to meet him. The mobs made a similar demand of other major clerics, including the Afghan ayatollah, Ishaq al-Fayyad. The crisis lasted until Monday, April 14, when city elders brought armed tribal elements loyal to them into the town to restore order. The Sadr Movement crowds were dispersed and a modicum of security was regained.⁴⁴ The US military forces were, throughout, careful not to intervene directly, because of the sensitivities of Shi'ites to the presence of foreigners at the shrine. Since the CIA had long cultivated the Iraqi tribes, and had spent millions to encourage them to rise against Saddam during the war, it is not impossible that the tribal take-over of the city was in part the Agency's doing. In the aftermath, the US forces appointed a Sunni ex-Ba'th officer who claimed to have turned against Saddam during the war as the mayor of Najaf, and he kept order with his supporters until he was finally dismissed two months later for corruption and kidnapping.

The battle for Najaf was inconclusive, though it is likely that Sistani retained his position mainly among the older inhabitants, while many of the youth gravitated to Muqtada. When for the first time Muqtada came out into the open and led Friday prayers at his father's old mosque in Kufa, on April 18, thousands attended. Sistani and his senior colleagues remained much more circumspect about coming into public, for which Muqtada derided them. At his first Friday prayers sermon after the war, on April 18 in Kufa, Muqtada thanked God rather than the US "for religious freedom and for liberating us from dictatorship." Thousands had flocked to hear him from among local laborers and farmers, suggesting the class base of his movement. He complained about the lack of electricity and water, and implied that the US was deliberately withholding services. He also criticized then-SCIRI leader Muhammad Baqir al-Hakim, saying, "Religious people who went into exile should not have left. The country needed them." Since Muqtada's father died for his insistence on remaining, one can understand his bitterness. The slam at al-Hakim was more than rhetorical. Shaykh 'Ali al-Maliki, the leader of the paramilitary branch of the Sadr Movement, told journalist Lara Marlowe that his forces had driven Badr Corps fighters out of East Baghdad on April 17. She concluded that the rumors that Shi'ite militias were fighting off "Ba'thists" and "Wahhabis" were a cover for internecine battles among Shi'ite forces themselves.⁴⁵

43. "Jama'at Muqtada al-Sadr tuhasir Manzil al-Sistani," ["The Muqtada al-Sadr Movement Besieges the House of Al-Sistani,"] *Al-Sharq al-Awsat*, April 14, 2003.

44. "Tadakhkhul Shuyukh Qaba'il al-Furat," ["Intervention of the Shaykhs of the Euphrates Tribes"], *Al-Sharq al-Awsat*, April 15, 2003.

45. Lara Marlowe, report from Najaf, *The Scotsman*, April 19, 2003.

AL-THAWRA TOWNSHIP OR "SADR CITY"

The more important political action took place in the poor quarters of East Baghdad or al-Thawra, now informally known as Sadr City, where the Sadr Movement became a "youth movement" *par excellence*.⁴⁶ Journalist Muhammad Husni reported firsthand on April 17 that Sadr Movement militias had filled the power vacuum created by the fall of the Ba'th Party, establishing patrols and engaging in firefights with infiltrators. They had also organized the return of looted goods, and were providing food aid from the mosques. He reported strong anti-American sentiments among the Friday prayers leaders at the Sadr mosques, who insisted that the US leave as soon as possible. The movement leaders told Husni that the enemy infiltrators were "Arab volunteers," with the implication that they were al-Qaeda or Sunni Arab nationalists.⁴⁷ We have already seen that Marlowe concluded they were actually fighting the Badr Corps.

The following day, on Friday, April 18, the Sadr movement helped staged one of the largest demonstrations yet seen in post-war Iraq, with an estimated 20,000 Baghdadis coming out for it. Sadr Movement supporter Shaykh Muhammad al-Fartusi and self-styled "head of security" gave a rousing sermon at the al-Hikmah mosque in al-Thawra, saying that the Shi'ites would not accept a brand of democracy "that allows Iraqis to say what they want but gives them no say in their destiny," adding, "this form of government would be worse than that of Saddam Husayn." He urged believers to follow the decrees of the Najaf religious establishment (by which he meant Muqtada al-Sadr), and listed a four-point code of conduct, stressing that music, imitation of Westerners, women going unveiled, and preferring tribal custom to Islamic law are all forbidden. After Friday prayers (where the congregants received their instructions), crowds poured into the streets, demanding that the US depart from Iraq and insisting on an Islamic state. Placards read, "Get out Now," and "No to Bush, no to Saddam, Yes to Islam!" The largely Shi'ite crowds were joined by Sunni Islamists. A supporting large demonstration was held the same day in the holy shrine city of Karbala, spurred on by the sermon of Sadr Movement preacher Kazim al-'Ibadi al-Nasiri at the mosque attached to the shrine of Imam Husayn, also demanding an immediate departure of US troops, saying "We reject this foreign occupation, which is a new imperialism."⁴⁸

The religious rites of commemorative pilgrimage carried out by Shi'ites to Karbala that began over the weekend of April 19 and 20 did not, as some radicals had

46. A good overview is al-Amin, "*Baghdad allati lam taf'al*," and by the same author, "*Madina rahkumuha shabakat masajid al-Hawza al-Natiqa*," ["City Governed by the Networks of the Mosques of the Speaking Religious Authority," *Al-Hayat*, July 12, 2003, both parts of a 6-part series on Muqtada and Iraqi Shi'ism.

47. Muhammad Husni, "*Rijal al-Din al-Shi'a yandafi'una li mil' al-Firagh al-Siyasi fi al-'Iraq*," [Shi'ite Clerics Rush in to Fill the Political Void in Iraq"], *Al-Quds al-'Arabi*, April 18, 2003.

48. Hasan Hafiz, "*Muzaharat Hashida*," ["Mass Demonstrations"], *Al-Quds al-'Arabi*, April 19, 2003; Mohamed Hasni, "Iraq's Friday Prayers Issue Warnings to US," *Agence France-Presse*, April 19, 2003; "The Search Continues," *Monday Morning* (Beirut), April 28, 2003.

hoped, turn into an anti-American political protest. The large crowds, in their hundreds of thousands, remained peaceful and apparently more interested in the pilgrimage itself than politics, though a small group occasionally chanted against the US occupation. Many followers of Sadr II stopped off at his tomb in Najaf to pay their respects.⁴⁹ Shaykh Fartusi visited Najaf over that weekend to get instructions from Muqtada, and returned to Baghdad late Sunday, after the curfew. He was stopped by Marines at a checkpoint, and they found a pistol in his car. They arrested him, apparently unaware of his importance. The next day, Monday April 21, the Sadr Movement mobilized and bused 5,000 protesters to the center of Baghdad, who chanted for the release of Fartusi. The rallies of the previous Friday had been much less visible, because they took place in neighborhoods. This demonstration was the largest yet staged at the center of the city. It was repeated on Tuesday, but then the Marines, finally aware of their mistake, released Fartusi. He maintained that he had been beaten and mistreated, saying that the US was "worse than Saddam."⁵⁰ The Sadr Movement continued to express strong anti-Western feelings, with gangs threatening and closing down liquor stores and cinemas, and enforcing the veil on women. Some Sadr Movement clerics nevertheless cooperated thereafter with US military community development efforts, and they continued to have great sway in East Baghdad, supplying food and other aid paid for by Iranian sources.⁵¹

Muqtada has taken a rejectionist but non-violent stance toward the US presence and its efforts to establish a new Iraqi government. He was invited by Jay Garner, the first US civil administrator of the country, to participate in a leadership conference held at Nasiriyya on April 28, but refused.⁵² He said, "I don't want the chair of the government because it will be controlled by the US and I don't want to be controlled by the US" Eyewitness journalist Nir Rosen reports that, "When asked if that meant he would want to attack the Americans, he snorted and replied with the colloquial Arabic equivalent of 'Why would I want to f**k myself?'"⁵³ The al-Da'wa Party also opposed that meeting, because it was being held by a former US General under Pentagon auspices. SCIRI sent a low-level delegation. Later, when Garner was replaced by civilian L. Paul Bremer III, both SCIRI and al-Da'wa proved ultimately willing to join the new Governing Council that declared itself on July 13 after negotiations with the US. Muqtada, however, refused, denouncing the plan at his June 14 Friday sermon at Kufa.⁵⁴ He later expressed severe reservations that the Americans could establish a just government in Iraq, since they were opposed to a Shi'ite state.

Muqtada called on May 2 for strict Islamic law to be applied to Iraq's Christians, as well, including the prohibition on bars and on allowing women to appear

49. Richard Lloyd Parry, "Pilgrimage represents Rebirth of Shia Faith," *The Times*, April 21, 2003 (reporting from Najaf).

50. Nadiya Mahdid, "Al-Quwwat al-Amrikiyya tufrij 'an Rajul Din," ["American Forces Release Cleric"], *Al-Sharq al-Awsat*, April 23 2003; same author, "Al-Fartusi," *Al-Sharq al-Awsat*, 24 April 2003; Craig S. Smith, "Shiite Clerics make Bid for Power," *New York Times*, April 26, 2003.

51. Anthony Shadid, "Troops Test Cooperation With Clerics," *Washington Post*, May 23, 2003.

52. Nadim Ladki, "Garner to Meet Prominent Iraqis," *Reuters*, April 27, 2003 (via Lexis Nexis).

53. Nir Rosen, "Shiite Contender Eyes Iraq's Big Prize," *Time Magazine Online*, May 3, 2003.

54. *Al-Zaman*, June 16, 2003.

unveiled.⁵⁵ This ruling appears to be a restatement of one of his father's fatwas, but this time the al-Sadr family had the authority to make it stick in some parts of Iraq. In contrast, Grand Ayatollah Sistani issued a statement saying that the Najaf establishment had not called for forcible veiling. Muqtada also forbade Iraqi merchants to deal with Kuwaitis, and his mentor Ayatollah Kazim al-Ha'iri forbade Iraqis to sell land to Jews, calling for such Jewish buyers to be killed.⁵⁶ The Sadr Movement stranglehold on power in al-Thawra continued to be strengthened in May, June, and July. Sadrists established informal Shi'ite courts in mosques to deal with local disputes, including over burglary and murder. Sadr II had run such courts clandestinely, but now they were the de facto tribunals of justice in many neighborhoods.

The al-Muhsin Mosque was a key Sadr Movement institution in East Baghdad. Shaykh Kazim 'Ibadi al-Nasiri called in his sermon on May 9 there for vigilante reprisal killings of Ba'thists, referring to a fatwa of Ayatollah Kazim al-Ha'iri.⁵⁷ In his sermon from the same mosque on May 16, Shaykh Muhammad Fartusi thundered, "The cinemas in Al-Saadun Street show indecent films. I warn them: if in a week they do not change, we will act differently with them. We warn women and the go-betweens who take them to the Americans: If in a week from now they do not change their attitude, the murder of these women is sanctioned (by Islam). This warning also goes out to sellers of alcohol, radios and televisions. The torching of cinemas would be permitted," he said, if cinemas did not change their ways.⁵⁸ In fact, many liquor shops, cinemas, and cosmetic shops were closed by threats or in some instances fire bombings.

DEMONSTRATIONS

The Sadr Movement attempted to provoke numerous demonstrations in Baghdad and Basra, calling for a withdrawal of Anglo-American troops, as a way of showing its popular influence. On May 14, hundreds of Shi'ites demonstrated in downtown Baghdad for an Islamic government, saying that it should be Shi'ite because they had suffered most under Saddam. On May 15, Shaykh al-'Ibadi al-Nasiri preached a thunderous sermon to 30,000 congregants at the Imam Sadr Mosque in East Baghdad, accusing US troops of using night vision goggles to see through women's clothes and of passing out pornography to children in the form of candy wrappers. He all but called for terror attacks on US forces. Ironically, the US forces had provided special security to the mosque. His sermon appears to have alarmed Muqtada al-Sadr back in Najaf, and it was announced that it had not been approved and that henceforth the

55. Mohamed Hasni, "Sadr Calls for Iraqi Christians to Follow Islamic Law," *Middle East Online*, May 2, 2003.

56. "Iraqi Fatwa Bans Trading with Kuwaitis," *Arab Times* (Kuwait), July 12, 2003; "Cleric Calls for Killing of Jews who Buy Land," *Reuter*, June 28, 2003.

57. James Drummond and Nicholas Pelham, "Shia Clerics Urge Faithful to Attack Returning Ba'athists," *Financial Times*, May 10, 2003.

58. "Shiite Leader in Baghdad Warns Women, Alcohol Sellers, Cinemas," *Agence France Presse*, May 16, 2003 (via Lexis Nexis).

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Najaf religious establishment (i.e. Muqtada) would have to pre-approve such sermons. Muqtada has steadfastly refused to sanction violence against Americans. That weekend, Shi'ite clerics like Shaykh Fartusi began calling for a million man march on Monday, May 19, the Shi'ite commemoration of the death of the Prophet Muhammad, which they had been forbidden by the Ba'th to mark on a day different from the one honored by the Sunnis. On May 19, Shi'ites conducted the commemorative procession to a mosque, and about 10,000 Sadrists turned the occasion into an anti-American rally, demanding an Iraqi government overseen by the Najaf ayatollahs and the departure of the Americans.⁵⁹ Given the difference between Fartusi's predictions and the actual turnout, and given that even it depended on the holy day procession, this outcome can only be seen as a setback for the Sadr Movement. Most Iraqi Shi'ites clearly were still willing to give the US time.

On Thursday, May 29, hundreds of Shi'ites, including 50 clerics, gathered in downtown Baghdad to chant against the US for using troops to make arrests of armed clerics in Najaf. They also chanted against Israel, and called the US "the number one source of terrorism."⁶⁰ The same day, a Baghdad cinema near the demonstration was rocked by a grenade attack, after defying demands from the Sadr movement "punishment committee" to close down. On June 3, hundreds of Sadr Movement Shi'ites demonstrated against the US in downtown Baghdad, protesting the brief detention of Shaykh Jasim Sa'adi on weapons charges. Among those protesting were members of the breakaway Fadilah Party, a faction of the Sadr Movement headed by Shaykh Muhammad Ya'qubi.⁶¹ On Saturday, June 21, 2,500 Shi'ites demonstrated in downtown Baghdad at the behest of Sadr Movement preachers, demanding that the Najaf religious authorities establish and supervise the new Iraqi government, and denouncing the Americans as occupiers. This protest came at a time when US civil administrator L. Paul Bremer seemed determined to relegate Iraqi leaders to a merely advisory role. During his Friday Prayers sermon, Shaykh Kazim 'Ibadi al-Nasiri had told his 10,000 congregants that they were engaged in a "clash of civilizations," and urged them to gather downtown during his Friday prayers sermon. They were joined by worshippers from Kazimiyya and Shuala.⁶²

June saw three big demonstrations against the British authorities in Basra, on June 1 (5,000), June 7 (2,000), and June 15 (10,000). The BBC online reported of the June 7 rally, "They were said to have rallied on the instructions of an organisation named after Ayatollah Mohammed Sadeq al-Sadr . . ."⁶³ Although Shi'ite unrest in

59. "Shiites call for Iraqi government free of foreign influences," Deutsche Press Agentur, 15 May 2003; Warren Richey, "Reverberations from an Iraq Prayer Meeting," *Christian Science Monitor*, May 19, 2003; "Shiites openly mark Mohammed's birthday in Iraq as lawlessness still reigns," AFP, May 19, 2003.

60. "Hundreds of Shiites hold anti-US rally in Baghdad," Agence France Presse, May 29, 2003.

61. "Iraqis protest at arrest of Shiite dignitary," Agence France Presse, June 3, 2003.

62. Patrick Tyler, "2,000 at Rally Demand Islamic Supervision of Elections," *New York Times*, June 22, 2003; Anthony Shadid, "Iraqi Shiite Leader Uneasy With U.S. Role," *Washington Post*, June 23, 2003.

63. "Basra protest against British presence," BBC News Online, June 7, 2003 at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/>
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Basra is often blamed on al-Hakim's Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq, the Sadr Movement is a considerable force in the city in its own right.⁶⁴ Still, the demands of the protesters were remarkably local, having to do with discontents about the way the British were running the city and with their appointees to the governing council.

FACTIONALISM

Muqtada al-Sadr made a trip to Iran for a week beginning June 7, meeting with high Iranian authorities and with his mentor, Ayatollah Kazim al-Ha'iri. Given the subsequent tension that developed between the two, this meeting may not have gone well. The Iranians had supplied food and other aid to Sadr Movement clerics in East Baghdad, allowing them to gain popularity by providing services to the people. Muqtada may have been seeking further such aid. If so, the Iranians wanted a quid pro quo. They wanted the exclusivist and sectarian Sadr Movement to avoid any further internal Shi'ite clashes such as had broken out over al-Khu'i's arrival in Najaf in early April. Former Iranian president and head of the Expediency Council, 'Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, said "All Iraqi Shiite groups and fighters, especially those of the Supreme Assembly for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq, should keep their unity and work for Iraq's interests by combatting internal and external conspiracies."⁶⁵

Rafsanjani's pleading was not entirely successful. By late June, Muqtada was telling journalist Hazim al-Amin that there was no coordination between him and the other Shi'ite leaders in Najaf, and that it was the fault of Grand Ayatollah Sistani and his colleagues, who were apolitical because they were not Iraqis. (This is a reference to his father's theory of the "al-Hawza al-Natiqa" or the "Speaking Religious Authority," the mantle of which Muqtada now claims). Al-Amin also reported that Sistani and Ayatollah Muhammad Baqir al-Hakim of SCIRI had grown closer, in hopes of uniting against the threat of the exclusivist and powerful Sadr Movement. Muqtada told him that he believes in the Khomeinist theory of the rule of the jurispudent, but

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1/hi/world/middle_east/2972308.stm ; "Iraqis protest against new British ruler in Basra," Agence France Presse, June 1, 2003; "Iraqis protest against British rule in Basra," Agence France Presse, June 15, 2003.

64. Andrzej Rybak, "Irak-Tagebücher: Basra holt Schwung für den Neubeginn," ["Iraq Diary: Basra gets Momentum for a New Beginning," *Financial Times Deutschland*, April 5, 2003 at <http://www.ftd.de/pw/in/1050940024444.html?nv=tn-rs>. He says, "Viele unterstützen den jungen Religionsgelehrten Muqtada al-Sadr aus Nadschaf, der gegen die Präsenz der USA in Irak... eintritt." [Many Support the Young Religious Scholar Muqtada al-Sadr of Najaf, who Stands against the US Presence in Iraq.]

65. "Iran's Rafsanjani Appeals for Unity Among Rival Iraqi Shiite Groups," Agence France-Presse, June 8, 2003. See also "Muqtada al-Sadr yabhath fi Qumm 'awdat al-Ha'iri ila al-Najaf," ["Muqtada al-Sadr discusses in Qom the Return of al-Ha'iri to Najaf"], *Al-Zaman*, June 6, 2003.

that the supreme jurisprudent of Iraq would be a different person than the supreme jurisprudent of Iran (among believers in the theory, a big debate has raged for over a decade over whether Iranian Supreme Jurisprudent 'Ali Khamenei's authority extends to all Shi'ites or is country-bound). Muqtada reaffirmed that he refused to cooperate with the American administration, but also declined to oppose it.⁶⁶

June and July witnessed an outbreak of fierce rivalry in Karbala between the Sadr Movement and followers of Grand Ayatollah Sistani over the right to preach in the mosque attached to the shrine of Imam Husayn, among the more prestigious venues in the Shi'ite world. An agreement was initially reached to alternate each Friday, but then in early July Muqtada issued a typically exclusivist decree that only Sadrist clerics had the right to lead prayers. On July 4, the two factions came to blows inside the shrine of the Imam, leaving the city polarized and tense.⁶⁷ In July, as well, the Sadr Movement and SCIRI quarreled over the shrine of Imam 'Ali in Najaf.

In early July, Muqtada, who is said to be on the brink of being an independent jurisprudent (*mujtahid*) and Object of Emulation himself, also began being critical of his supposed mentor, Ayatollah Kazim al-Ha'iri, for refusing to come back to Najaf from Qom, and suggesting that he did not after all recognize him as a superior.⁶⁸ For his part, according to the Iranian newspaper *Baztab*, al-Ha'iri began backing off his support for Muqtada, saying that offices dedicated to the memory of Sadr II should be closed except in Najaf, and that the activities of the Muslims should henceforth be conducted under the shadow of the Guardian (*Wali*) of the Muslims (i.e. al-Ha'iri himself).⁶⁹ If *Baztab* is to be believed, Al-Ha'iri was positioning himself to succeed to Sadr II and sideline Muqtada. He received some help, inadvertent or not, when on July 16 Shaykh Muhammad Ya'qubi finally declared himself an Object of Emulation, making formal the split of his al-Fadila group from the Muqtada loyalists. His followers demonstrated against threats to him in Najaf, though the Muqtada group maintained that he had no local support and just brought in some armed tribesmen to stage the demonstration. Ayatollah Kazim al-Ha'iri is said to have blessed Ya'qubi's schism, saying he had the prerequisites for being an Object of Emulation.⁷⁰

The movement of Muqtada al-Sadr seems likely to survive this minor schism, and it continued to show great popular strength through late summer. Sadrists appear to have been involved in riots against Marine patrols in Karbala in late July, resulting

66. Hazim al-Amin, "Arwiqat al-Hawzah fi al-Najaf tadijj bi inqisamat," [The Halls of the Hawza in Najaf are Riven with Divisions] *Al-Hayat*, June 27, 2003.

67. Hamza Hendawi, "Once Showcased as Example of Peace, Holy Shiite City now Moving in Opposite Direction," Associated Press, July 15, 2003.

68. Al-Amin, "Madina tahkumuha shabakat."

69. "Awj-giri-yi Tanish miyan-i Sadri-ha va Majlis-i A'la," ["Tensions Peak Between the Sadrists and SCIRI"] *Baztab*, July 13, 2003/22 Tir 1384 at <http://www.baztab.com/index.asp?ID=9120&Subject=News>

70. "Inshi'ab dar Sadriha," ["Split Among the Sadris"] *Baztab*, July 16, 2003/25 Tir 1384 at: <http://www.baztab.com/index.asp?ID=9299&Subject=News>; the Ya'qubi schism, which began last spring, is also reported by al-Amin, "Madina," and journalist Nir Rosen in Najaf kindly sent me an unpublished report he had done on al-Fadila. I am also grateful to Trudy Rubin of the *Philadelphia Inquirer* for sharing insights from her 3-week trip to Najaf and other Shiite sites in May-June, 2003.

in one dead and nine wounded when the Marines replied to gunfire and shot into the crowd. In a Friday sermon in early August, Muqtada called on the Marines to be tried for murder in accordance with the sharia. Sadrists were definitely involved in major riots in Basra the weekend of August 9-10. Followers of Muqtada have significant power in Basra, and are said to hold a third of the seats on the current city council. On August 15, Shi'ites in East Baghdad rioted against the United States because a military helicopter had blown a Shi'ite banner off a telecom tower. The banner invoked the promised one of Shi'ite Islam, the Imam Mahdi, and appears to have been placed on the tower by Sadrists who believe he is about to come back. Muqtada had announced that he would begin recruiting a militia called the "Mahdi Army," though he pledged it would be non-violent. Some 10,000 young men are said to have joined, and the banners put up in East Baghdad may have been in part celebrating the militia's formation. Muqtada continued to call for an immediate withdrawal from Iraq of American and British troops.

When Ayatollah Muhammad Baqir al-Hakim was killed along with nearly 100 others in a huge truck bomb in Najaf on August 29, SCIRI leaders began demanding an immediate US military withdrawal, as well. Because of religious sensitivities about close Marines patrols in Najaf, after the bombing the US civil administrator Paul Bremer winked at the emergence of armed paramilitaries in Najaf, including Badr Corps fighters trained by the Revolutionary Guards in Iran and members of Muqtada's Army of the Mahdi. The US military had been dead set against such paramilitaries appearing in public with arms, and indicated that it would not be tolerated for long. The bombing brought SCIRI and the Sadrists closer in their position on the Coalition military forces. It also removed an important rival to Muqtada, though Muhammad Baqir al-Hakim never had the young al-Sadr's widespread popularity, in any case. Muqtada's enemies among the Sunnis accused him of blaming them for the bombing and of provoking Shiites to expropriate their religious sites. The Sadr movement remains significant in Iraqi street politics despite its exclusion from the American-appointed Interim Governing Council and the new cabinet appointed in early September.⁷¹

Observers on the ground report that the Sadr Movement controls the major mosques, Shi'ite community centers, hospitals and soup kitchens in East Baghdad, Kufa and Samarra', and has a strong presence in Najaf, Karbala and Basra, as well. It is highly networked, and its preachers have taken a strong rhetorical line against what they view as an Anglo-American occupation. It is sectarian both in its demographic base (poor, urban and young) and its dedication to the themes of difference, antagonism and separation. Politically, it must be seen as a movement of the populist Right, seeking to impose religious authority on the public, to institute corporate techniques of control, to reduce women to second class citizens, to exclude foreign influence, and to subordinate the minority Sunnis to Shi'ite religious leadership.

71. A continuing chronicle of Shi'ite movements in contemporary Iraq, with citations, may be found at <http://www.juancole.com>; for these points, see the August and September 2003 archives.)

THE US AND SHI'ITE RELIGIOUS FACTIONS IN IRAQ ★ 565

Sadr Movement adherents differentiate themselves from middle class and wealthier, more secular Iraqis of the sort who controlled Iraq politically for most of the twentieth century. They decry the wearing of Western-made clothes, patronizing movie theaters that show Western films, drinking alcohol, and the appearance in public of unveiled women. They insist on the necessity of holding and attending Friday prayers at mosques. They also represent themselves as more socially conscious and caring than is the Westernized and individualistic Iraqi middle class. Their militias provided security to millions of Shi'ites in the spring and summer of 2003, at a time when the Iraqi police force had collapsed and the Anglo-American forces were too small to provide security. Sadrist clergymen fought looting and insisted on the return of looted merchandise. Adherents also specialize in providing food and medical aid to poor neighborhoods, seeking thereby to build a political base when elections come. They appear to have gained some Iranian patronage for these efforts.

Sadrists are antagonistic to other social forces and often attempt to keep themselves separate from them. They denounce the Anglo-American presence in Iraq as a form of imperialism, insist that the occupiers leave immediately, and say that the US treatment of the Sadr Movement leaders they have occasionally arrested and released has been "worse than Saddam's." They accuse Western troops of using night vision goggles to see through women's clothes, and of distributing pornography to children in the form of candy wrappers. Some have called for the assassination of any Iraqi woman who forms a liaison with a Western soldier. Muqtada says that since the US is opposed to the erection of a Shi'ite state, he expects nothing good of its state-building efforts in Iraq. They attack the supposed influence of Jews and of Israel. The repertoires of social action to which they have resorted include large rallies in neighborhoods or downtown Baghdad, Najaf and Basra, orchestrated by the Friday prayers leaders at mosques. They also engage in social displays of power, as with their armed militia patrols, though the US is attempting to outlaw the carrying of weapons in public.

Their antagonism to the secular middle class values of the Iraqi political and economic elite is often extreme, and has sometimes been expressed in the form of firebombing cinema houses and liquor shops, or at least threatening owners in an effort to make them close. Not only is the Sadr movement antagonistic to the Coalition and to secularist Iraqis, but it is hostile to other Shi'ite religious forces. The Sadrists insist that no Object of Emulation is acceptable who does not stand in the shadow of Muhammad Sadiq al-Sadr. They thus break with the mainstream tradition of Usuli Shi'ism, which recognizes plural authorities and leaves it up to the individual believer to choose his or her Object of Emulation. They reject the leadership of Grand Ayatollah Sistani and the Najaf establishment, on the grounds that it is foreign and politically timid. They insist on having an Iraqi Object of Emulation, and one who speaks out rather than one who keeps silent, and some of them tried to force Sistani out of Najaf altogether. They have brought into question his right to appoint prayer leaders in other cities. The Sadr Movement attempted to exclude the Badr Brigade from East Baghdad, and is locked in a struggle with SCIRI for control of the shrine of Imam 'Ali in Najaf. In Karbala, they are battling supporters of Sistani for control of

the mosque attached to the shrine of Imam Husayn. They have separated their congregation from the one led by Sistani's appointee. Their antagonism to these other groups is in part rooted in their attempt to monopolize sacred space in Iraq.

Can the Sadrists maintain their political momentum? If the Defense Department scenario comes to fruition, and Iraq holds relatively free and fair elections in late 2004 or early 2005, the Sadr Movement's political power may be diluted in a new Iraqi parliament that they cannot hope to dominate. Assuming they agree to field candidates, they could only hope to play in it the sort of role that the Lebanese Hizbullah does in the Lebanese parliament, where the radical party is often forced to cooperate with the Maronite Christians and other forces. If, on the other hand, Iraq begins to collapse into insecurity and angry urban crowds seek an early exit of Coalition forces, the Sadr Movement networks and militias will stand them in good stead in asserting power in East Baghdad and the south. It seems clear that the future of Iraq is intimately wrought up with the fortunes of the Sadr Movement.

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42. The Iranian Hand

Michael Ledeen, Wall Street Journal, 16 April 2004, Page A14

Much is being made about the irony of an Iranian envoy arriving in Iraq to help negotiate a solution to the U.S. standoff with radical Shiite cleric Muqtada al-Sadr. How could we allow a charter member of President Bush's "Axis of Evil" to negotiate a "peace" with the thuggish Sadr and his band of fanatical militants?

Indeed, the irony is as thick as Sadr's own beard. But the fact that Iran holds sway over him and other Shiite militants in Iraq should surprise no one. Despite repeated denials by the State Department, it is an open secret throughout the Middle East that Sadr has been receiving support -- if not precise orders -- from the mullahs in Iran for some time now.

That the war being waged by Shiite militants throughout Iraq is not just a domestic "insurgency" has been documented by the Italian Military Intelligence Service (Sismi). In a report prepared before the current wave of violence, Sismi predicted "a simultaneous attack by Saddam loyalists" all over the country, along with a series of Shiite revolts.

The Italians knew that these actions were not just part of an Iraqi civil war, nor a response to recent actions taken by the Coalition Provisional Authority against the forces of Sadr. According to Italian intelligence, the actions were used as a pretext by local leaders of the factions tied to an Iran-based ayatollah, Kazem al-Haeri, who was "guided in his political and strategic choices by ultraconservative Iranian ayatollahs in order to unleash a long planned general revolt." The strategic goal of this revolt, says Sismi, was "the establishment of an Islamic government of Khomeinist inspiration." The Italian intelligence agency noted that "the presence of Iranian agents of influence and military instructors has been reported for some time." Our own government will not say as much publicly, but Donald Rumsfeld and Gen. John Abizaid, the commander of U.S. forces in Iraq, have recently spoken of "unhelpful actions" by Iran (and Syria).

The London-based Al-Hayat reported on April 6 that the Iraqi Governing Council was actively discussing "the major Iranian role in the events that took place in the Iraqi Shiite cities," noting that the Iranians were the predominant financiers of Sadr. Another London newspaper, Al Sharq Al-Awsat, quoted a recent Iranian intelligence defector that Iranian infiltration of Iraq started well before Operation Iraqi Freedom. Hundreds of intelligence agents were sent into Iraq through the north. After the fall of Saddam, greater numbers came across the uncontrolled border, masquerading as students, clerics and journalists -- and as religious pilgrims to the now-accessible holy cities of Najaf and Karbala.

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The editor of the Kuwaiti newspaper Al Seyassah recently wrote a front-page editorial saying that Hezbollah and Hamas were working with Sadr, "backed by the ruling religious fundamentalists in Tehran and the nationalist Baathists in Damascus." No classified information was required for that claim, since Sadr himself has publicly proclaimed that his militia is the fighting arm of both Hezbollah and Hamas. Nonetheless, the State Department still doesn't believe -- or won't admit publicly -- that there's a connection between Sadr's uprising and Iran's mullahs. Just last week, State's deputy spokesman, Adam Ereli, told reporters that "We've seen reports of Iranian involvement, collusion, provocation, coordination, etc., etc. But I think there's a dearth of hard facts to back these things up."

One wonders what Foggy Bottom's analysts make of Sadr's recent visit to Iran, when he met with Hashem Rafsanjani (the number two power in the regime), Murtadha Radha'i (head of intelligence for the Revolutionary Guards) and Brigadier General Qassim Suleimani (the al-Quds Army commander in charge of Iraqi affairs). And what might they say about the fact that much of Sadr's funding comes straight from Ayatollah al-Haeri, one of the closest allies of the Iranian supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei?

Americans must understand that the war in Iraq is in reality a regional war which unites religious fanatics like the Iranians and radical secularists like the Syrians and Saddam's Iraqi supporters. The terrorists include Shiites like Sadr and murderous Sunnis like al Qaeda leader Abu Musab Zarqawi (who, despite his celebrated contempt for Shiites, has openly proclaimed common cause with Sadr).

Iraq cannot be peaceful and secure so long as Tehran sends its terrorist cadres across the border. Naturally, our troops will engage -- and kill -- any infiltrators they encounter. But we can be sure that there will be others to take their place. The only way to end Tehran's continual sponsorship of terror is to bring about the demise of the present Iranian regime. And as it happens, we have an excellent opportunity to achieve this objective, without the direct use of military power against Iran. There is a critical mass of pro-democracy citizens there, who would like nothing more than to rid themselves of their oppressors. They need help, but they neither need nor desire to be liberated by force of arms.

Above all, they want to hear our leaders state clearly and repeatedly -- as Ronald Reagan did with the "Evil Empire" -- that regime change in Iran is the goal of American policy. Thus far, they have heard conflicting statements and mealy-mouthed half truths of the sort presented by Mr. Ereli, along with astonishing proclamations, such as the one by Deputy Secretary of State Richard

Armitage, in which he averred that Iran is "a democracy." (One wonders whether he will liken Muqtada al-Sadr to Patrick Henry.)

Mr. Armitage notwithstanding, we can reach the Iranian people by providing support to the several Farsi-language radio and TV stations in this country, all currently scrambling for funds to broadcast a couple of hours a day. We can encourage private foundations and individuals to support the Iranian democracy movement. The current leadership of the AFL-CIO has regrettably abandoned that organization's traditional role of supporting free trade unions inside tyrannical countries, but there are some individual unions that could do it.

This sort of political campaign aimed at toppling the Iranian regime -- allied to firm punitive action within Iraq against terrorists of all stripes -- will make our task in Iraq manifestly less dangerous. Ultimately, security in Iraq will come in large measure from freedom and reform in Iran (as well as in Syria and Saudi Arabia). This is a truth that we should not hide from, nor be fearful to take on.

Mr. Ledeen, resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute, is the author of "The War Against the Terror Masters" (St Martin's, 2003).

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PNG Post-Courier

April 19, 2004 Monday

SECTION: FLARE UP IN IRAQ; Pg. 15

LENGTH: 237 words

HEADLINE: US policies to blame

BODY:

TEHRAN: Iran yesterday said America's iron-fisted policies and the lack of security undermined Iranian efforts to bring calm to Iraq.

And that it would no longer co-operate with Washington in such efforts.

Iran had sent a diplomatic delegation to Iraq in an effort to improve security but Foreign Ministry spokesman Hamid Reza Asefi said the team did not make the contacts it had hoped, and blamed the Americans.

The latest setback to Iranian efforts came after an Iranian diplomat was killed in Baghdad on Thursday, causing Iran to distance itself from mediation efforts to end a standoff between Iraqi militias loyal to anti-US cleric Moqtada al-Sadr and US forces.

From the very beginning of the crisis, Iran tried to help ease tension but Washington's employment of an iron-fist policy further complicated the situation, Mr Asefi said.

He was referring to the increasing use of force by the US military, which laid siege to Fallujah last week after the killing and mutilation of four US civilians.

Mr Asefi also said America's policies caused the failure of the mission of an Iranian diplomatic delegation to Iraq last week.

He said Hossein Sadeghi, a top Iranian Foreign Ministry official, failed to meet with al-Sadr and Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Husseini al-Sistani, Iraq's most powerful Shi'ite cleric.

We couldn't meet Sadr or Ayatollah Sistani because of lack of security, Mr Asefi said.

LOAD-DATE: April 19, 2004

LIABLE SOURCE

s TUESDAY, APRIL 27, 2004 C3

By Richard Leiby

Speak, Memoer

Their corruption is our corruption," declares a remarkably candid insider's assessment of alleged kickbacks, patronage and other woes plaguing the U.S.-selected provisional government in Iraq. The leaked memo has foreign policy wonks playing a guessing game: Who is the important Iraqi official described as a "happy drunk"? Who is the Kurdish politician who seems to be acting out a part in "The Godfather"?

Penned by a Pentagon adviser attached to the Coalition Provisional Authority, the chatty March memo offers a series of observations and suggestions after several months in Iraq as the author heads into non-government life. "Despite the progress evident in the streets of Baghdad, much of which happens despite us rather than because of us, Baghdadis have an uneasy sense that they are heading toward civil war," the memo reports. People are stockpiling guns, the author says, and "CPA is ironically driving the weapons market: Iraqi police sell their 'lost' U.S.-supplied weapons on the black market; they are promptly re-supplied."

The memo was the subject of a story distributed last week by the Association of Alternative Newsweeklies (aan.org). While the names of certain Iraqi figures and the memo's recipient were redacted, the missing name that prompted the most speculation was that of the author. Three sources tell us the critique was written by Michael Rubin, a thirty-something neocon intellectual who promptly became a scholar at the hawkish American Enterprise Institute after returning to



BY NABE AL-KURANI—ASSOCIATED PRESS



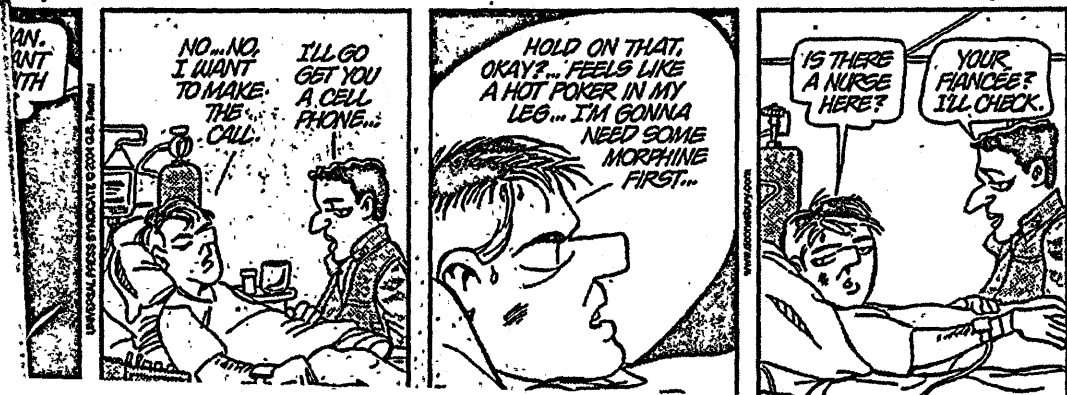
Did Michael Rubin, left, write the warning about conditions in Baghdad? He isn't saying.

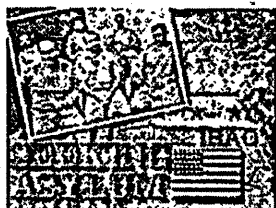
Washington. "The sky is not falling" in Iraq; he wrote early this month for National Review Online.

In his articles and biography, Rubin says he served as a CPA political officer for nine months and previously worked on Iraq and Iran issues while on Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld's staff. National Review Online describes Rubin as the only CPA political officer in Baghdad "who lived outside the American security bubble." The memo, which mentions continuing electrical outages and "frequent explosions, many of which are not reported in the mainstream media," faults U.S. officials for their isolation from ordinary Iraqis.

Rubin wouldn't confirm or deny that he wrote the memo. Last week he told an AEI spokeswoman he didn't want to talk about it, and he didn't return our call yesterday.

By GARRY TRUDEAU



ONLINE FOCUS**ONLINE
NEWSHOUR****BACK TO IRAQ?**

May 4, 1998

The NewsHour with Jim Lehrer Transcript

After bringing them to America, the U.S. government has decided that six Iraqis pose a security risk and must return home. However, the government won't say how they present a risk to national security; that information is classified.

JEFFREY KAYE: Imprisoned in a federal detention center south of Los Angeles, six men from Iraq face deportation. Although the United States brought them here, the government now considers them national security risks. The case has attracted attention because its reliance on classified evidence has prevented the six from rebutting accusations against them. That, according to Rabih Aridi of the human rights group Amnesty International, violates basic standards of justice.



RABIH ARIDI: We believe they have been denied due process because they were not allowed to examine the evidence that was used against them. Nor were their lawyers. We are talking about a right that is clearly stated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and that is the right to a fair trial.

JEFFREY KAYE: The INS, the Immigration & Naturalization Service, maintains the men are not entitled to classified information. Paul Virtue is INS general counsel.

A Constitutional question: has due process been provided or denied to these men?



PAUL VIRTUE, INS: We believe that full due process has been provided to the extent we're required to do so under the Constitution.

JEFFREY KAYE: The men say they belonged to U.S.-backed Iraqi opposition groups formed after the 1991 Gulf War. In 1996, opposition members and thousands of other refugees fled to the border with Turkey after the Iraqi army attacked rebel strongholds in Northern Iraq. The U.S. flew 6,500 Iraqi refugees to the U.S. Island of Guam in the Pacific. The evacuees included some 600 opposition



A RealAudio version of this segment is available.

NEWSHOUR LINKS:

April 28, 1998
Amb. Butler discusses efforts to verify the destruction of Iraqi weapons.

April 27, 1998
Iraqi exiles search for an alternative to Saddam Hussein.

March 13, 1998
A panel of experts debate whether it is time to lift sanctions on Iraq.

Online Forum
Noam Chomsky and James Woolsey debate U.S. foreign policy.

March 4, 1998
An interview with U.N. Secretary General **Kofi Annan**.

March 2, 1998
An interview with Iraq's Ambassador to the U.N. **Nizar Hamdoon**.

members and their families. The government felt a moral obligation to provide a haven, says former Defense Department Official Zalmay Khililzad, now with the policy research institute, Rand.



ZALMAY KHLILZAD: They had worked with us closely. They had put their lives at risk. And also it's possible that they would have been killed or jailed, and if they had gone all over the Middle East, I don't know who would have been able to provide them a safe haven, since the Turks were unwilling.

"They had worked with us closely. They had put their lives at risk."

JEFFREY KAYE: Evacuees stayed on Guam for five months while INS and FBI agents investigated their applications for political asylum. The vast majority of refugees were settled in America, but government investigators concluded that 25 didn't qualify for asylum.

PAUL VIRTUE: The U.S. Government has had some concerns that because we had to evacuate people fairly quickly, without an opportunity to vet them overseas, as we mentioned, that people within the evacuee group might, in fact, have also been involved with the Iraqi government and working on behalf of the Iraqi government.

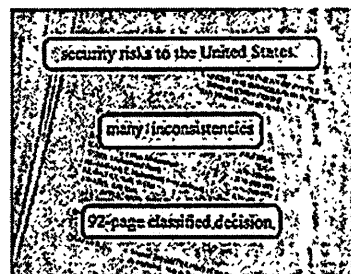
JEFFREY KAYE: The 25 refugees were flown to California and placed in detention. After hearings, some eventually received asylum. Of the six still detained in LA as security risks, two are doctors; three deserted the Iraqi military to join the opposition; and one former soldier, Safa Batat, says he was shot and bombed by Saddam Hussein's troops, and poisoned by one of his agents.



SAFA AL-BATAT: (speaking through interpreter) I've been fighting the Iraqi government since 1991. And the evidence of that is apparent in my body--evidence, not words--traces of the bullets and shrapnel. And even now I suffer from the effect of Thallium, which is still present in my body.



Frustration from having classified evidence presented behind closed doors.



JEFFREY KAYE: In immigration court hearings held behind closed doors, the INS presented classified evidence and secret witnesses. In March, the judge ruled the men "pose security risks to the United States." Her public report cited inconsistencies in the men's stories. A separate, 92-page classified decision relied mostly on secret evidence. The men testified, but the fact they couldn't respond to the classified evidence against

February 27, 1998
Congressional views of the U.N. deal with Iraq.

February 24, 1998
James Baker and William Perry discuss the deal's impact on U.S. foreign policy.

February 20, 1998
A panel of experts examine the crisis from the Iraqi perspective.

February 19, 1998
An exploration of public support for the use of force in Iraq as compared to past conflicts.

February 9, 1998
Regional commentators give local perspectives on the growing crisis with Iraq.

January 14, 1998
Iraq's U.N. Ambassador, Nizar Hamdoon, defends his country's actions.

January 13, 1998
Amb. Butler discusses the latest disagreement with Iraq.

Online Forum:
What's the best way to deal with Iraq?

November 13, 1997
Newsmaker interview with Deputy PM Aziz who defends his country's expulsion of U.N. weapons inspectors.

November 12, 1997
UN Ambassador Bill Richardson discusses the Security Council's vote to impose stricter sanctions on Iraq.

November 10, 1997
Defense Sec. Cohen discusses the situation with Iraq.

Browse the NewsHour's coverage of the Middle

them frustrated their lawyer, Neils Frenzen.

NEILS FRENZEN: If someone told us we suspect Mr. X of being a foreign intelligence officer, or we suspect Mr. Y of being a foreign intelligence agent, we could respond to that perhaps by guessing. But nothing has been ruled out. We have simply had these vague generalities of national security that have been directed in our direction, with no idea of what the evidence is. And so our case has been one of guesswork. The use of secret evidence in a situation where one's life depends on it, and where one's life depends on being able to respond to that secret evidence, there's no place for it in the American legal system.



East and the United Nations.

OUTSIDE LINKS:

The United Nations.

Iraq-ArabNet.



PAUL VIRTUE: I think we have to put this in context. I think the use of classified information in immigration court proceedings is very rare. We've used it a couple of dozen times in the last two years, during which immigration courts considered about four hundred thousand cases, so we're talking a very minuscule percentage.

JEFFREY KAYE: To get the classified evidence in this case, the legal team brought in R. James Woolsey, the man on the left. As a former head of the CIA, Woolsey was privy to the nation's top secrets. He still holds a security clearance. In March, he came from Washington to meet with the Iraqis and to criticize the government he once served.

R. James Woolsey: "This case at this point stands as really, I think a stain on the honor of the United States."

R. JAMES WOOLSEY: This case at this point stands as really, I think a stain on the honor of the United States.

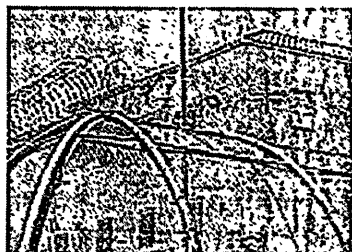
JEFFREY KAYE: Woolsey signed on as the Iraqis' co-counsel, and filed a motion to obtain the classified evidence.

R. JAMES WOOLSEY: I believe whether it's me or someone else, that an attorney with security clearances, in order for fairness to be done, ought to be able to review this material on behalf of these men. If the government doesn't want to share the classified information with counsel who are cleared, it would be my very strong suspicion it's because the government has made some serious mistakes and has something to hide.



JEFFREY KAYE: Virtue says the INS has no intention of providing Woolsey with a classified document because his clients have no legal standing in this country.

PAUL VIRTUE: These are people who are seeking admission to the United States. Essentially they're knocking at the door, asking for the United States to protect them as refugees. The due process requirements are different for someone who has not been lawfully admitted to the United States.



R. JAMES WOOLSEY: They were brought to Guam, a territorial possession of the United States, by the U.S. Government, and they were taken from Guam to California by the U.S. Government. And the INS is maintaining this legal position that they have not been admitted to the United States, so it won't have to grant them any procedural rights of the sort that an individual does have if he's been admitted but then is in risk of being deported.

JEFFREY KAYE: The detainees say they are victims of misunderstandings by INS investigators, as well as the factional in-fighting among Iraqis. Dr. Adil Hadi Awadh, who joined the opposition in 1996, after deserting from a military hospital, says Saddam Hussein fostered a culture of suspicion in order to undermine his foes.

DR. ADIL HADI AWADH: We've been living among these accusations since a long time in Iraq. So it's a very expected thing to be regarded as a traitor in Iraq simply because of just the revenge purposes.



JEFFREY KAYE: The detainees say on Guam rivals unjustly fingered them. The refugees included men once ousted from the opposition who denounced the detainees, according to Mohammed Tuma, a deserter from the Iraqi army.

MOHAMMED TUMA: (speaking through interpreter) No doubt, they were trying to get back at those who expelled them from the opposition. And the responsible parties in Guam listened to them and didn't listen to us. And I don't know why.

PAUL VIRTUE: I don't believe that simply a disagreement or some problems between the factions would have led to this--would have led to people continuing to be detained in this circumstance.

JEFFREY KAYE: The decision was based on more substantive information?

PAUL VIRTUE: I believe so, yes.



JEFFREY KAYE: But Virtue said he could not disclose that information. However, one man with intimate knowledge of the Iraqi opposition says at least two of the detainees are who they claim to be. Warren Marik is a retired CIA case officer. In 1994 and '95, he and other U.S. agents worked out of this house in the city of Irbil in Northern Iraq. Guarded by rebel militia, the CIA team assisted the opposition movement. Marik says he worked with two of the detainees. One was Safa Batat whom Marik says arranged for the Americans to debrief Iraqi army defectors. In London, Batat publicly denounced Saddam Hussein for trying to poison him.

WARREN MARIK: I don't believe that Safa Batat is an Iraqi agent because of his activities in London.

JEFFREY KAYE: How do you know Dr. Ali?

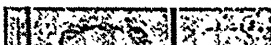
WARREN MARIK: Dr. Ali treated me and members of my team in Northern Iraq. I had a terrible case of bronchitis. And he gave me medicine. He treated a couple people in my teams and--and they didn't die. That's--that's--(laughs)--rule number one. And rule number two was, you know, they--they were cured.



JEFFREY KAYE: So the fact that he didn't kill these people demonstrates to you that he could not be an agent of Saddam?

WARREN MARIK: Partially. You get into a good question.

JEFFREY KAYE: Marik says that while Saddam's agents did infiltrate the opposition, he knows of no evidence that implicates the detainees. The U.S. Government did not make Marik available to testify in the Iraqis' case. One man who did testify on their behalf is Ahmed Chalabi, the head of the Iraqi National Congress, or INC, a main opposition group.



AHMED CHALABI: I have no evidence and can see no way that these people are

agents of Saddam Hussein. They are not agents of Saddam Hussein.

JEFFREY KAYE: Does that mean you can personally vouch for them?

AHMED CHALABI: I know three of them personally. The three people who belong to the INC, I know them personally.

A bleak future if the men are forced to return to Iraq.

JEFFREY KAYE: The detainees say if forced back to Iraq, they will be killed.

MOHAMMED AL-AMMARY: (speaking through interpreter) The verdict of the judge is a death sentence. All that is left is for the verdict to be executed in Baghdad. That's all that's left.



JEFFREY KAYE: The INS says if the men are eventually deported, they could try to find refuge in another country, besides Iraq. But in any event, both the government and the Iraqis' lawyers expect a protracted legal battle over the use of classified evidence.

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The Nation
April 12, 2004
Pg. 16

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Still Dreaming Of Tehran

By Robert Dreyfuss and Laura Rozen

The Bush Administration's hawks and their neoconservative allies at the American Enterprise Institute (AEI) and *The Weekly Standard* are engaged in a high-risk and high-stakes effort to restore their fading power in Washington by pressing for a confrontation with Iran. It's no secret that the neocons' star has fallen since the war with Iraq. The intelligence scandal plaguing the White House and the ongoing crisis in Iraq itself can both be laid at their doorstep, and it's widely believed that President Bush's re-election team would dearly like to extricate the President from the Iraqi tar baby.

But the neocons aren't giving up, and they are trying to pull the White House in even deeper. Not only are they undeterred by the chaos in Iraq, but they are pressing ahead to advance their regional strategy, one that calls for regime change in Iran, then Syria and Saudi Arabia. Says Chas Freeman, who served as US Ambassador to Saudi Arabia during the first Gulf War and a leading foe of the neocons, "It shows that they possess a level of fanaticism, or depth of conviction, that is truly awesome. There is no cognitive dissonance there."

What makes the neocon strategy on Iran especially risky is that with Iraq teetering on the brink of civil war, neighboring Iran has significant clout inside Iraq, including ties to various Iraqi Shiite factions and a growing paramilitary and intelligence presence. If Iran chooses, it can help ease the daunting task that the United States faces in trying to put together a sovereign Iraqi government. But if it seeks confrontation, it can help spark an anti-US revolt in southern Iraq, home to most of Iraq's Shiite majority. In that case, nearly all analysts agree, the American occupation could be overwhelmed.

Leading the charge against Iran is AEI's Michael Ledeen, perhaps best known for setting in motion the US-Israeli arms deal with Iran in the mid-1980s that became known as Iran/*contra*. Supporting Ledeen's position are two other AEI fellows: Richard Perle, the ringleader of the neocons and a former member of the Pentagon's Defense Policy Board, and David Frum, a *Weekly Standard* contributing editor and the former White House speechwriter who coined the phrase "axis of evil." In their new book, *An End to Evil*, Perle and Frum call for a covert operation to "overthrow the terrorist mullahs of Iran." Speaking to retired US intelligence officers in McLean, Virginia, in January, Ledeen called Iran the "throbbing heart of terrorism" and urged the Bush Administration to support revolutionary change. "Tehran," he said, "is a city just waiting for us."

Ledeen is viewed skeptically by many experts, including at the State Department and the Central Intelligence Agency. "Ledeen doesn't know anything about Iran," says Juan Cole, a professor at the University of Michigan who is an expert on the Shiites of Iran and Iraq. "He doesn't speak Persian, and I believe he has never been there." But Ledeen does have connections in the Iranian exile community. For the past two years, he has maintained a relationship with Manucher Ghorbanifar, the Iranian wheeler-dealer who worked closely with him in Iran/*contra*. Ledeen introduced Ghorbanifar to a key neoconservative official, Harold Rhode, a longtime Pentagon staffer who speaks Arabic, Farsi, Turkish

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BML

and Hebrew and who until recently served in Iraq as a liaison between the Defense Department and Ahmad Chalabi. Rhode and another Pentagon official, Larry Franklin, have been talking to Ghorbanifar about options for regime change in Tehran. "They were looking at getting introduced to alleged sources inside Iran, who could give them some inside information on the struggles in Iran," said Vince Cannistraro, a former CIA counterterrorism chief. Ghorbanifar, he said, was spinning tall tales about alleged (but unsubstantiated) transfers of Iraqi uranium to Iran's nuclear weapons program.

Rhode and Franklin were critical players in the campaign for war against Iraq. In 2002 they helped organize the Pentagon's Office of Special Plans, the Iraq war-planning unit whose intelligence staffers are now under investigation by the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence for allegedly manipulating evidence about Iraq's nonexistent weapons of mass destruction and ties to terrorism. Both the OSP and the Rhode-Franklin effort on Iran were run out of the office of Douglas Feith, the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy and a key neocon ally. Their initiative on Iran reportedly drew a sharp protest from the State Department. *Newsday* quoted a US official who said that the entire effort was designed to "antagonize Iran so that they get frustrated and then by their reactions harden US policy against them."

There is widespread disagreement about both Iran's intentions in Iraq and the extent of its capability to cause mischief there. But there is a consensus that Iran can exercise significant power. It has close ties to the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq, whose Badr Brigade paramilitary force of about 10,000 was trained by Iran's Revolutionary Guard, and to the forces of Muqtada al-Sadr, a 30-year-old Shiite firebrand. "There are thousands of Iranian intelligence agents and operational agents inside Iraq today, and the border is completely open," says Amatzia Baram, an Israeli expert on Iraq.

So far, analysts say, Iran has chosen to play a waiting game. Ken Katzman of the Congressional Research Service says that Iran "views its interest to play it low-key, to keep a low profile and continue to promote a cohesive Shiite bloc in Iraq in order to be in a position to become dominant once the United States leaves."

The "realists" inside the Bush Administration, led by Secretary of State Colin Powell and Coalition Provisional Authority head Paul Bremer in Iraq, are well aware that Iran could deal a fatal blow to the already faltering US efforts. Partly as a result, they've engaged in a quiet dialogue with Tehran. According to the *Financial Times*, last May Iran offered a "road map" for normalizing US-Iranian relations. Since then, Powell and his allies have sent assistance after the devastating earthquake in southeast Iran, and offered to send a delegation led by Senator Elizabeth Dole. They've also supported efforts by Germany, France and Britain to work a deal with Iran over its nuclear weapons program. (Germany's intelligence service also brokered a prisoner exchange between Israel and Hezbollah, which is close to Iran.) But of late, some of those conciliatory efforts have stalled. A planned Congressional staff delegation to Tehran, the first since the rise of Ayatollah Khomeini's regime in 1979, was canceled by the Iranians, according to the office of Senator Arlen Specter, whose staff was to participate. And after the initial harmony, signs are emerging of a serious split between Washington and Europe over Iran's nuclear program, with echoes of the US-Europe split over Iraqi WMD.

How the differing approaches--the neocons' war cries and the realists' more conciliatory strategy--are viewed by Iran's leadership is anybody's guess. But there are at least several factors that might push the Iranian ruling elite in the direction of the confrontation the neocons want. First, the hard-line clergy are in the midst of a crisis with the so-called reformists. In the past, the mullahs have used anti-US rhetoric, and even militant actions, to trump liberal and reformist rivals. Second, while Iran welcomes the rise of Shiite power in Iraq, it is at the same time uneasy about losing influence to the mullahs in Najaf and Karbala. According to several experts on Shiism, Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani is now the leading Shiite cleric in the world, which could make him a rival to Iran's less prestigious clerics. Though Sistani

has foiled US policy in Iraq by insisting on direct elections, he has refused to denounce the US occupation and may cooperate with a UN-brokered compromise for creating an Iraqi government. "Sistani is a double-edged sword for Iran," says Juan Cole. And third, there is the Bush factor. Some neoconservative strategists argue that Iran will act decisively in order to prevent Bush from being re-elected. Raymond Tanter, a scholar at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, a pro-Israel think tank, predicts, "They are going to launch a political-military campaign in an effort to defeat President Bush, because they believe that if Bush is re-elected, he will do to them what he did to Iraq."

It's unclear that Iran would risk a confrontation with the United States in Iraq even if the mullahs do believe that they are next on Bush's invasion list. But the mullahs are famous for misunderstanding US politics, just as Americans have failed repeatedly to understand Iran's.

In a way, the neocons' Iran project is very similar to the early phase of their Iraq one. It includes a steady drumbeat of threats and warnings, Washington lobbying, a media offensive and support for exile groups--in Iran's case a mishmash that combines supporters of Khomeini's grandson; Reza Pahlavi, the son of the fallen Shah, and the Iranian monarchists; and the Mujaheddin e-Khalq (MEK), a 3,800-strong exile force based in Iraq. In one of the strangest events ever to occur at a Washington think tank, last September Khomeini's grandson--dressed in rough-hewn black and brown robes and crowned by a turban, with dark brooding eyes like his grandfather's--took the podium at AEI, introduced by Michael Ledeen, to call for US assistance to overthrow the Iranian government. He even welcomed an alliance with the Pahlavi monarchists.

Many analysts view the prospects of a Pahlavi-Khomeini-MEK alliance with exceeding skepticism. And they note that the neocons, having bungled Iraq, don't have a lot of credibility left on Middle East policy. But it would be wrong to count them out. A former CIA officer who took part in the debate over Iraq policy in the 1990s recalls how the neocons ultimately prevailed. "The neocons had this idea of working with the Iraqi opposition to arm and train them and to overthrow Saddam Hussein, and people like me said, 'That is really stupid,'" he says. "But you get people to think about it, you get the President engaged, then options expand and then when opportunities come along, you seize them. That's what they did. They got people to buy in. Before September 11, people told them, 'It's never going to happen.' Come September 12, the rules changed." An explosion in Iraq, and some Iranian mischief there, and the rules could change again.

Robert Dreyfuss is a contributing editor of The Nation. Laura Rozen is a journalist who covers national security issues from Washington.

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 TOPLINES:

Eli J. Lake is the State Department correspondent for United Press International.

TEXT:

Eli J. Lake is the State Department correspondent for United Press International.

It seemed like a match made in neon heaven. Less than one week after the United States accused Syria of allowing terrorists to enter Iraq and Saddam Hussein's henchmen to leave it, Farid Ghadry informally unveiled his Reform Party of Syria. He used the occasion of the American Enterprise Institute's second to last weekly briefing on Iraq--a series the institute organized to coincide with the war--to go public with his opposition efforts. Ghadry--who plans to announce a Syrian government in exile in the coming months--asked the panel of Washington hawks, from the audience, the question on everyone's mind: "What about regime change for Syria?"

Ghadry's timing was good. The week before, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld had sent the White House a "Road Map for Syria"--over a dozen largely punitive policy options spurred by the Pentagon's assessment that American soldiers were endangered by Syria's open-border policy during the war. The memo's proposals, The New Republic has learned, include docking an aircraft carrier within Syrian territorial waters, using proxies to undermine Syrian intelligence agents inside Lebanon, interdicting Iranian flights to Hezbollah positions in Lebanon, and sending American forces over the Syrian border in "hot pursuit" of senior Iraqi officials. Meanwhile, Congress was developing a set of new sanctions against Damascus that were tougher than the limited bans on weapons and other items the United States has already passed. Could there be a better moment for the Syrian Ahmed Chalabi to emerge?

Unfortunately, finding liberal dissidents with a base of support in Syria makes finding liberal dissidents with a base of support in Iraq look easy. The Syrian opposition is overwhelmingly populated by fundamentalists. And Syrian liberals have virtually no public profile outside of Washington.

The similarities between Ghadry and Chalabi, co-founder of the Iraqi National Congress, seem striking. Ghadry, like Chalabi, has had his share of bad days in business. While Chalabi fled Jordan in 1989 after Petra Bank, which he set up, collapsed amidst allegations of financial fraud, Ghadry owned Hannibal's Coffee Co., a chain of American coffee shops that went bankrupt in 1996. Like Chalabi, Ghadry walks and talks the language of liberal democracy. His party's website boasts papers on reforming Syria's

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omnipresent security services, which are similar in some respects to Iraq's former Baath Party apparatus, and on establishing representative government. The Reform Party of Syria has even drafted a model constitution that would enshrine not only basic rights of speech, assembly, life, and property but also more idealistic goals, such as a pollution-free environment, fair labor practices, and access to health care. Ghadry also supports peace with Israel. "Why do we have to be enemies with our neighbor?" he asks, admitting that he has been impressed by Israel's democracy and vibrant civil society on business visits to the country. Ghadry, astonishingly enough, is even a member of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee.

Other anti-government exiles have started to emerge as well. On April 24, 120 Syrian exiles of all ideological stripes, ranging from communists to Alawite businessmen, signed an open letter in Al-Hayat, a leading Arab newspaper published in London, to Bashar Assad, calling on him to allow exiled dissidents to return to the country, to abolish military-type courts, and to dismantle part of the state's security services. "The Iraqi war proved the security services cannot defend the independence, sovereignty, and dignity of Syria," the letter said.

There are limited signs that reformers may be growing bolder within Syria as well. Prior to a crackdown in mid-2001 against civil society organizations, Syrians had been forming small groups that openly discussed politics, previously a rare occurrence. Some of that ferment remains. In a rare interview last month with Syrian reformers in Damascus, National Public Radio's Kate Seelye found several people willing to publicly speak out against the political repression pervading the country.

But, despite this minor thaw, American officials are deeply pessimistic that Syria contains the type of leader the United States is looking for. "We have done nothing to cultivate or encourage ... opposition (to Syria's regime) either abroad or in the country," says one Pentagon official. According to Frank Anderson, the CIA's former Near East Division chief, the United States "thought about changing governments in Iran, Iraq, and Libya, but in Syria we decided that none of the options were more attractive than the incumbents." In fact, several American officials knowledgeable about Syria say that Assad's most liberal opponents have no real political backing. For Syrian liberals to create "any meaningful political opposition is ridiculous," says a former American ambassador to Syria. After decades of being closely linked to Lebanon, say American officials, many Syrians have come to associate pro-Western liberals with Lebanese Christians, who many Syrians blame for oppressing Muslims in Lebanon and for being supported by Israel. Recognizing the Syrian liberals' lack of a power base, Rumsfeld's policy memo did not advocate seeking out Syrian exiles and dissidents for an opposition movement, as the Pentagon did in the West Bank and Gaza after the president's speech last June calling for a new Palestinian leadership. Nor did Rumsfeld's plan set aside funding for dissidents inside Syria, as Pentagon civilians advocate for the internal opponents of Iran's ruling mullahs.

Ghadry illustrates the point. His organization is only now getting off the ground. And a Syrian who belongs to one of Israel's main lobbying groups is not exactly a strong political candidate in a country that remains one of the most rabidly anti-Israel in the region. As Ghadry himself admits, "The Syrians are not ready for someone who wants to make peace with Israel."

Assad's most powerful opponent, admits one CIA

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consultant with extensive knowledge of Syria, is the theocratic Muslim Brotherhood. "The only opposition I know of in Syria is the Muslim Brotherhood," agrees former Assistant Secretary of Near Eastern Affairs Edward Walker. Indeed, according to Youssef M. Ibrahim, a former Middle East specialist at the Council on Foreign Relations, Assad has grown so fearful of the Brotherhood's ability to spread radical Islam that he has begun making speeches denigrating religious extremism and chastising Islamist-influenced medical schools for mixing science and Islam.

The

Brotherhood--which Assad's father, Hafez, banned-- are tough characters. In 1982, their Syrian branch launched a bloody intifada against the regime that included randomly assassinating members of the ruling elite. What's more, they churn out a steady stream of anti-Israel and anti-U.S. rhetoric. Even worse, Newsweek has reported that American and German investigators believe that members of the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood played critical roles in supporting and recruiting the Hamburg-based leaders of the Al Qaeda cells that carried out the September 11 attacks.

For the

time being, Bush administration hawks want to further isolate Assad and thus pressure him to change. They believe this pressure will lead more Syrian dissidents to come out of the woodwork. Secretary of State Colin Powell's recent visit to Damascus may underscore this strategy: By informing him that the United States could turn the screws on Syria, Powell offered Assad, like Yasir Arafat before last June's speech, a final opportunity to change. Unfortunately, if Assad does not come around, Washington may discover it cannot find anyone it likes to replace him.

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President and founder, Compass Middle East Wire Service

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OCCUPATION

President and founder, Compass Middle East Wire Service

BIRTHDAY

June 18, 1954

HOMETOWN

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MARITAL STATUS

Married, four children

SELF-PORTRAIT

The more challenging the job, the better the performance

MOTTO

The sky's the limit

WALTER MITTY FANTASY

Racing in an F1 car

INSPIRATION

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Adam Smith, the father of capitalism, and all great people who have left something for humanity.

GREATEST FEAT

Supporting an orphanage in Russia and the poor in Washington

BAD HABITS

Can not forgive the same mistake twice

PET PREVES

Cigarette smoke

HOBBY

Car racing and sport cars

LUXURY DEFINED

Knowing your limitations

DRINK OR WINE

Petrus 1982, cappuccino

FAVORITE RESTAURANT

Aux Beaux Champs

VACATION SPOT

Italy

CLOTHING STORE

Giorgio Armani

TV PROGRAM

Peter Jennings' "ABCNews"

CAR IN GARAGE

1992 Mercedes

BOOKS AT BEDSIDE

"Thick Face, Black Heart" by Chin-Ning Chu

LAST WORDS

"Capitalism must live."

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The United States and Shi'ite Religious Factions in Post-Ba'thist Iraq

Juan Cole

In post-Saddam Husayn Iraq, Shi'ite militias rapidly established their authority in East Baghdad and other urban neighborhoods of the south. Among the various groups which emerged, the Sadr Movement stands out as militant and cohesive. The sectarian, anti-American Sadristists wish to impose a puritanical, Khomeinist vision on Iraq. Their political influence is potentially much greater than their numbers. Incorporating them into a democratic Iraq while ensuring that they do not come to dominate it poses a severe challenge to the US Administration.

In planning the war on Iraq, the American Defense Department and intelligence organizations appear to have been unaware that millions of Iraqi Shi'ites had joined a militant and puritanical movement dedicated to the establishment of an Iran-style Islamic Republic in Iraq, even though these developments had been detailed in many Arabic-language books and articles. On February 18, 2003, Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz gave an interview on National Public Radio in which he maintained that "The Iraqis are . . . by and large quite secular. They are overwhelmingly Shi'a which is different from the Wahabis of the peninsula, and they don't bring the sensitivity of having the holy cities of Islam being on their territory."¹ Even more disturbingly, this quote shows that Wolfowitz did not realize that religious Iraqi Shi'ites are extremely sensitive about foreigners in their shrine cities such as Najaf and Karbala, or that these cities are religious power centers of great symbolic potency.

US Defense Department leaders such as Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld and his deputies, Wolfowitz and Douglas Feith, mistakenly thought that the middle and lower strata of the Ba'th bureaucracy, police, and army would survive the war, and that they could simply hand it over to secular expatriate figure Ahmad Chalabi and his Iraqi National Congress. Although from a Shi'ite background, Chalabi was largely unknown in Iraq and was wanted in Jordan on embezzlement charges. The CIA and the State Department broke with Chalabi late in 2002 when he proved unable

Juan Cole is Professor of Modern Middle Eastern and South Asian History at the University of Michigan. He is editor of the *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, and author of numerous books and articles. His recent works include *Modernity and the Millennium* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998) and *Sacred Space and Holy War: The Politics, Culture and History of Shi'ite Islam* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2002).

1. "Deputy Secretary Wolfowitz Interview with National Public Radio," February 19, 2003 at <http://www.washingtonfile.net/2003/Feb/Feb21/EUR509.HTM>.

MIDDLE EAST JOURNAL * VOLUME 57, NO. 4, AUTUMN 2003

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April 8, 2003 Tuesday

LENGTH: 670 words**HEADLINE:** Senator asks \$50M to aid Iran dissidents**BYLINE:** By MARK BENJAMIN AND ELI LAKE**DATELINE:** WASHINGTON, April 8 (UPI)**BODY:**

A leading member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee plans to introduce legislation Wednesday authorizing \$50 million a year to aid democratic activists inside Iran seeking a peaceful end to that country's regime.

A copy of an amendment to be offered by Sen. Sam Brownback, R-Kansas, obtained by United Press International, says, "It shall be the policy of the United States to support efforts to achieve democratic reform inside Iran, including support for the thousands of protesters who have expressed a desire for the government to hold a referendum vote that could permit Iran to move toward a secular, democratic government that respects human rights and does not seek to possess weapons of mass destruction."

The senator plans to attach the legislation to a bill authorizing next year's foreign assistance budget for the State Department.

Andy Fisher, a spokesman for Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Richard Lugar, R-Ind., said Lugar supports efforts to establish a friendly democracy in Iran. It is unclear if Lugar supports the proposal.

"There is an opportunity in Iran to make some differences and take advantage of dramatic demographic shifts in the country," Fisher said.

A spokeswoman for the American Israel Public Affairs Committee told UPI her organization supports the amendment.

The move comes at a critical moment in U.S. relations with the Islamic world. President Bush in his 2002 State of the Union address identified Iran, along with Iraq and North Korea, as part of an "axis of evil."

As the United States moves to mop up resistance in Baghdad, the Bush administration is hoping to confront the twin challenges of installing a new government there and convincing the Islamic world the invasion of Iraq does not signal a new era of American occupation in the region.

Last month, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld threatened to treat Iranian proxies that moved into Iraq as enemy combatants in Operation Iraqi Freedom. On March 24, U.S. intelligence issued a report detailing minutes of the Islamic Republic's National Security Council where the leadership of the country decided on a strategy to send in irregular fighting units to five large Iraqi cities.

In Iranian local elections earlier this year, few Persians took to the polls, with voter turnout in the single digits. Iranian students, union workers and intellectuals have intermittently over the past year taken to the streets in the capital and large cities demanding a political referendum on the current regime.

While Iranians are allowed to vote for the president, they may not elect the country's supreme leader who oversees Iran's military and security services and appoints religious clerics as judges for the courts.

Under Brownback's proposed legislation, the State Department would allocate \$50 million annually to an Iran Democracy Foundation. The purpose of the foundation is to support "pro-democracy broadcasting to Iran," such as the satellite television and radio stations based in Los Angeles that many Iranians watch and listen to already; support training for the Iranian-American community to reach out to Iranian dissidents; and fund human rights and civil society

groups working inside Iran.

The proposal is very similar to ideas proposed last June by Pentagon staffers in the Bush administration's Iran policy review discussions. But consensus was never reached inside the government.

The amendment does not call for regime change per se, but it does state, "Democratic change within Iran would contribute greatly to increasing the stability of the entire region and would serve as a beacon to the people of Iraq and Saudi Arabia to also seek democratic reform from within."

This language in the amendment is very similar to the Iraq Liberation Act, which Congress passed in 1998. That legislation first enshrined regime change as an open policy goal for the United States in Iraq. Sen. Brownback was an early supporter and author of the legislation.

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Chalabi Tipped Iran To Code Break

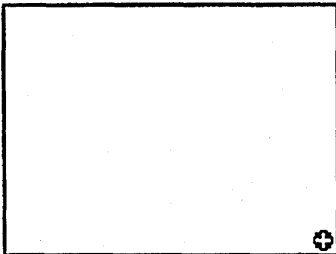
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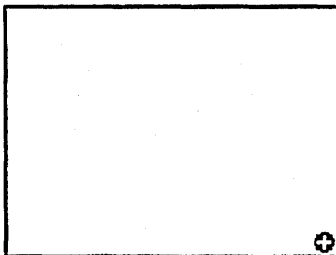
U.S. Intel Passed To Iran?



(Photo: CBS/AP)



Ahmad Chalabi displays a family photo he says was smashed during the May 20 raid on his home. (Photo: AP)



U.S. troops outside Chalabi's home during May 20 raid. (Photo: AP)

IRAQ IN TURMOIL

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(CBS/AP) CBS News has learned new details involving the Iran espionage allegations against Ahmad Chalabi, the Iraqi exile leader who was one touted as a possible president to lead Iraq in the post-Saddam transition.

On May 20, Iraqi police backed by American soldiers raided the Baghdad home and offices of Chalabi. Chalabi is a controversial figure who provided the Bush administration with prewar intelligence on supposed weapons of mass destruction in Iraq – including the now-discredited information about mobile labs whose true use is still a matter of debate.

After the raid, *60 Minutes* Correspondent Lesley Stahl reported that the U.S. had evidence Chalabi has been passing highly-classified U.S. intelligence to Iran.

CBS News has since learned that Chalabi recently told an Iranian intelligence official the U.S. has cracked Iranian codes, allowing it to read communications on everything from Iran's sponsorship of terrorists to its covert operations inside Iraq.

CBS has also been told FBI agents are questioning Defense Department officials about who gave such top secret U.S. information to Chalabi in the first place.

Chalabi is still active and visible on the scene in Iraq where he is a member of the handpicked Iraqi Governing Council.

Over the Memorial Day weekend, Chalabi was reportedly involved in negotiations to maintain a falter cease fire in the city of Kufa between U.S. military and radical Shiite cleric Muqtada al-Sadr. Chalabi and other Shiite leaders met with al-Sadr representatives and declared there was "a momentum for peace."

But Chalabi's star has definitely fallen in U.S. eyes. Despite his seat on the Iraqi Governing Council, it seems the Bush administration is going out of its way to ensure that the man who made a career lobbying to get rid of former Iraqi President Saddam Hussein has no American-backed political future in Iraq.

Other tense situations in recent months between the Bush administration and Chalabi include:

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• Timeline:

• Shutting Down Saddam

- American officials have complained privately that Chalabi was interfering with an inquiry into money skimmed from the U.N. oil-for-food program.

- Chalabi has recently accused the U.S.-led coalition of not going far enough to give Iraqis sovereignty. He

also fiercely resisted U.S. military commanders' recent decision to soften rules blocking former members of Saddam's ruling party from government jobs.

Chalabi still has strong supporters in Washington, and the Pentagon continued to pay for intelligence provided by his organization until recently.

Danielle Pletka, a vice president at the conservative American Enterprise Institute, after the May 20 raid that she believed the raid was likely "political manipulation in order to disable somebody who has been a thorn in the side of the CPA."

"We need the United Nations right now, and Chalabi is the prime mover behind the investigation in the oil-for-food program," Pletka said.

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Document 41 of 54

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The New York TimesJune 2, 2004 Wednesday
Late Edition - Final

SECTION: Section A; Column 3; Foreign Desk; THE REACH OF WAR: THE OFFENSE; Pg. 1

LENGTH: 1178 words

HEADLINE: Chalabi Reportedly Told Iran That U.S. Had Code

BYLINE: By JAMES RISEN and DAVID JOHNSTON

DATELINE: WASHINGTON, June 1

BODY:

Ahmad Chalabi, the Iraqi leader and former ally of the Bush administration, disclosed to an Iranian official that the United States had broken the secret communications code of Iran's intelligence service, betraying one of Washington's most valuable sources of information about Iran, according to United States intelligence officials.

The general charge that Mr. Chalabi provided Iran with critical American intelligence secrets was widely reported last month after the Bush administration cut off financial aid to Mr. Chalabi's organization, the Iraqi National Congress, and American and Iraqi security forces raided his Baghdad headquarters.

The Bush administration, citing national security concerns, asked The New York Times and other news organizations not to publish details of the case. The Times agreed to hold off publication of some specific information that top intelligence officials said would compromise a vital, continuing intelligence operation. The administration withdrew its request on Tuesday, saying information about the code-breaking was starting to appear in news accounts.

Mr. Chalabi and his aides have said he knew of no secret information related to Iran and therefore could not have communicated any intelligence to Tehran.

American officials said that about six weeks ago, Mr. Chalabi told the Baghdad station chief of Iran's Ministry of Intelligence and Security that the United States was reading the communications traffic of the Iranian spy service, one of the most sophisticated in the Middle East. (X) BMK

According to American officials, the Iranian official in Baghdad, possibly not believing Mr. Chalabi's account, sent a cable to Tehran detailing his conversation with Mr. Chalabi, using the broken code. That encrypted cable, intercepted and read by the United States, tipped off American officials to the fact that Mr. Chalabi had betrayed the code-breaking operation, the American officials said.

American officials reported that in the cable to Tehran, the Iranian official recounted how Mr. Chalabi had said that one of "them" -- a reference to an American -- had revealed the code-breaking operation, the officials said. The Iranian reported that Mr. Chalabi said the American was drunk.

The Iranians sent what American intelligence regarded as a test message, which mentioned a cache of weapons inside Iraq, believing that if the code had been broken, United States military forces would be quickly dispatched to the specified site. But there was no such action.

The account of Mr. Chalabi's actions has been confirmed by several senior American officials, who said the leak contributed to the White House decision to break with him.

It could not be learned exactly how the United States broke the code. But intelligence sources said that in the past, the United States has broken into the embassies of foreign governments, including those of Iran, to steal information, including codes.

The F.B.I. has opened an espionage investigation seeking to determine exactly what information Mr. Chalabi turned over to the Iranians as well as who told Mr. Chalabi that the Iranian code had been broken, government officials said. The inquiry, still in an early phase, is focused on a very small number of people who were close to Mr. Chalabi and also had access to the highly restricted information about the Iran code. FBI

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Some of the people the F.B.I. expects to interview are civilians at the Pentagon who were among Mr. Chalabi's strongest supporters and served as his main point of contact with the government, the officials said. So far, no one has been accused of any wrongdoing.

In a television interview on May 23, Mr. Chalabi said on CNN's "Late Edition" that he met in Tehran in December with the Iranian supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, and the Iranian president, Mohammad Khatami. He also said he had met with Iran's minister of information.

Mr. Chalabi attacked the C.I.A. and the director of central intelligence, George J. Tenet, saying the agency was behind what Mr. Chalabi asserted was an effort to smear him.

"I have never passed any classified information to Iran or have done anything -- participated in any scheme of intelligence against the United States," Mr. Chalabi said on "Fox News Sunday." "This charge is false. I have never seen a U.S. classified document, and I have never seen -- had a U.S. classified briefing."

Mr. Chalabi, a member of the Iraqi Governing Council, said, "We meet people from the Iranian Embassy in Baghdad regularly," but said that was to be expected of Iraqi officials like himself.

Some defenders of Mr. Chalabi in the United States say American officials had encouraged him in his dealings with Iran, urging him to open an office in Tehran in hopes of improving relations between Iran and Washington. Those defenders also say they do not believe that his relationship with Iran involved any exchange of intelligence.

Mr. Chalabi's allies in Washington also saw the Bush administration's decision to sever its ties with Mr. Chalabi and his group as a cynical effort instigated by the C.I.A. and longtime Chalabi critics at the State Department. They believe those agencies want to blame him for mistaken estimates and incorrect information about Iraq before the war, like whether Iraq possessed weapons of mass destruction.

One of those who has defended Mr. Chalabi is Richard N. Perle, the former chairman of the Defense Policy Board. "The C.I.A. has disliked him passionately for a long time and has mounted a campaign against him with some considerable success," Mr. Perle said Tuesday. "I've seen no evidence of improper behavior on his part. No evidence whatsoever."

Mr. Perle said he thought the C.I.A. had turned against Mr. Chalabi because he refused to be the agency's "puppet." Mr. Chalabi "has a mind of his own," Mr. Perle said.

American intelligence officials said the F.B.I. investigation into the intelligence leak to Iran did not extend to any charges that Mr. Chalabi provided the United States with incorrect information, or any allegations of corruption.

American officials said the leak about the Iranian codes was a serious loss because the Iranian intelligence service's highly encrypted cable traffic was a crucial source of information, supplying Washington with information about Iranian operations inside Iraq, where Tehran's agents have become increasingly active. It also helped the United States keep track of Iranian intelligence operations around the world.

Until last month, the Iraqi National Congress had a lucrative contract with the Defense Intelligence Agency to provide information about Iraq. Before the United States invasion last year, the group arranged for Iraqi defectors to provide the Pentagon with information about Saddam Hussein's government, particularly evidence purporting to show that Baghdad had active programs to develop weapons of mass destruction. Today, the American intelligence community believes that much of the information passed by the defectors was either wrong or fabricated.

URL:

LOAD-DATE: June 2, 2004

June 02, 2004

Can we expect to see Richard Perle start to defend Chalabi's leaks of the most sensitive US intelligence to the Iranian terror masters? Ledeen? Harold Rhode? Michael Rubin? I hear Larry Franklin isn't defending Chalabi any more.

There are only two defenses I can see: it's not true (seems the evidence is overwhelmingly in favor of, it's true). Or, it's okay that Chalabi did it.

Or, there's a third. How about, WE WERE WRONG. We were fools, and dupes. But none of these people seem to have the moral capacity to admit they were wrong. What kind of blindness, what kind of pathological arrogance, prevents these people from ever admitting they are wrong?

MORE: A friend says Chalabi supporters may also use the defense, Chalabi was framed by Iranians who wanted him to be politically neutralized in Iraq. [As if he even needed to be neutralized by outside forces!] That the two Iranians who were detected in an intercept to be discussing what Chalabi supposedly gave them could have been trying to frame him. I find this deeply unconvincing. [Remember how each shred of bogus intel about ties between al Qaeda and Saddam these very same neocons clung to as the holy grail? This is that in reverse].

A question. Is Chalabi simply believed to have conversationally told an Iranian source that the US had broken XYZ communications code? Or is he actually believed to have had physical access to some sort of code breaking technology itself? Why does this matter? Because the number of US officials who might have known the former is certainly greater than the latter. Even a civilian Pentagon official known to be very close to Chalabi and who believes himself a huge expert on Iran and the Middle East might have heard the latter and passed it on to Chalabi.

Posted by Laura at 10:56 AM

War and Piece

June 14, 2004

ABOUT WAR AND PIECE

War and Piece is written by Laura Rozen, a journalist who reports on national security and foreign policy issues from Washington, D.C. (More)



Reunion after the Sarajevo Siege. Photograph by Roger Richards, 1996.

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RECENT ARTICLES

"Chalabi Smackdown," The American Prospect Online, May 20, 2004.

"Ye of Little Faith," The American Prospect, May 18, 2004.

John Ashcroft refused to give the Senate Judiciary Committee the first 1, 2002 torture memo the Justice Department Office of Legal Counsel prepared at John Ashcroft's White House. Senate Washington Post got ahold of it and posted it here. (note: .pdf linked). The NYT is reporting that a small unit of military intelligence interrogators at Abu Ghraib began alerting senior US military officers in November 2003 to the abuse. This contradicts what senior military commanders have said: that they did not learn of the abuse until January.

June 13, 2004

Posted by Laura at 05:25 AM

Here's an interesting February 2001 article on the

11th. June 13, 2004 Pentagon renewing ties to INC intelligence chief Aras Kareem.

Here's an interesting February 2001 article on the Notice the date -- several months before September 11th. Pentagon renewing ties to INC intelligence chief Aras Kareem.

Notice the date -- several months before September 11th. In one of the most telling signs the Bush administration will revamp U.S. Iraq policy, Pentagon officials began meeting with the chief of operations for the umbrella of Iraqi resistance groups considered so dangerous in U.S. intelligence circles that his cousin, Ali Aras Kareem, sought asylum previously detained in connection with his part because of his investigation into that horrific last week

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Standing By Your NRO and AEI

by Karen Kwiatkowski
by Karen Kwiatkowski

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Michael Rubin is moaning, lamenting and harmonizing about how criticism of neoconservative war planning and occupation strategies in Iraq is part of a vast all-powerful conspiracy. It would make a great country song.

Rubin didn't say the conspiracy was great or right-wing. But he poignantly captures the pain and panic of the neoconservatives these days. Like a poor wife standing by her man, Michael Rubin sings Tammy Wynette.

His article in the National Review Online is mostly about me. Interestingly, in the fourth paragraph, he writes that he never met me. He sure knows a lot about me, though! Well, Mike Rubin knows a lot about a lot of things.

According to his AEI C.V., he is an Iran and Iraq expert who spent two years with the Office of Secretary of Defense working Iran and Iraq issues. He also advised Mr. Jerry Bremer and the Coalition Provisional Authority. Let me get this straight. He was the advisor to the guy who invaded Iraq on false premises, and to the other guy who is running Iraq more than a year later. If it were I, I'm not sure I'd include that information on my résumé. Of course, it's not his fault; he's just a consultant.

When Rubin was part of the Office of Special Plans, many of us, especially in uniform, saw the pooch get prepped for screwing, and then the actual screwing of the pooch. It wasn't pretty. We saw guys like Rubin running around promoting a war because Saddam had a lot of viable WMDs. I'm sure it wasn't Michael Rubin pushing that claim, and that these fantasy WMDs only existed in the minds of the OTHER Iraq war über-strategists. Not Michael.

We saw intelligence get watered down when it didn't prove the über-strategists' preconceived notions about Iraq, and we watched while Kool-Aid was added to the weak bits of unsubstantiated data that seemed to. I'm sure Rubin never drank that particular Kool-Aid. Although in his Tammy Wynette role, he may have served it up.

We saw a guy named Doug Feith, a lobbyist for Israel in his law firm who espoused extremely pro-Likud views, be confirmed by the Congress as the Under Secretary for Defense Policy with his like-minded consultants. We watch as Feith then focused his attention on developing a Middle East war/policy. We observed as he made a huge mess of it.

But of course, Michael had nothing to do with that. He was just standing by his man.

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When Jon Stewart at the Comedy Channel comments on the Giant Mess-o-Potamia, he's not kidding. Somehow, I see a sweaty Michael Rubin back in the kitchen wiping his hands on his stained apron. No, Michael, the damned spot won't come out. Trust me.

Rubin's NRO tirade thematically centers on the presumed "Kwiatkowski-LaRouche-grand-conspiracy-to-pick-on-neoconservatives-and-make-them-look-like-really-foolish-blunderers-by-getting-us-into-an-unnecessary-war-killing-more-than-750-American-soldiers-and-suggesting-the-horror!-that-some-neoconservatives-are-even-war-criminals." His article is in key ways factually incorrect, wrong, and in some ways, a little bit stupid. But smears usually are, aren't they?

Some key mistakes include the old AEI charge that I have something to do with LaRouche, that I didn't know where the OSP offices were located, that I left the Pentagon because I felt others had gotten promotions and I didn't, that I said Larry Franklin used his wheelchair-bound wife as a cover for gallivanting around the world on secret missions, and that I have a fringe ideology, among others. For the record, no on LaRouche, yes on the location of the OSP spaces, no on the promotion question (I never even stayed long enough to meet my first O-6 board), no on Larry Franklin and his wife and secret missions, and I'm not sure on the "fringe ideology." Rubin never really explains what fringe ideology he's talking about.

I can only say with a high confidence that it isn't the same fringe ideology embraced by the *National Review* and the American Enterprise Institute these days.

When Michael Rubin says he knows something about something, it seems he really doesn't know much. The little he knows appears not to be supported by either facts or evidence, and is somewhat hope-based. Whether he is advising the Pentagon on Iraq and Iran, or trying to smear me, Rubin gets it wrong, again and again.

Like Tammy Wynette's heroine, he's going on faith in and love for the neocon agenda, and loyalty to his neocon friends. Faith and love and loyalty are wonderful things, but Michael, dear, it's hard sometimes, isn't it? All that abuse, and people giving you a hard time, saying you made bad choices, all those reasons to leave but you just can't do it. I think Tammy says it best:

Sometimes it's hard to be a woman
Givin' all your love to just one man
You'll have bad times and he'll have good times
Doin' things that you don't understand

But if you love him, you'll forgive him
Even though he's hard to understand
And if you love him, oh be proud of him
'Cause after all he's just a man

May 19, 2004

Karen Kwiatkowski [send her mail] is a retired USAF lieutenant colonel, who spent her final four and a half years in uniform working at the Pentagon. She now lives with her

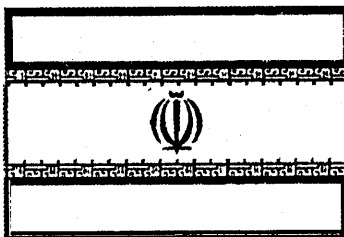
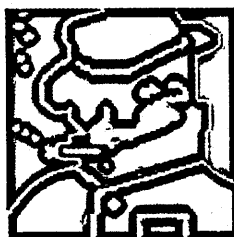


freedom-loving family in the Shenandoah Valley, and writes a bi-weekly column on defense issues with a libertarian perspective for militaryweek.com.

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Qods (Jerusalem) Force Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC - Pasdaran- e Inqilab)

While the Constitution of Iran entrusts the military with guarding Iran's territorial integrity and political independence, it gives the Revolutionary Guard [Pasdaran] the responsibility of guarding the Revolution itself. Established under a decree issued by Khomeini on May 5, 1979, the Pasdaran was intended to guard the Revolution and to assist the ruling clerics in the day-to-day enforcement of the government's Islamic codes and morality. The Revolution also needed to rely on a force of its own rather than borrowing the previous regime's tainted units.

By 1986 the Pasdaran consisted of 350,000 personnel organized in battalion-size units that operated either independently or with units of the regular armed forces. In 1986 the Pasdaran acquired small naval and air elements. By 1996 the ground and naval forces were reported to number 100,000 and 20,000, respectively.

Domestic Operations

The Pasdaran has maintained an intelligence branch to monitor the regime's domestic adversaries and to participate in their arrests and trials. Khomeini implied Pasdaran involvement in intelligence when he congratulated the Pasdaran on the arrest of Iranian communist Tudeh leaders. The *Baseej* (volunteers) come under the control of the Revolutionary Guards. In 1988, up to 900,000 baseej were mobilized. The Baseej allegedly also monitor the activities of citizens, and harass or arrest women whose clothing does not cover the hair and all of the body except hands and face, or those who wear makeup. During the year ending in June 1995, they reportedly "notified 907,246 people verbally and issued 370,079 written notices against 'social corruption' and arrested 86,190 people, and also broke up 542 'corrupt gangs', arresting their 2,618 members, and seized 86,597 indecent videocassettes and photographs.

The *Ashura Brigades* force was reportedly created in 1993 after anti-government riots erupted in various Iranian cities and it consists of 17,000 Islamic militia men and women. The Ashura Brigades are reportedly composed of elements of the Revolutionary Guards (Pasdaran) and the *Baseej* volunteer militia

In August 1994, some Pasdaran units, rushed to quell riots in the city of Ghazvin, 150 km. west of Tehran, reportedly refused orders from the Interior Minister to intervene in the clashes, which left more than 30 people dead, 400 wounded and over 1,000 arrested. Subsequently, senior officers in the army, air force and the usually loyal Islamic Revolutionary Guard reportedly stated that they would no longer order their troops into battle to quell civil disorder. A Pasdaran commander was among four senior army officers who are said to have sent a letter to the country's political leadership, warning the clerical rulers against "using the armed forces to crush civilian unrest and internal conflicts." In a communiqué sent to Ayatollah Ali Khomeini, stated that "the role of the country's armed forces is to defend its borders and to repel foreign enemies from its soil, not to control the internal situation or to strengthen one political faction above another." They are said to have then recommended the use of *Baseej* volunteers for this purpose. In a move believed to indicate a shift in the trust of the ruling clerics from the Pasdaran to the *Baseej* volunteer force, on 17 April 1995 Ayatollah Ali Khomeini reportedly promoted a civilian, veterinary surgeon Hassan Firuzabadi, to the rank of full general, placing him above both Brigadier-General Mohsen Rezai, commander-in-chief of the Pasdaran and Brigadier General Ali Shahbazi of the regular armed forces.

Foreign Operations

The foreign operations by the Guardians, which also encompass the activities of Hizballah and Islamic Jihad – are usually carried out through the **Committee on Foreign Intelligence Abroad** and the **Committee on Implementation of Actions Abroad**. As with agents of Ministry of Intelligence, Pasdaran personnel operate through front companies and non-governmental organizations, employees or officials of trading companies, banks, cultural centers or as representatives of the Foundation of the Oppressed and Dispossessed (Bonyade-e- Mostafazan), or the Martyrs Foundation.

The **Qods (Jerusalem) Force** of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) is responsible for extraterritorial operations, including terrorist operations. A primary focus for the Qods Force is training Islamic fundamentalist terrorist groups. Currently, the Qods Force conducts training activities in Iran and in Sudan. The Qods Force is also responsible for gathering information required for targeting and attack planning. The Pasdaran has contacts with underground movements in the Gulf region, and Pasdaran members are assigned to Iranian diplomatic missions, where, in the course of routine intelligence activities they monitor dissidents. Pasdaran influence has been particularly

The largest branch of Pasdaran foreign operations consists of approximately 12,000 Arabic speaking Iranians, Afghans, Iraqis, Lebanese shi'ites and North Africans who trained in Iran or received training in Afghanistan during the Afghan war years. Presently these foreign operatives receive training in Iran, Sudan and Lebanon, and include the *Hizballah* ["Party of Allah"] intelligence, logistics and operational units in Lebanon [Hizballah is primarily a social and political rather than military organization]. The second largest Pasdaran foreign operations relates to the Kurds (particularly Iraqi Kurds), while the third largest relates to the Kashmiri's, the Balouchi's and the Afghans. The Pasdaran has also supported the establishment of *Hizballah* branches in Lebanon, Iraqi Kurdistan, Jordan and Palestine, and the Islamic Jihad in many other Moslem countries including Egypt, Turkey, Chechnya and in Caucasia. *Hizballah* has been implicated in the counterfeiting of U.S. dollars and European currencies, both to finance its operations and to disrupt Western economies by impairing international trade and tourism.

The **Office of Liberation Movements** has established a Gulf Section tasked with forming a Gulf Battalion as part of the Jerusalem Forces. In April 1995 a number of international organizations linked to international terrorism --including the Japanese Red Army, the Armenian Secret Army, and the Kurdistan Workers' Party -- were reported to have met in Beirut with representatives of the Iraqi Da'wah Party, the Islamic Front for the Liberation of Bahrain, Hizballah, Iran's "Office of Liberation Movements," and Iran's Guardians of the Revolution. Tehran's objective was to destabilize Arab Gulf states by supporting fundamentalists with military, financial, and logistical support. Members of these and other organizations receive military training at a Guardians of the Revolution facility some 100 kilometers south of Tehran. A variety of training courses are conducted at the facility for fundamentalists from the Gulf states, Egypt, Algeria, Tunisia, and Lebanon, including naval operations, mines, and diving operations in a special camp near the Orontes River.

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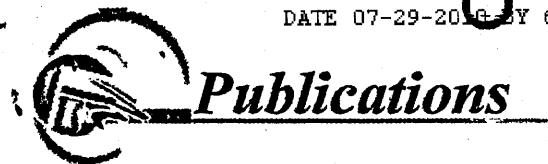
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IRAN LIBERATION

News Bulletin of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the National Council of Resistance of Iran

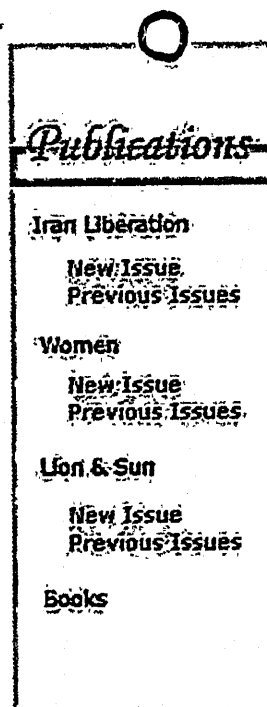
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April 7, 2003

Tehran Poised to Attack Mojahedin, Sieze Iraqi Territory

Contrary to the consecutive denials and reiterations that it does not intend to interfere in Iraq, the clerical regime is poised fully to take advantage of the developments in the region and attack the Mojahedin and capture parts of Iraqi territory. To this end, the People's Mojahedin Organization of Iran issued a statement on April 1, exposing parts of the activities of the regime which are as follows:

1. The regime has stationed a total of 46 brigades and an assortment of weapons, equipment and missiles in the border region. The following activities have been undertaken in the past 10 days:
2. Transferring the 3rd Brigade of the 21st Hamzeh Division from Marand to Chehel Zari (along the border region in Kermanshah Province);



3. Transferring part of the 28th Sanandaj Division to the city of Mehran (a border town in Ilam Province);

4. Transferring part of the Guards Corps 10th Division to Mehran;

5. Transferring parts of the 16th Qazvin Armored Division to Sar-pol-Zahab (in the border region in Kermanshah Province);

6. Transferring 1st and 2nd brigades of 81st Kermanshah Division from Kermanshah and Islam-Abad to the border region and deploying five tank battalions along Qasr-e Shirin;

7. Transferring the 35th Commando Brigade from Kermanshah to Mehran and Gilan-e Gharb;

8. Transferring parts of the 55th Airborne Brigade from Shiraz to Sar-pol-Zahab;

9. Transferring the 2nd Brigade of the 84th Division from Khorramabad to Bostan;

10. Transferring part of the 64th Orumieh Division to Abadan (south of Khuzistan Province, opposite Basra);

11. Transferring the 45th Commando Brigade from Shushtar to Khorramshahr and Bostan;

12. Transferring the 2nd Brigade of the Revolutionary Guards 7th Vali-

Asr Division from Behbahan to Sousangerd (in the border region in Khuzistan Province);

13. Transferring part of the 2nd Brigade of the Revolutionary Guards 4th Division from Ilam to Mehran;

14. Transferring part of the 3rd Brigade of the Revolutionary Guards 4th Division from Hamedan to Qasr-e Shirin;

15. Transferring parts of the intelligence and operations headquarters of the Revolutionary Guards Divisions from different provinces to Qasr-e Shirin to assess the situation and order the operational forces of those divisions if needed;

16. Concentrating the Intelligence Ministry's terrorist groups and forces in the Qasr-e Shirin in order to infiltrate the Iraqi territory and carry out terrorist operational against the Mojahedin in Khanaqin, Jalawla, Baquba and Baghdad;

17. Transferring a part of the 64th Al-Hadid Missile Brigade of the Revolutionary Guards to Howeizeh (border region in Khuzistan Province) to carry out missile attacks with Fajr 3 and 5 missiles;

18. Transferring a part of the 65th Special Airborne Force from Tehran to the so-called Abuzar in south of Sar-pol-Zahab. The probe and reconnaissance units of the brigade

have so far carried out several reconnaissance missions on Mojahedin bases in Khosravi-Khaneqin and Sumar-Mandali axes.

19. Transferring ammunition and equipment inside Iraq by the Revolutionary Guards Fajr Base (belonging to the extra-territorial terrorist Qods Force) in Ahwaz, in Bostan, Shat-Ali, Howeizeh and Tala'ieh (border region in Khuzistan Province);

20. Transferring 40 truck-loads of ammunition from Kermanshah to Iraqi territory through Azgaléh to Maydan and Darbandikhan by the Revolutionary Guards Zafar Garrison;

21. Redeploying mercenaries of the 9th Badr Corps from Kermanshah to Marivan and Iraqi Kurdistan and from Dezful to Howeizeh as well as helping groups of them to infiltrate the Iraqi territory in Mandali, Mehran and Howeizeh by the extra-territorial terrorist Qods (Jerusalem) Force.

22. According to the Qods Force's operational scheme, the 9th Badr Corps is planning, similar to 12 years ago, to pour into Basra, Nasseriyah and Al-Amara. Revolutionary Guards Brig. Gen. Ahmad Forouzandeh, in charge of the Iraqi Crisis Headquarters, is currently based in Ahwaz (Khuzistan Province);

23. Commanders of the Qods Force, including its commander Brig. Gen. Qassem Soleimani, his deputy Brig. Gen. Iraj Masjedi, Brig. Gen. Hamid Taghavi, Ramezan Garrison's commander of operations, and Brig. Gen. Obeidavi, Fajr Garrison's commander, are making the military and terrorist preparations in Iraqi territory. Occasionally, they use ambulances to enter Iraqi territory;

24. All of the so-called Ashura and Az-Zahra battalions of the Revolutionary Guards paramilitary Bassij forces across the country have been armed to confront the Mojahedin. The Revolutionary Guards Divisions have been put on alert across the country;

25. Eight warplanes in Hamedan's Nojeh air base, eight in Dezful's Vahdati air base, two in Bandar Abbas air base and two in Bushehr air base are on a state of readiness round-the-clock. They are armed with air-to-air missiles.

26. The clerical regime has so far stationed a total of 46 brigades with an assortment of weapons, equipment and missiles in hopes of taking advantage of the Iraqi situation and attack the Mojahedin.

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The New Yorker

June 28, 2004

SECTION: FACT; Annals Of National Security; Pg. 54

LENGTH: 5151 words

HEADLINE: PLAN B;
As June 30th approaches, Israel looks to the Kurds.

BYLINE: SEYMOUR M. HERSH

BODY:

In July, 2003, two months after President Bush declared victory in Iraq, the war, far from winding down, reached a critical point. Israel, which had been among the war's most enthusiastic supporters, began warning the Administration that the American-led occupation would face a heightened insurgency—a campaign of bombings and assassinations—later that summer. Israeli intelligence assets in Iraq were reporting that the insurgents had the support of Iranian intelligence operatives and other foreign fighters, who were crossing the unprotected border between Iran and Iraq at will. The Israelis urged the United States to seal the nine-hundred-mile-long border, at whatever cost.

The border stayed open, however. "The Administration wasn't ignoring the Israeli intelligence about Iran," Patrick Clawson, who is the deputy director of the Washington Institute for Near East Policy and has close ties to the White House, explained. "There's no question that we took no steps last summer to close the border, but our attitude was that it was more useful for Iraqis to have contacts with ordinary Iranians coming across the border, and thousands were coming across every day—for instance, to make pilgrimages." He added, "The questions we confronted were 'Is the trade-off worth it? Do we want to isolate the Iraqis?' Our answer was that as long as the Iranians were not picking up guns and shooting at us, it was worth the price."

Clawson said, "The Israelis disagreed quite vigorously with us last summer. Their concern was very straightforward—that the Iranians would create social and charity organizations in Iraq and use them to recruit people who would engage in armed attacks against Americans."

The warnings of increased violence proved accurate. By early August, the insurgency against the occupation had exploded, with bombings in Baghdad, at the Jordanian Embassy and the United Nations headquarters, that killed forty-two people. A former Israeli intelligence officer said that Israel's leadership had concluded by then that the United States was unwilling to confront Iran; in terms of salvaging the situation in Iraq, he said, "It doesn't add up. It's over. Not militarily—the United States cannot be defeated militarily in Iraq—but politically."

Flynt Leverett, a former C.I.A. analyst who until last year served on the National Security Council and is now a fellow at the Saban Center for Middle East Policy, told me that late last summer "the Administration had a chance to turn it around after it was clear that 'Mission Accomplished'—a reference to Bush's May speech—"was premature. The Bush people could have gone to their allies and got more boots on the ground. But the neocons were dug in—'We're doing this on our own.'"

Leverett went on, "The President was only belatedly coming to the understanding that he had to either make a strategic change or, if he was going to insist on unilateral control, get tougher and find the actual insurgency." The Administration then decided, Leverett said, to "deploy the Guantanamo model in Iraq"—to put aside its rules of interrogation. That decision failed to stop the insurgency and eventually led to the scandal at the Abu Ghraib prison.

In early November, the President received a grim assessment from the C.I.A.'s station chief in Baghdad, who filed a special field appraisal, known internally as an Aardwolf, warning that the security situation in Iraq was nearing collapse. The document, as described by Knight-Ridder, said that "none of the postwar Iraqi political institutions and leaders have shown an ability to govern the country" or to hold elections and draft a constitution.

A few days later, the Administration, rattled by the violence and the new intelligence, finally attempted to change its go-it-alone policy, and set June 30th as the date for the handover of sovereignty to an interim government, which would allow it to bring the United Nations into the process. "November was one year before the Presidential election," a U.N. consultant who worked on Iraqi issues told me. "They panicked and decided to share the blame with the U.N. and the Iraqis."

A former Administration official who had supported the war completed a discouraging tour of Iraq late last fall. He visited Tel Aviv afterward and found that the Israelis he met with were equally discouraged. As they saw it, their warnings and advice had been ignored, and the American war against the insurgency was continuing to founder. "I spent hours talking to the senior members of

the Israeli political and intelligence community," the former official recalled. "Their concern was 'You're not going to get it right in Iraq, and shouldn't we be planning for the worst-case scenario and how to deal with it?' "

Ehud Barak, the former Israeli Prime Minister, who supported the Bush Administration's invasion of Iraq, took it upon himself at this point to privately warn Vice-President Dick Cheney that America had lost in Iraq; according to an American close to Barak, he said that Israel "had learned that there's no way to win an occupation." The only issue, Barak told Cheney, "was choosing the size of your humiliation." Cheney did not respond to Barak's assessment. (Cheney's office declined to comment.)

In a series of interviews in Europe, the Middle East, and the United States, officials told me that by the end of last year Israel had concluded that the Bush Administration would not be able to bring stability or democracy to Iraq, and that Israel needed other options. Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's government decided, I was told, to minimize the damage that the war was causing to Israel's strategic position by expanding its long-standing relationship with Iraq's Kurds and establishing a significant presence on the ground in the semi-autonomous region of Kurdistan. Several officials depicted Sharon's decision, which involves a heavy financial commitment, as a potentially reckless move that could create even more chaos and violence as the insurgency in Iraq continues to grow.

Israeli intelligence and military operatives are now quietly at work in Kurdistan, providing training for Kurdish commando units and, most important in Israel's view, running covert operations inside Kurdish areas of Iran and Syria. Israel feels particularly threatened by Iran, whose position in the region has been strengthened by the war. The Israeli operatives include members of the Mossad, Israel's clandestine foreign-intelligence service, who work undercover in Kurdistan as businessmen and, in some cases, do not carry Israeli passports.

Asked to comment, Mark Regev, the spokesman for the Israeli Embassy in Washington, said, "The story is simply untrue and the relevant governments know it's untrue." Kurdish officials declined to comment, as did a spokesman for the State Department.

However, a senior C.I.A. official acknowledged in an interview last week that the Israelis were indeed operating in Kurdistan. He told me that the Israelis felt that they had little choice: "They think they have to be there." Asked whether the Israelis had sought approval from Washington, the official laughed and said, "Do you know anybody who can tell the Israelis what to do? They're always going to do what is in their best interest." The C.I.A. official added that the Israeli presence was widely known in the American intelligence community.

The Israeli decision to seek a bigger foothold in Kurdistan—characterized by the former Israeli intelligence officer as "Plan B"—has also raised tensions between Israel and Turkey. It has provoked bitter statements from Turkish politicians and, in a major regional shift, a new alliance among Iran, Syria, and Turkey, all of which have significant Kurdish minorities. In early June, *Intel Brief*, a privately circulated intelligence newsletter produced by Vincent Cannistraro, a retired C.I.A. counterterrorism chief, and Phillip Giraldi, who served as the C.I.A.'s deputy chief of base in Istanbul in the late nineteen-eighties, said:

Turkish sources confidentially report that the Turks are increasingly concerned by the expanding Israeli presence in Kurdistan and alleged encouragement of Kurdish ambitions to create an independent state. . . . The Turks note that the large Israeli intelligence operations in Northern Iraq incorporate anti-Syrian and anti-Iranian activity, including support to Iranian and Syrian Kurds who are in opposition to their respective governments.

In the years since the first Gulf War, Iraq's Kurds, aided by an internationally enforced no-fly zone and by a U.N. mandate providing them with a share of the country's oil revenues, have managed to achieve a large measure of independence in three northern Iraqi provinces. As far as most Kurds are concerned, however, historic "Kurdistan" extends well beyond Iraq's borders, encompassing parts of Iran, Syria, and Turkey. All three countries fear that Kurdistan, despite public pledges to the contrary, will declare its independence from the interim Iraqi government if conditions don't improve after June 30th.

Israeli involvement in Kurdistan is not new. Throughout the nineteen-sixties and seventies, Israel actively supported a Kurdish rebellion against Iraq, as part of its strategic policy of seeking alliances with non-Arabs in the Middle East. In 1975, the Kurds were betrayed by the United States, when Washington went along with a decision by the Shah of Iran to stop supporting Kurdish aspirations for autonomy in Iraq.

Betrayal and violence became the norm in the next two decades. Inside Iraq, the Kurds were brutally repressed by Saddam Hussein, who used airpower and chemical weapons against them. In 1984, the Kurdistan Workers Party, or P.K.K., initiated a campaign of separatist violence in Turkey that lasted fifteen years; more than thirty thousand people, most of them Kurds, were killed. The Turkish government ruthlessly crushed the separatists, and eventually captured the P.K.K.'s leader, Abdullah Ocalan. Last month, the P.K.K., now known as the Kongra-Gel, announced that it was ending a five-year unilateral ceasefire and would begin targeting Turkish citizens once again.

The Iraqi Kurdish leadership was furious when, early this month, the United States acceded to a U.N. resolution on the restoration of Iraqi sovereignty that did not affirm the interim constitution that granted the minority Kurds veto power in any permanent constitution. Kurdish leaders immediately warned President Bush in a letter that they would not participate in a new Shiite-controlled government unless they were assured that their rights under the interim constitution were preserved. "The people of Kurdistan will no longer accept second-class citizenship in Iraq," the letter said.

There are fears that the Kurds will move to seize the city of Kirkuk, together with the substantial oil reserves in the surrounding region. Kirkuk is dominated by Arab Iraqis, many of whom were relocated there, beginning in the nineteen-seventies, as part of Saddam Hussein's campaign to "Arabize" the region, but the Kurds consider Kirkuk and its oil part of their historic homeland. "If Kirkuk is threatened by the Kurds, the Sunni insurgents will move in there, along with the Turkomen, and there will be a bloodbath,"

an American military expert who is studying Iraq told me. "And, even if the Kurds do take Kirkuk, they can't transport the oil out of the country, since all of the pipelines run through the Sunni-Arab heartland."

A top German national-security official said in an interview that "an independent Kurdistan with sufficient oil would have enormous consequences for Syria, Iran, and Turkey" and would lead to continuing instability in the Middle East no matter what the outcome in Iraq is. There is also a widespread belief, another senior German official said, that some elements inside the Bush Administration-he referred specifically to the faction headed by Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz-would tolerate an independent Kurdistan. This, the German argued, would be a mistake. "It would be a new Israel-a pariah state in the middle of hostile nations."

A declaration of independence would trigger a Turkish response-and possibly a war-and also derail what has been an important alliance for Israel. Turkey and Israel have become strong diplomatic and economic partners in the past decade. Thousands of Israelis travel to Turkey every year as tourists. Turkish opposition to the Iraq war has strained the relationship; still, Turkey remains oriented toward the West and, despite the victory of an Islamic party in national elections in 2002, relatively secular. It is now vying for acceptance in the European Union. In contrast, Turkey and Syria have been at odds for years, at times coming close to open confrontation, and Turkey and Iran have long been regional rivals. One area of tension between them is the conflict between Turkey's pro-Western stand and Iran's rigid theocracy. But their mutual wariness of the Kurds has transcended these divisions.

A European foreign minister, in a conversation last month, said that the "blowing up" of Israel's alliance with Turkey would be a major setback for the region. He went on, "To avoid chaos, you need the neighbors to work as one common entity."

The Israelis, however, view the neighborhood, with the exception of Kurdistan, as hostile. Israel is convinced that Iran is on the verge of developing nuclear weapons, and that, with Syria's help, it is planning to bolster Palestinian terrorism as Israel withdraws from the Gaza Strip.

Iraqi Shiite militia leaders like Moqtada al-Sadr, the former American intelligence official said, are seen by the Israeli leadership as "stalking horses" for Iran-owing much of their success in defying the American-led coalition to logistical and communications support and training provided by Iran. The former intelligence official said, "We began to see telltale signs of organizational training last summer. But the White House didn't want to hear it: 'We can't take on another problem right now. We can't afford to push Iran to the point where we've got to have a showdown.'"

Last summer, according to a document I obtained, the Bush Administration directed the Marines to draft a detailed plan, called Operation Stuart, for the arrest and, if necessary, assassination of Sadr. But the operation was cancelled, the former intelligence official told me, after it became clear that Sadr had been "tipped off" about the plan. Seven months later, after Sadr spent the winter building support for his movement, the American-led coalition shut down his newspaper, provoking a crisis that Sadr survived with his status enhanced, thus insuring that he will play a major, and unwelcome, role in the political and military machinations after June 30th.

"Israel's immediate goal after June 30th is to build up the Kurdish commando units to balance the Shiite militias-especially those which would be hostile to the kind of order in southern Iraq that Israel would like to see," the former senior intelligence official said. "Of course, if a fanatic Sunni Baathist militia took control-one as hostile to Israel as Saddam Hussein was-Israel would unleash the Kurds on it, too." The Kurdish armed forces, known as the peshmerga, number an estimated seventy-five thousand troops, a total that far exceeds the known Sunni and Shiite militias.

The former Israeli intelligence officer acknowledged that since late last year Israel has been training Kurdish commando units to operate in the same manner and with the same effectiveness as Israel's most secretive commando units, the Mistaravim. The initial goal of the Israeli assistance to the Kurds, the former officer said, was to allow them to do what American commando units had been unable to do-penetrate, gather intelligence on, and then kill off the leadership of the Shiite and Sunni insurgencies in Iraq. (I was unable to learn whether any such mission had yet taken place.) "The feeling was that this was a more effective way to get at the insurgency," the former officer said. "But the growing Kurdish-Israeli relationship began upsetting the Turks no end. Their issue is that the very same Kurdish commandos trained for Iraq could infiltrate and attack in Turkey."

The Kurdish-Israeli collaboration inevitably expanded, the Israeli said. Some Israeli operatives have crossed the border into Iran, accompanied by Kurdish commandos, to install sensors and other sensitive devices that primarily target suspected Iranian nuclear facilities. The former officer said, "Look, Israel has always supported the Kurds in a Machiavellian way-as balance against Saddam. It's Realpolitik." He added, "By aligning with the Kurds, Israel gains eyes and ears in Iran, Iraq, and Syria." He went on, "What Israel was doing with the Kurds was not so unacceptable in the Bush Administration."

Senior German officials told me, with alarm, that their intelligence community also has evidence that Israel is using its new leverage inside Kurdistan, and within the Kurdish communities in Iran and Syria, for intelligence and operational purposes. Syrian and Lebanese officials believe that Israeli intelligence played a role in a series of violent protests in Syria in mid-March in which Syrian Kurdish dissidents and Syrian troops clashed, leaving at least thirty people dead. (There are nearly two million Kurds living in Syria, which has a population of seventeen million.) Much of the fighting took place in cities along Syria's borders with Turkey and Kurdish-controlled Iraq. Michel Samaha, the Lebanese Minister of Information, told me that while the disturbances amounted to an uprising by the Kurds against the leadership of Bashar Assad, the Syrian President, his government had evidence that Israel was "preparing the Kurds to fight all around Iraq, in Syria, Turkey, and Iran. They're being programmed to do commando operations."

The top German national-security official told me that he believes that the Bush Administration continually misread Iran. "The Iranians wanted to keep America tied down in Iraq, and to keep it busy there, but they didn't want chaos," he said. One of the senior German officials told me, "The critical question is 'What will the behavior of Iran be if there is an independent Kurdistan with

close ties to Israel?' Iran does not want an Israeli land-based aircraft carrier"-that is, a military stronghold-"on its border."

Another senior European official said, "The Iranians would do something positive in the south of Iraq if they get something positive in return, but Washington won't do it. The Bush Administration won't ask the Iranians for help, and can't ask the Syrians. Who is going to save the United States?" He added that, at the start of the American invasion of Iraq, several top European officials had told their counterparts in Iran, "You will be the winners in the region."

Israel is not alone in believing that Iran, despite its protestations, is secretly hard at work on a nuclear bomb. Early this month, the International Atomic Energy Agency, which is responsible for monitoring nuclear proliferation, issued its fifth quarterly report in a row stating that Iran was continuing to misrepresent its research into materials that could be used for the production of nuclear weapons. Much of the concern centers on an underground enrichment facility at Natanz, two hundred and fifty miles from the Iran-Iraq border, which, during previous I.A.E.A. inspections, was discovered to contain centrifuges showing traces of weapons-grade uranium. The huge complex, which is still under construction, is said to total nearly eight hundred thousand square feet, and it will be sheltered in a few months by a roof whose design allows it to be covered with sand. Once the work is completed, the complex "will be blind to satellites, and the Iranians could add additional floors underground," an I.A.E.A. official told me. "The question is, will the Israelis hit Iran?"

Mohamed ElBaradei, the I.A.E.A. director, has repeatedly stated that his agency has not "seen concrete proof of a military program, so it's premature to make a judgment on that." David Albright, a former U.N. weapons inspector who is an expert on nuclear proliferation, buttressed the I.A.E.A. claim. "The United States has no concrete evidence of a nuclear-weapons program," Albright told me. "It's just an inference. There's no smoking gun." (Last Friday, at a meeting in Vienna, the I.A.E.A. passed a resolution that, while acknowledging some progress, complained that Iran had yet to be as open as it should be, and urgently called upon it to resolve a list of outstanding questions.)

The I.A.E.A. official told me that the I.A.E.A. leadership has been privately warned by Foreign Ministry officials in Iran that they are "having a hard time getting information" from the hard-line religious and military leaders who run the country. "The Iranian Foreign Ministry tells us, 'We're just diplomats, and we don't know whether we're getting the whole story from our own people,'" the official said. He noted that the Bush Administration has repeatedly advised the I.A.E.A. that there are secret nuclear facilities in Iran that have not been declared. The Administration will not say more, apparently worried that the information could get back to Iran.

Patrick Clawson, of the Institute for Near East Policy, provided another explanation for the reluctance of the Bush Administration to hand over specific intelligence. "If we were to identify a site," he told me, "it's conceivable that it could be quickly disassembled and the I.A.E.A. inspectors would arrive"-international inspections often take weeks to organize-"and find nothing." The American intelligence community, already discredited because of its faulty reporting on Iraqi weapons of mass destruction, would be criticized anew. "It's much better," Clawson said, "to have the I.A.E.A. figure out on its own that there's a site and then find evidence that there had been enriched material there."

Clawson told me that Israel's overwhelming national-security concern must be Iran. Given that a presence in Kurdistan would give Israel a way to monitor the Iranian nuclear effort, he said, "it would be negligent for the Israelis not to be there."

At the moment, the former American senior intelligence official said, the Israelis' tie to Kurdistan "would be of greater value than their growing alliance with Turkey. 'We love Turkey but got to keep the pressure on Iran.'" The former Israeli intelligence officer said, "The Kurds were the last surviving group close to the United States with any say in Iraq. The only question was how to square it with Turkey."

There may be no way to square it with Turkey. Over breakfast in Ankara, a senior Turkish official explained, "Before the war, Israel was active in Kurdistan, and now it is active again. This is very dangerous for us, and for them, too. We do not want to see Iraq divided, and we will not ignore it." Then, citing a popular Turkish proverb-"We will burn a blanket to kill a flea"-he said, "We have told the Kurds, 'We are not afraid of you, but you should be afraid of us.'" (A Turkish diplomat I spoke to later was more direct: "We tell our Israeli and Kurdish friends that Turkey's good will lies in keeping Iraq together. We will not support alternative solutions.")

"If you end up with a divided Iraq, it will bring more blood, tears, and pain to the Middle East, and you will be blamed," the senior Turkish official said. "From Mexico to Russia, everybody will claim that the United States had a secret agenda in Iraq: you came there to break up Iraq. If Iraq is divided, America cannot explain this to the world." The official compared the situation to the breakup of Yugoslavia, but added, "In the Balkans, you did not have oil." He said, "The lesson of Yugoslavia is that when you give one country independence everybody will want it." If that happens, he said, "Kirkuk will be the Sarajevo of Iraq. If something happens there, it will be impossible to contain the crisis."

In Ankara, another senior Turkish official explained that his government had "openly shared its worries" about the Israeli military activities inside Kurdistan with the Israeli Foreign Ministry. "They deny the training and the purchase of property and claim it's not official but done by private persons. Obviously, our intelligence community is aware that it was not so. This policy is not good for America, Iraq, or Israel and the Jews."

Turkey's increasingly emphatic and public complaints about Israel's missile attacks on the Hamas leadership in the Gaza Strip is another factor in the growing tensions between the allies. On May 26th, Turkey's Foreign Minister, Abdullah Gul, announced at a news conference in Ankara that the Turkish government was bringing its Ambassador in Israel home for consultations on how to revive the Middle East peace process. He also told the Turkish parliament that the government was planning to strengthen its ties to the Palestinian Authority, and, in conversations with Middle Eastern diplomats in the past month, he expressed grave concern about Israel. In one such talk, one diplomat told me, Gul described Israeli activities, and the possibility of an independent Kurdistan, as "presenting us with a choice that is not a real choice-between survival and alliance."

A third Turkish official told me that the Israelis were "talking to us in order to appease our concern. They say, 'We aren't doing anything in Kurdistan to undermine your interests. Don't worry.'" The official added, "If it goes out publicly what they've been doing, it will put your government and our government in a difficult position. We can tolerate 'Kurdistan' if Iraq is intact, but nobody knows the future-not even the Americans."

A former White House official depicted the Administration as eager-almost desperate-late this spring to install an acceptable new interim government in Iraq before President Bush's declared June 30th deadline for the transfer of sovereignty. The Administration turned to Lakhdar Brahimi, the United Nations special envoy, to "put together something by June 30th-just something that could stand up" through the Presidential election, the former official said. Brahimi was given the task of selecting, with Washington's public approval, the thirty-one members of Iraq's interim government. Nevertheless, according to press reports, the choice of Iyad Allawi as interim Prime Minister was a disappointment to Brahimi.

The White House has yet to deal with Allawi's past. His credentials as a neurologist, and his involvement during the past two decades in anti-Saddam activities, as the founder of the British-based Iraqi National Accord, have been widely reported. But his role as a Baath Party operative while Saddam struggled for control in the nineteen-sixties and seventies-Saddam became President in 1979-is much less well known. "Allawi helped Saddam get to power," an American intelligence officer told me. "He was a very effective operator and a true believer." Reuel Marc Gerecht, a former C.I.A. case officer who served in the Middle East, added, "Two facts stand out about Allawi. One, he likes to think of himself as a man of ideas; and, two, his strongest virtue is that he's a thug."

Early this year, one of Allawi's former medical-school classmates, Dr. Haifa al-Azawi, published an essay in an Arabic newspaper in London raising questions about his character and his medical bona fides. She depicted Allawi as a "big husky man . . . who carried a gun on his belt and frequently brandished it, terrorizing the medical students." Allawi's medical degree, she wrote, "was conferred upon him by the Baath party." Allawi moved to London in 1971, ostensibly to continue his medical education; there he was in charge of the European operations of the Baath Party organization and the local activities of the Mukhabarat, its intelligence agency, until 1975.

"If you're asking me if Allawi has blood on his hands from his days in London, the answer is yes, he does," Vincent Cannistraro, the former C.I.A. officer, said. "He was a paid Mukhabarat agent for the Iraqis, and he was involved in dirty stuff." A cabinet-level Middle East diplomat, who was rankled by the U.S. indifference to Allawi's personal history, told me early this month that Allawi was involved with a Mukhabarat "hit team" that sought out and killed Baath Party dissenters throughout Europe. (Allawi's office did not respond to a request for comment.) At some point, for reasons that are not clear, Allawi fell from favor, and the Baathists organized a series of attempts on his life. The third attempt, by an axe-wielding assassin who broke into his home near London in 1978, resulted in a year-long hospital stay.

The Saban Center's Flynt Leverett said of the transfer of sovereignty, "If it doesn't work, there is no fallback-nothing." The former senior American intelligence official told me, similarly, that "the neocons still think they can pull the rabbit out of the hat" in Iraq. "What's the plan? They say, 'We don't need it. Democracy is strong enough. We'll work it out.'"

Middle East diplomats and former C.I.A. operatives who now consult in Baghdad have told me that many wealthy Iraqi businessmen and their families have deserted Baghdad in recent weeks in anticipation of continued, and perhaps heightened, suicide attacks and terror bombings after June 30th. "We'll see Christians, Shiites, and Sunnis getting out," Michel Samaha, the Lebanese Minister of Information, reported. "What the resistance is doing is targeting the poor people who run the bureaucracy-those who can't afford to pay for private guards. A month ago, friends of mine who are important landowners in Iraq came to Baghdad to do business. The cost of one day's security was about twelve thousand dollars."

Whitley Bruner, a retired intelligence officer who was a senior member of the C.I.A.'s task force on Iraq a decade ago, said that the new interim government in Iraq is urgently seeking ways to provide affordable security for second-tier officials-the men and women who make the government work. In early June, two such officials-Kamal Jarrah, an Education Ministry official, and Bassam Salih Kubba, who was serving as deputy foreign minister-were assassinated by unidentified gunmen outside their homes. Neither had hired private guards. Bruner, who returned from Baghdad earlier this month, said that he was now working to help organize Iraqi companies that could provide high-quality security that Iraqis could afford. "It's going to be a hot summer," Bruner said. "A lot of people have decided to get to Lebanon, Jordan, or the Gulf and wait this one out."

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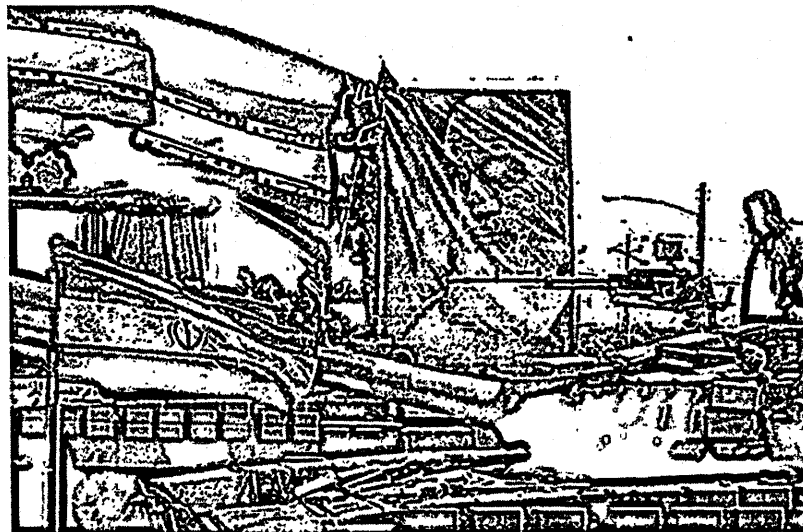
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Newsweek National News

And Now a Mole?

In the Pentagon, a suspected spy allegedly passes secrets to Israel



Scott Peterson / Getty Images

A show of force: Iran displays its military might

By Michael Isikoff And Mark Hosenball
Newsweek

Sept. 6 issue - 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

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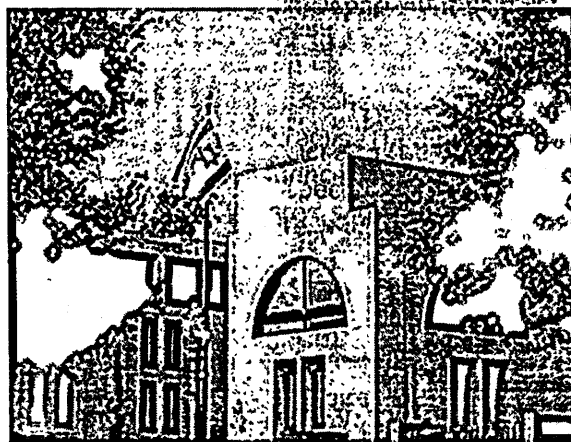
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officer with the Near East and South Asia office at the Pentagon.

Franklin soon became a subject of the FBI investigation as well. Now he may face charges, accused of divulging to Israel classified information on U.S. government plans regarding Iran, officials say. While some U.S. officials warned against exaggerated accusations of spying, one administration source described the case as the most significant Israeli espionage investigation in Washington since Jonathan Pollard, an American who was imprisoned for life in 1987 for passing U.S. Navy secrets to the Israelis. The FBI and Justice Department are still reviewing the evidence, but one intelligence source believes Franklin may be arrested shortly.

The probe itself amounts to another embarrassing problem for Donald Rumsfeld, the beleaguered Defense secretary. It comes during a week in which violence flared up again in Iraq and a Pentagon investigation indirectly blamed Rumsfeld for poor oversight in the Abu Ghraib prisoner abuse scandal. In a statement, the Defense Department said it "has been cooperating with the Department of Justice on this matter for an extended period of time."

At first blush, officials close to the investigation say, Franklin seemed an unlikely suspect: he was described as a midlevel policy "wonk" with a doctorate who had toiled for some time on Mideast affairs. Yet he had previously worked at the Defense Intelligence Agency, and there was at least one other aspect to his background that caught the FBI's attention: although Franklin was not Jewish, he was an Army reservist who did his reserve duty at the U.S. Embassy in Tel Aviv.



David Y. Lee / Polaris for Newsweek
Israel in DC: An American "wonk" may have given secrets to Israel about Iran

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. There is no evidence that money changed hands. "For whatever reason, the guy hates Iran passionately," the official said, referring to the Iranian government.

NEWSWEEK's efforts to reach Franklin or a lawyer representing him were unsuccessful. But a close friend, Michael Ledeen of the American Enterprise Institute, said he believes the charges against Franklin are "nonsensical." Officials say that Franklin began cooperating about a month ago, after he was confronted by the FBI. At the time, these officials say, Franklin acknowledged meetings with the Israeli contact. Law-enforcement officials say they have no evidence that anyone above Franklin at the Pentagon had any knowledge of his activities.

Israeli officials, meanwhile, bristled at the suggestion of espionage. Ephraim Sneh, a member of Parliament and a retired general who has been monitoring the development of nukes in Iran for years, said that Israel would be crazy to spy on its best friend. "Since Pollard, we avoid any intelligence activity on U.S. soil," Sneh said in an interview. "I know the policy; I've been in this business for years. We avoid anything that even smells like intelligence-gathering in the U.S." Another Israeli official contended that the Israelis had no cause to steal secrets because anything important on Iran is already exchanged between the CIA and the Mossad, Israel's spy agency. In a statement, AIPAC denied that any of its employees received information "they believed was secret or classified," and said it was cooperating.

U.S. investigators would not reveal what kind of information Franklin was allegedly trying to divulge to Israel. But for months the administration has been debating what to do about Iran's clerical regime as well as its alleged program to build nuclear weapons—a subject of keen interest to the Israelis, who have quietly warned Washington that they will not permit Tehran to gain nuclear capability.

Franklin was known to be one of a tightly knit group of pro-Israel hawks in the Pentagon associated with his immediate superior, William Luti, the hard-charging and impassioned protégé of former House speaker Newt Gingrich. As deputy assistant secretary of Defense for Near East affairs, Luti was a key player in planning the Iraq war. He, in turn, works in the office of Under Secretary Douglas Feith, a career lawyer who, before he became

the Pentagon's No. 3, was a sometime consultant for Likud, Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's political party. Officials say they have no evidence that either Feith or Luti had any knowledge of Franklin's discussions with the Israelis.

Franklin has also been among the subjects of a separate probe being conducted by the Senate intelligence committee. Part of that investigation concerns alleged "rogue" intelligence activities by Feith's staff. Among these activities was a series of meetings that Franklin and one of his colleagues, Harold Rhode, had in Paris in late 2001 with Manucher Ghorbanifar, the shadowy Iranian arms dealer made infamous during the Iran-contra scandal of the 1980s. One purpose of those meetings was to explore a scheme for overthrowing the mullahs in Iran, though Rumsfeld later said the plan was never seriously considered. But so far, there is no evidence that the Ghorbanifar contacts are related to the espionage probe. And officials familiar with the case suggest that the political damage to Bush and the Pentagon may prove to be more serious than the damage to national security.

With Michael Hirsh and Daniel Klaidman in Washington and Dan Ephron in Jerusalem

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Last update - 01:52 29/08/2004

Order was out - no spying on U.S., says former Mossad chief

By Yossi Helman, Gideon Alon and Nathan Guttman

A former head of the Mossad and military secretary to former defense minister and prime minister Yitzhak Rabin says an unequivocal order to the intelligence community prohibits illegal activity in the U.S. and operating a person to collect information.

"I hope the information is false and there are no grounds for suspicion," MK Danny Yatom (Labor), who was Mossad chief from 1996 for a year and a half, said.

According to Yatom, in spite of the prohibition, the U.S. administration, especially the intelligence community, harbors strong suspicions of Israel being involved in intelligence-gathering activities. The full extent of these suspicions was revealed in 1997 when U.S. media published reports of FBI investigations into allegations that a Mossad agent was involved in running an intelligence agent within the administration. As a result, then-CIA chief George Tenet asked Danny Yatom for clarifications in both a phone call and in writing. A letter that Yatom sent to Tenet containing clarifications did not satisfy the Americans, and Yatom had to fly to Washington for a meeting with Tenet. When it eventually became clear that the allegation was false, Tenet wrote Yatom a letter of apology.

It subsequently turned out that the FBI, which listens in on all home and office phone calls of Israeli diplomats, had intercepted a call between two Mossad officials stationed in the U.S., Yoram Hassel, head of the Mossad mission, and another individual involved in the workings of Tevel, an intelligence unit responsible for liaison with the CIA and other intelligence organizations. The two spoke in code and mentioned the word "mega." Unaware that "mega" was the Mossad's code word for the CIA, the U.S. thought mega was an agent run by the Mossad.

Chairman of the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee MK Yuval Steinitz told Haaretz yesterday, "I am certain that this story is groundless. This is certainly not a case of Pollard II." Steinitz said that since the Pollard affair, Israel has not operated spies against the U.S., and that there were good relations in the area of intelligence between Israel, the U.S., and other Western countries against terror - and no need to resort to spying.

"I would be very surprised if in the final analysis it turned out that there is any basis to this story," Steinitz said. "At most, it's possible that certain people may have said things they were not authorized to say, but I can say with certainty that even if someone passed

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information about White House policy on the Iranian issue, this was not done at the request of Israel or on the initiative of any official figure in Israel."

• MK Ehud Yatom (Likud) a member of the sub-committee for the supervision of secret services said yesterday, "It is inconceivable that Israel, which enjoys an excellent intelligence relationship with its ally, the U.S., would spy on the American Defense Department." According to Yatom, if the FBI has discovered something, he hoped it would turn out to be an unnecessary initiative on the part of a U.S. official.

The Israeli Embassy in Washington categorically denied accusations of an Israeli mole in the Pentagon. "The U.S. is Israel's most appreciated ally," embassy spokesman David Segal said yesterday. "We have sound a ongoing working relationship at all levels and in no way would Israel do anything to impair this relationship" Segal said.

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Will the Pentagon spy charges harm U.S. Jewry and Israel?

The headlines are explosive. The FBI suspects a Pentagon analyst has passed classified information to Israel via the AIPAC lobbying group.

If the allegations are proven, the affair could do untold harm to Israel's relations with Washington. But even if the allegations are baseless, as Israel and AIPAC maintain, the case "breathes new life into the assertion that Israeli and not American interests led to the war in Iraq," wrote Haaretz correspondent Nathan Guttman. "It revives the old charge that Israel is not an ally but a treacherous country, and the old saw that American Jews have a 'divided loyalty' problem in their preference for Israeli over American interests."

The probe of Pentagon desk officer Larry Franklin also recalls a nadir in Israel's relations with its closest ally, the case of naval analyst Jonathan Pollard, jailed since the 1980s for spying for Israel.

Do charges of "dual loyalty" or divided allegiance endanger American Jews? What of the contentions that neo-conservative Jews and the pro-Israel lobby exercise undue influence over American policymaking? Will the issue have a bearing on the presidential elections?

What you think

Whatever the culpability of Israel - and there is every reason for the time being to believe the government's protestations of innocence - lobbying groups like AIPAC should be scrutinized. They form a virtual "fourth branch" of government that can easily abuse their influence. I would like to see some of the layers of the onion peeled away so that AIPAC's actual influence over Congress and the administration can be determined. They have disproportionate influence on our policies toward Israel and Palestine, and their blafant pro-Likud views are neither balanced nor beneficial to the U.S. or Israel's long-term security.

David Ehrens, New Bedford, United States of America

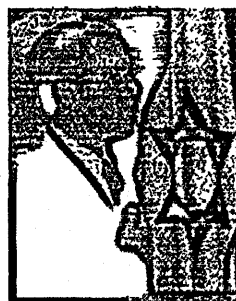
When the truth comes out, it will be quite evident that these charges are nothing but politically motivated.

As Jews, we have we have been accused of dual loyalty since the beginning of time. Guilty as charged. Why can't one love and defend two countries that one considers home - especially when by a large majority, both of these countries share the same values and interests?

Seth Cohen, Miami, United States of America

There is absolutely no danger of backlash against American Jews. This scandal makes AIPAC and the Likud look slimy. The bigger question is: When will Israel become politically and economically independent of the U.S.? It is becoming increasingly clear that the current conjoined-twin relationship between the two is a one-way street that offers no benefits for the U.S.

Michelle Ruth, San Francisco, United States of America



Make Your Point debates



Truth or Blas:
Israel in the media



Israel and world
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I worked on Capitol Hill for five years. AIPAC is despised there for pushing members of Congress around. Do you think that all these resolutions of support indicate that Congress cares about Israel? They don't. They just indicate how easily Congress can be intimidated.

This scandal won't hurt Israel unless Israel sticks too closely to AIPAC.
Peter Ross, Los Angeles, United States of America

My boss was Jewish and cared deeply about Israel. He despises AIPAC for using Israel for its own ends. I called him today to ask how he feels about the spy scandal. He said that "maybe now Israelis will understand that AIPAC hurts them badly up here. You can't win friends or keep friends through intimidation. Israel is a great ally of America but I would never trust AIPAC and, you know what, I'd guess that 400 of the 435 House members feel the same way I do. It is the most unpopular lobby in town. This scandal won't hurt Israel unless Israel sticks too closely to AIPAC. It should throw them to the wolves."

Peter Ross, Los Angeles, United States of America

If anything waws ever mentioned about a fraction of U.S. espionage activities, Mr. Franklin's sneakery would pale to nonexistence.

Gilma Ramirez, Carmiel, Israel

If the allegation is true, and even if it is false, it will raise the canard of dual loyalty. AIPAC may lose its tax exempt status, and the U.S. Congress may avoid the organization. It's troubling that Palestinian groups in the U.S. could launch a class-action suit and keep this issue alive. The suit could contend that since funds were cut for Arab organizations, likewise for Israel or its 'pro' lobby.

Ricardo Arias, Houston, United States of America

With both major American political parties striving to outdo one another in slavish devotion to Israel, I cannot see that this affair is merely something something cooked up by malcontents trying to smear the Bush administration.

Jack McMonigle, Edgewater, FL, United States of America

The publication of the affair might serve the U.S. administration in appeasing voters bothered by the close relationship between the U.S. and Israel. It may also be trying to attenuate its failure to achieve progress in the Israeli/Palestinian conflict, and hence find a pretext to distance itself from Sharon, who isn't rewarding it at a time when it could use a boost. Whether there is any merit in the allegations, either of these tactics will harm U.S.-Israel relations.

The timing of the allegations and the paucity of findings revealed so far appear to be a calculated move to counter this administration's reorganization efforts of the various intelligence gathering agencies. In the process, allegiances of Jewish office holders may be questioned.

I. Gat, Los Angeles, United States of America

It appears that this "affair" is more fantasy than fact, and the timing of the release of this information is highly suspect and politically motivated. American Jews have nothing to fear; there are no targets on their backs, no whispers of traitor when they leave the room. Haaretz feeds into this paranoia by asking this foolish question.

Ilan Sigura, Miami, United States of America

Contrary to the popular and misinformed belief that Jewish lobbies and neo-conservative Jews in the Pentagon "control foreign policy" of the U.S. in the Middle East, the facts tell a different story. It is the crisis in the non-democratic Arab world, Islamic terrorism, as well as rampant anti-Semitic incitement against Israel and Jews. That forces the U.S. to be involved there in ways in which it doesn't want to be involved to begin with.

Unfortunately, the interests of the U.S. and Israel don't always coincide.
Jan Pieter Verhey, Huizen, The Netherlands

Before 9/11 the Bush government aimed at concentrating on domestic affairs and it was Bin Laden who basically took control of the U.S. agenda for the Middle East. And had the Palestinians radically renounced all violent struggle



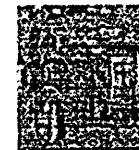
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**The West Bank
separation fence**

against Israel and chosen the path of non-violent resistance, a final settlement could have been reached already long ago. The Arabs might want to lobby in the U.S. for such non-violent struggle and take Martin Luther King and Ghandi as their heroes and martyrs, instead of suicidal terrorists. As long as this doesn't happen, Israel might need some spies around to know the true agenda of countries like Iran that develop nuclear WMD and support anti-Israel terrorists groups. Unfortunately, the interests of the U.S. and Israel don't always coincide.
Jan Pieter Verhey, Huizen, The Netherlands

After thousands of years, the world is still persecuting Jews, albeit disguised in different ways. The way the United Nations view Israeli actions in the Occupied Territories as compared to how they view Palestinian suicide bombers is a prime example. I just cannot fathom why the UN willingly condemn legitimate Israeli actions against Palestinian militants but only give Palestinians a light slap on their wrists with regard to Palestinian suicide bombers who wantonly blow up innocent Israeli women, children, old folk and men.

It seems that even the U.S. media has joined in this madness with regard to the Larry Franklin affair. The FBI has not even concluded their investigations and we already see the U.S. media portraying Israel as the culprit.

I would like to appeal to all to wait for the official conclusion before making your judgement. Please note that it is also election season in U.S. now and some unscrupulous American political supporters might want to leak some biased news to boost their hidden agenda.

Gabriel Ho, Singapore, Singapore

For all intents and purposes, Israel has secured effective control over U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East, through various sophisticated means, including AIPAC's lobbying, as well as placing at the top decision-making echelons right-wing Zionists who view Israel's interests - from a Likud perspective, of course - as far more relevant than American interests, when the two do not converge.

The Franklin affair has the potential of announcing the beginning of the end of this unquestionable control Israel has enjoyed for many years now.

Omar Barghouti, Acre, Israel

We are living with this "dual loyalty" all the time. This is what anti-Semites, out of fresh accusations or smears against a Jewish figure in politics, revert to. The difference is that Jews no longer feel the need to defend their loyalty to America and their care for Israel. Nothing will change the relationship between the two friends. They need each other and they like each other and scandals concocted by people who want to hurt the relationship will find that they are knocking their heads to the wall.

Batya Dagan, Los Angeles, United States of America

Nothing will change the relationship between the two friends. They need each other and scandals concocted by people who want to hurt the relationship will find that they are knocking their heads to the wall.
Batya Dagan, Los Angeles, United States of America

If it's true, to bite the hand that is feeding us shows arrogance and contempt for our friends, as well as the rest of the world. This is why the resentment to Israel is justified and not just another case of anti-Semitism, as many Jews would have it. When I was young I saw Israel as morally right but now I'm not so sure.
Ronnie Wolman, Toronto, Canada

Of course it will badly harm the relations Israel has with the USA. Worse, all the allegations of the Arab World that the U.S. is governed by the "Zionist Lobby" will be proven correct, to their satisfaction. Do Jews of the diaspora and Israel needs this?

Claude Myriam Hasson, Sao Paulo, Brazil

The damage has been done by Israel. They denied the Jonathan Pollard story for 13 years. They still deny their involvement in the New Zealand Passport story. The Sharon government and the rest of their group are not the friend of United States but an open enemy, and very soon it will be proved before the November elections.

Sal Azam, Chicago, United States of America

To love America and care for Israel's security is not dual loyalty. A few people made some mistakes, that does not represent all of Americas Jews.

Gabriel G, San Francisco, United States of America

Perhaps history and the events of WW2 have convinced some Jews that their fate can never again rest in the hands of the "Goyim" but it would be very careless of Israel to sacrifice the good will of the American people by treating them with arrogance, presuming that Israel knows what's best for both of them.

Dan McAllinden, Los Angeles, United States of America

From the timing alone one can conclude this is a political ploy either of the CIA - which has a weakened connection to Israel according to Haaretz today- or much more likely to the Democrat who was the anonymous source of the leak. There are a whole bunch of Americans who never got over letting Jews into their country clubs who now and again dabble in the latest form of Jew baiting which now takes the form of lying about Jewish spies.

Al Stein, Mendocino, United States of America

From the timing alone one can conclude this is a political ploy either of the CIA or a Democrat
Al Stein, Mendocino, United States of America

75% of American Jews are reported to be voting for Sen. Kerry in the upcoming election, the AIPAC so leaning towards the Likud, hardly represent American Jewry and should take this blame and not share it with people they do NOT represent.

Johanes Franzen, Stockholm, Sweden

If the spy case against Franklin is true, all it does is serve to reinforce the opinions of the Arabs, who suspect the Jews of desiring world dominion, the anti-Semites, who claim the Jews control the government, and the mainstream, who distrust the Jews but choose to hide it when it's unpopular. The Arabs already believe Israel perpetrated 9-11, Iraq, and many other horrors. The spy case is simply fodder for an already-loaded cannon, pointed at the Jews for 3000 years.

Jordan Hirsch, Dallas, United States of America

The so-called "spy affair" should be reported more carefully in the media. Journalist should reassess their responsibility in reporting such matters. Mr. Franklin is still innocent until proven guilty. At this point it appears to be a matter of inappropriate handling of classified documents a charge that even Sandy Berger has to face. Unfortunately, the damage has been done and it fuels the hate-propaganda of all those believing in the "Jewish-Zionist" world conspiracy.

Bernd Wollschlaeger, Miami, United States of America

The spy story was invented to blame the Iraq war on Jews, just as Jews have always been blamed throughout history for major problems and mistakes made by Gentiles. We were blamed for the black plague, Germany's loss in World War I, we are blamed for the Arab world's incompetence and cruelty, and now we are being blamed for the war in Iraq. The result will harm U.S. Jews. Within the next few hundred years discrimination and violence against Jews in America will increase drastically. It will get to the point where every U.S. Jew is either dead or in Israel.

Eli Sayetta, San Francisco, United States of America

It is time for Israel to divest itself of its relationship with AIPAC. AIPAC is itself a rogue operation dedicated to the aggrandizement of AIPAC. It is not pro-Israel. It is pro-AIPAC. I believe that the neo-conservative AIPAC types at the Department of Defense gave information to AIPAC and that AIPAC took it to impress the Israelis of their importance. I do not believe Israel was running this operation. Ehud Yatom is right. So is Sharansky. Israel is innocent but the power mongers at AIPAC and the warmongers at Feith's operation are guilty as sin. I hope AIPAC is destroyed by this and we American Jews can

It is time for Israel to deal with the U.S. government to government not through AIPAC, which is both outmoded and, as we see now, dangerous.
Ari Rabinowitz, Brooklyn, United States of America

replace it with a truly pro-Israel operation, one that is not on a power trip. I just hope that AIPAC's shenanigans do not hurt Israel. As Rabin suggested in 1992, it is time for Israel to deal with the U.S. government to government not through AIPAC, which is both outmoded and, as we see now, dangerous.
Ari Rabinowitz, Brooklyn, United States of America

On the contrary, the Pentagon spy scandal will greatly benefit U.S. Jews and Israel. By drawing attention to AIPAC, the organization will be exposed as the pompous, propagandistic fraud that it is. Thus, U.S. Jews will be more likely to think rationally and humanely about the Israel-Palestinian conflict. They will listen more closely to the uplifting message of Jewish peace and justice groups. Israel, with diminished U.S. support for its outrageous and immoral conduct, will also benefit. The greatest gift the world can give to Israel is to insist that the nation bring peace and justice to Palestinians. First step: End the occupation and bring all the Settlers home.
David Howard, Ojai, California, United States of America

There is something smelly about the "Franklin/AIPAC" affair. Governments and their security agencies by rule do not go public in matters of "spies" until they have been nailed and indicted. So far this reeks of a malicious leak or of capital ineptitude of the FBI, or both!
Egon Lazarus, MORAGA, United States of America

The point about the American spies is good, and so is the point about this incident being set up to blame the Iraq mess on Israel. Wake up people and smell the coffee! I think I speak for lots of people in Canada, the U.S., and Israel when I say that Israel had nothing to do with the war on Iraq. Was it Israel who told Saddam to act like a crazy dictator? It wasn't Israel who told Saddam to fire scuds at Israel, nor to kill Iraqis. No. This spy business is to rehash the theory that Israel set up the war on Iraq. The fact that Israel actually sent spies to bring this upon themselves seems utterly stupid. It is appalling to think that any right minded human being would think otherwise!
Tyrone Nimerowski, Winnipeg, Canada

Larry Franklin should be viewed as innocent unless found guilty in a court of law, but even if he's convicted of espionage, that wouldn't have a big anti-Jewish backlash in America. Most Americans now consider American Jews part of the national mainstream. If American Jews' special ties to Israel is "dual loyalty," what about the 30 million or so American Christian Zionists? They are Israel's strongest bastion of support in America. Yes, most politically conscious Americans believe by now that the Iraq war was masterminded by neo-conservatives to eliminate a bitter enemy of Israel. But again, I don't see that spawning much ill-feeling among Americans against Jews or Israel because of their deep loyalty toward the Jewish state. What the Israelis may need to worry about is the war's disastrous effect of America, their only real ally in the world. The Iraqi quagmire is dramatically exposing the limits of America's power and eroding its clout in the Middle East and the world. And it's happening when Israel struggles to extricate itself from its own quagmire in Gaza and the West Bank.
Mustafa Malik, Cheverly, Md., United States of America

Nobody in the White House is going to say anything negative about Israel right now. Bush needs some Jewish votes in Florida and Ohio, and November's election will dictate policy until November. This issue will die quietly and quickly.
Paul Mann, Chicago, United States of America

The "macho" attitude which permeates all Israeli society, does not make this a farfetched possibility. The invincibility trait runs high and corrupts one and all. On an optimist point this may turn to be nothing but a political smoke screen by the GOP to fend off its supposedly pro-Israel stand. On a pessimist view, nothing is too stupid to put it beyond any level of Israel's government. To advance Israel's advantage (supposedly) then any risk is worthwhile.
Nessim Dayan, Ashdod, Israel

It is amply clear that Israel and its powerful lobby in Washington were behind the American invasion and occupation of Iraq last year. Now Israel is trying to get the US to invade Iran and is using Jewish Americans to get the job done. Israelis should stop thinking that America plays the role of monkey and Israel the organ grinder

Khalid Suleiman, Jerusalem, Israel

This charge smells of political diversion. Why would the FBI leak this to the press before arresting Franklin if they have kept the year long investigation quiet before now?

Perhaps because the U.S. had a major defeat in Iraq this week, the economic numbers are bleak and the connections between the Bush campaign and the Swift Boat ads were becoming clearer.

Lisa Stanfield, Michigan, United States of America

Why would the FBI leak this to the press before arresting Franklin if they have kept the year long investigation quiet before now?

Lisa Stanfield, Michigan, United States of America

During the Pollard affair, Rabin said that he caught two Americans spying in Dimona and they were politely sent out of the country. So why this hullabaloo when we did not even do anything?

richard cohen, United Kingdom

I highly doubt Israel would risk jeopardizing relations with the U.S. If it turns out that indeed there was a spy I doubt relations would be harmed: first because it was not as if an enemy was spying, and the information on Iran is something Israel should know, without having to spy for its survival. Also relations will remain warm because the interests, hopes values and destinies of both countries are completely interwoven.

D Vinnikov, NY, United States of America

This is obviously part of an effort to blame the Iraq war mess on Israel ahead of the U.S. elections. But AIPAC should know better than to maintain lobbying contact with bureaucrats in the Department of Defense. The solution is to prevent these types of scurrilous charges from occurring in the first place as there is no shortage of people willing to use these types of incidents for their own political motives. Contacts of this nature should be between government officials on both sides. Israel, like any other independent nation has a foreign ministry and a defense department with liaison officers for this. Let AIPAC lobby in Congress.

Henry Cittone, New York, United States of America

If this turns out to be true, this is one of the dumbest things Israel could have done. How on earth could they have thought that this was a good idea?

Jackle, Haifa, Israel

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Last update - 21:14 30/08/2004

Shalom: Mole affair is exaggerated 'media nonsense'

By Nathan Guttman, Haaretz Correspondent, Haaretz Service and Agencies

Officials confirmed Monday that a senior Israeli diplomat in Washington met several times with Larry Franklin, a Pentagon analyst being investigated by the FBI on suspicion he passed classified information on Iran to the American Israel Public Affairs Committee.

However, Foreign Minister Silvan Shalom - denying allegations of espionage - said such meetings are commonplace and the two governments routinely share secrets.

"Israel and the United States have intimate ties ... and the information being exchanged is much more classified than any conversation that may have taken place," Shalom told a joint news conference with his German counterpart, Joschka Fischer.

The Israeli diplomat was identified as Naor Gilon, head of the political department at Israel's embassy in Washington, and a specialist on nuclear weapons proliferation, Israel says. Iran and its nuclear ambitions pose the greatest threat to the Jewish state.

Shalom did not mention Gilon by name, but when asked about contacts between Gilon and Franklin did not deny they had taken place.

A statement issued after the weekly cabinet meeting said that "in discussing the Larry Franklin affair, he [Shalom] noted that Foreign Ministry checks have shown that the entire Israeli Embassy acted according to procedures."

Shalom said Monday that Israel already receives all the classified information it needs from the U.S. government through shared intelligence. He called the Franklin affair "media nonsense" that has been taken out of all proportion, Army Radio reported.

"There is no truth whatsoever in the claims that

Israel spied or in any way acted against our great friend and ally, the United States," Shalom told reporters in Jerusalem.

"I think the ties between Israel and the United States are intimate. The cooperation and levels of information are so close, so intimate, that the information that is exchanged is much more classified than any conversation or another," he said.

The pro-Israel AIPAC lobby denied serving as a conduit for documents from the analyst connected to U.S. Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld's office.

Newsweek magazine reported on Sunday that the FBI began investigating Franklin after tailing Gilon, the minister of political affairs at the Israeli embassy in Washington, who met an AIPAC representative for lunch. Franklin reportedly approached their table and engaged in a warm conversation with them.

However, Shalom said any meetings Franklin might have held with pro-Israeli officials were simply part of diplomatic work, according to Army Radio.

"American embassy officials meet regularly with Israeli government officials," said Shalom. "It's an accepted thing."

The magazine also said Franklin was once posted at the U.S. Embassy in Tel Aviv when he served in the U.S. Air Force Reserve. According to the report, Federal Bureau of Investigation counter-intelligence agents were following Franklin when they saw him attempt to pass a classified policy document on Iran to an unnamed surveillance target.

The U.S. administration believes that the FBI will refrain from charging Franklin with espionage, American media said Sunday. The FBI apparently lacks any evidence that the Pentagon data analyst was operated by either Israel or AIPAC.

Franklin, an analyst in the Pentagon's Near East and South Asia Bureau, could be charged with mishandling a classified document. However, the FBI has yet to make an official pronouncement on whether Franklin will be arrested and what charges he might face. Nevertheless, investigators are broadening their

probe and interviewing figures at the Defense Department, the State Department and outside the administration.

The investigation currently centers on a single document relating to a discussion held by senior administration officials about U.S. policy on Iran. Franklin is suspected of handing the document - which was classified - to AIPAC, which conveyed the document or its contents to Israeli government representatives.

The Los Angeles Times reported Sunday that Franklin may have conveyed the classified information innocently, not realizing he was breaking the law.

"The man is not a spy, he's an idiot," an official familiar with the investigation told the paper.

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Last update - 01:56 30/08/2004

Analyst at center of spy flap called naive, ardently pro-Israel

By Nathan Guttman

WASHINGTON - Larry Franklin, the Pentagon analyst suspected of passing classified material about Iran to the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, has never hidden his unequivocal support of Israel. Colleagues from the Near East and South Asia desk at the Defense Department said yesterday that his sympathy for Israel was overt and public - he didn't refrain from praising Israel and he held aggressive views about several Arab governments, primarily the ayatollahs' regime in Iran and Saddam Hussein's dictatorship in Iraq.

"Everyone knew he was a friend of Israel, but he didn't go about it in any unusual way," a Pentagon coworker said. "He was always accessible to everyone."

Franklin's resume describes his current position, which he has held since 2001, as: "Office of the Secretary of Defense, Policy, Near East/South Asia, Iran desk analyst, Office of Special Plans Iraq. Focus Projects: Hizbollah, Islam, Saudi Arabia." But the official resume reveals only a few details about the man at the center of the affair.

Franklin, a religious Catholic in his late 50s, lives in Kearneysville, West Virginia, a 90-minute drive from the Pentagon. But living in the distant suburb assured a high quality of life for Franklin, his wife Patricia and their five children, some of whom are college-age. Franklin has a doctorate in East Asian studies from St. John's University, a Catholic university in New York City, and speaks Farsi, Arabic, French, Spanish, Russian and Chinese (in

addition to English). On top of his work at the Pentagon, Franklin teaches history at Shepherd University in West Virginia.

In conversations about Franklin with his colleagues, one of the words that comes up again and again is "naive." He is described as an ideologue who believes wholeheartedly in the neo-conservative approach. "Everything by him is black and white," said someone who has worked with Franklin in the Pentagon. "He is a very nice person, very conservative, not at all arrogant," said the colleague, adding that one of the reasons he was brought into the Near East and South Asia desk was his political beliefs.

Franklin's political opinions are similar to those of his bosses - Douglas Feith, undersecretary of defense, and William Luti, the deputy undersecretary of defense responsible for Near Eastern and South Asian affairs. Like them, Franklin supports the policy of acting to bring democracy to Arab regimes and build up pro-American allies in the Middle East.

But those who have worked with Franklin also say he was a bit extreme in his work patterns, attitude and behavior. They occasionally referred to him as "Planet Larry" as a way of expressing the extent to which he "lives in a world of his own," colleagues said.

People who have worked with Franklin believe that it was his trademark naivete that got him in trouble, saying Franklin was not aware of the severity of his activities, and so did not try to hide or mask them. Franklin visited Israel eight times while he served in the U.S. Air Force and worked at the Pentagon. Most of his visits appear to have been related to his reserve duty service as an officer dealing with international contacts. According to his resume, Franklin served as a reserve air force colonel between 1997 and 2004, working with the U.S. military attache in Tel Aviv. Beforehand he was involved in analyzing counter-intelligence in the air force.

Had the current accusations not come to light, Franklin's job at the Pentagon would have

depended on the presidential elections, his coworkers said. If Democratic candidate John Kerry wins the next election, colleagues said, it's doubtful that Franklin will move up, due to his well-known political views.

"He was considered a little strange even for the neo-cons," a coworker said. "They're probably saying to themselves - oh, Larry again."

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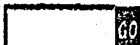
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Making a mountain into a molehill

 By [Akiva Eldar](#)

It now looks by all accounts like Larry Franklin will, at worst, be tried for mishandling sensitive material. In other words, he'll be charged with leaking information to the pro-Israel lobby AIPAC. "Sensitive" data of this sort, or of an even more sensitive nature, is routinely conveyed during meetings between American officials and Israeli diplomats under the bright lights of upscale restaurants in the heart of Washington, D.C.

The real problem threatening Israel-U.S. relations and the Jewish community does not reside in this small-fry from the Pentagon and the classification grade of the

leaked document, but rather in the suspicion of something fishy at the top. The murky waters of this affair will provide ample fishing grounds for political rivals and conspiracy



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Chutzpah: Class 101

Sarah Augerbraun knew she wasn't in Florida anymore when standing in line at her local supermarket, a man tried to cut in front of her. "I realized

I had two options," recalls the former Hebrew teacher. "I could have either yelled at him or just ignored it."

 By [Daphna Berman](#)

An expiration date

In a few months, when American magazines list



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buffs. First they'll land Franklin's boss, Undersecretary of Defense for Policy Douglas Feith, and then they'll hook the entire group of neoconservatives of which he is one of the leaders. That is the group of Israel's friends, including many Jews, that pushed President Bush to go to war in Iraq.

The best form of defense being offense, spokespeople for the Israeli government insinuated that anti-Israel elements are behind the affair. Republican representatives point to "Democratic agents" among senior FBI officials who want to spoil things for Bush on the eve of his party's convention.

They may be right. But you don't need Franklin and the classified Iranian document to draw fire at the conspiracy to take over Iraq. As members of think tanks several years ago, Feith and his friends volunteered an open document in which they laid bare their Israeli-American plot to change the face of the entire Middle East. In 1996, a conservative Israeli-American research institute invited Feith and others, including Richard Perle who headed an advisory panel to the Pentagon known as the

the great movie hits of 2004, not only "Spiderman 2" and "Shrek 2" will star at the top of the list. So will one documentary.
By Uri Klein

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Defense Policy Board, to put together a strategic manual for the incoming prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Feith is responsible for the following paragraph from that document: "Israel can shape its strategic environment, in cooperation with Turkey and Jordan, by weakening, containing, and even rolling back Syria. This effort can focus on removing Saddam Hussein from power in Iraq - an important Israeli strategic objective in its own right - as a means of foiling Syria's regional ambitions."

The document goes on to state that "Jordan has challenged Syria's regional ambitions recently by suggesting the restoration of the Hashemites in Iraq ... Since Iraq's future could affect the strategic balance in the Middle East profoundly, it would be understandable that Israel has an interest in supporting the Hashemites in their efforts to redefine Iraq."

Six years later, members of that same group supported the half-baked idea to crown Jordan's Prince Hassan as Iraq's ruler.

If anyone was looking to use Franklin to sock Feith

in the weak spot of dual loyalty, in order to hurt Bush, they could have located its sources in that very same open document. Its authors provided the head of a foreign government tips on manipulating U.S. members of Congress. They suggested that he take advantage of the period remaining before the November '96 presidential and congressional elections to obtain "a benign American reaction" for his/their policy. In exchange for the free advice, they asked for Netanyahu's help in recruiting members of Congress who "care very much about missile defense" to counter an agreement with Russia on reining in proliferation of long-range missiles.

Feith and his friends promised in that document that Israeli support for the missile plan would assist efforts to relocate the U.S. embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. That initiative, sponsored by the Republican presidential candidate Bob Dole, was the brainchild of the neoconservatives and their friends at AIPAC. It utterly contravened the view held by president Bill Clinton and prime minister Yitzhak Rabin that initiatives of that sort do not help build trust between Israel and the Palestinians. Perhaps

that is the strongest proof
of all that the
neoconservatives and
Jewish lobbyists do not
serve two masters. They
serve themselves, and
that's the trouble.


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White House - AP Cabinet & State

Top Officials Queried in Israel Probe

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By **CURT ANDERSON**, Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON - High-ranking officials at the Pentagon ([news](#) - [web sites](#)) and State Department have been interviewed or briefed by FBI ([news](#) - [web sites](#)) agents investigating a Defense Department analyst suspected of passing to Israel classified Bush administration materials on Iran.



AP Photo

Among those briefed by the FBI was Douglas J. Feith, the Pentagon undersecretary for policy who is a superior of the analyst under investigation, said government officials familiar with the sessions.

- Full Coverage

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The officials spoke Monday on condition of anonymity because the probe is ongoing.

The FBI agents briefed Feith on Sunday in his office at the Pentagon and also asked questions, the officials said. Also recently briefed by the FBI was Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz, they said.

Others at State and Defense have been interviewed or briefed over the course of the probe, but the officials declined to provide any other names.

There was no immediate indication that the criminal investigation has widened beyond the single analyst, identified previously by senior law enforcement officials as Larry Franklin. Franklin, who has not responded to telephone messages seeking comment, works in an office dealing the Middle East affairs and has access to classified government information.

The investigation focuses on whether Franklin passed classified U.S. material on Iran to the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, the influential Israeli lobbying organization in Washington, and whether anyone in that group forwarded the information on to Israeli officials. AIPAC and Israel have strenuously denied the allegations.

Israeli officials did confirm Monday that a senior Israeli diplomat in Washington has met with Franklin. Those officials, also speaking on condition of anonymity, identified the diplomat as Naor Gilon, head of the Israeli Embassy's political department.

Gilon told the Israeli newspaper Maariv that he did nothing wrong but was concerned that he may no longer be able to work in Washington because of the investigation.

"Now, people will be scared to talk with me," Gilon said in a story published Monday.

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Prosecutors were still deciding whether to bring the most serious charge of espionage against Franklin or others, or opt for a lesser charge such as mishandling classified information. U.S. Attorney Paul McNulty of Virginia's eastern district, who is overseeing the probe, did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

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Analysis / A cold wind blowing from the CIA

By

Before former U.S. Central Intelligence Agency head George Tenet retired, he made stinging comments on various occasions to Israeli officials in the intelligence community, especially the Mossad, saying Israel had a spy in America.

The accusation was rejected out of hand - Tenet was even loudly challenged to catch any such agent and expose him publicly. The exchange of remarks was passed on to Israel, evoking surprise at the political level over the accusations.

On Friday night, the American media revealed that an investigation was proceeding into a suspected Pentagon mole who was transmitting information to AIPAC (the American Israel Public Affairs Committee) and from there to Israel about the White House's war plans for Iraq.

A person named Larry Franklin was mentioned, who works in the office of undersecretary of defense Douglas Feith. Between Larry Franklin and Doug Feith there are at least three levels of bureaucratic hierarchy.

AIPAC insisted last night that it heard Franklin's name for the first time on Friday when investigators came to them. They also said that AIPAC provided the authorities with documents and information that investigators had requested or asked about.

In any case, it is difficult to imagine that an organization like AIPAC, considered professional and very experienced, would get itself involved in maintaining a mole in the American security establishment.

The timing of the affair's exposure is connected with the U.S. election campaign and the struggle against the group of neoconservatives in the administration, who are accused of leading President Bush to war with Iraq.

While AIPAC claims it never heard of Larry Franklin, he is known to the Israeli intelligence community. He has appeared more than once at meetings with Israeli intelligence, especially with military intelligence, mostly in a group setting.

Israel has noticed that relations between the CIA and the Mossad had begun to cool. Senior Israeli and American officials say the chill may have a number of causes. One might have been the leaking of secret

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And Now a Mole?

In the Pentagon, a suspected spy allegedly passes secrets about Iran to Israel

By Michael Isikoff and Mark Hosenball

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 Pentagon.

Franklin soon became a subject of the FBI investigation as well. Now he may face charges, accused of divulging to Israel classified information on U.S. government plans regarding Iran, officials say. While some U.S. officials warned against exaggerated accusations of spying, one administration source described the case as the most significant Israeli espionage investigation in Washington since Jonathan Pollard, an American who was imprisoned for life in 1987 for passing U.S. Navy secrets to the Israelis. The FBI and Justice Department are still reviewing the evidence, but one intelligence source believes Franklin may be arrested shortly.

The probe itself amounts to another embarrassing problem for Donald Rumsfeld, the beleaguered Defense secretary. It comes during a week in which violence flared up again in Iraq and a Pentagon investigation indirectly blamed Rumsfeld for poor oversight in the Abu Ghraib prisoner-abuse scandal. In a statement, the Defense Department said it "has been cooperating with the Department of Justice on this matter for an extended period of time."

At first blush, officials close to the investigation say, Franklin seemed an unlikely suspect: he was described as a midlevel policy "wonk" with a doctorate who had toiled for some time on Mideast affairs. Yet he had previously worked at the Defense Intelligence Agency, and there was at least one other aspect to his background that caught the FBI's attention: although Franklin was not Jewish, he was an Army reservist who did his reserve duty at the U.S. Embassy in Tel Aviv.

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. There is no evidence that money changed hands. "For whatever reason, the guy hates Iran passionately," the official said, referring to the Iranian government.

NEWSWEEK's efforts to reach Franklin or a lawyer representing him were unsuccessful. But a close friend, Michael Ledeen of the American Enterprise Institute, said he believes the charges against Franklin are "nonsensical." Officials say that Franklin began cooperating about a month ago, after he was confronted by the FBI. At the time, these officials say, Franklin acknowledged meetings with the Israeli contact. Law-enforcement officials say they have no evidence that anyone above Franklin at the Pentagon had any knowledge of his activities.

Israeli officials, meanwhile, bristled at the suggestion of espionage. Ephraim Sneh, a member of Parliament and a retired general who has been monitoring the development of nukes in Iran for years, said that Israel would be crazy to spy on its best friend. "Since Pollard, we avoid any intelligence activity on U.S. soil," Sneh said in an interview. "I know the policy; I've been in this business for years. We avoid anything that even smells like intelligence-gathering in the U.S." Another Israeli official contended that the Israelis had no cause to steal secrets because anything important on Iran is already exchanged between the CIA and the Mossad, Israel's spy agency. In a statement, AIPAC denied that any of its employees received information "they believed was secret or classified," and said it was cooperating.

U.S. investigators would not reveal what kind of information Franklin was allegedly trying to divulge to Israel. But for months the administration has been debating what to do about Iran's clerical regime as well as its alleged program to build nuclear weapons—a subject of keen interest to the Israelis, who have quietly warned Washington that they will not permit Tehran to gain nuclear capability.

Franklin was known to be one of a tightly knit group of pro-Israel hawks in the Pentagon associated with his immediate superior, William Luti, the hard-charging and impassioned protégé of former House speaker Newt Gingrich. As deputy assistant secretary of Defense for Near East affairs, Luti was a key player in planning the Iraq war. He, in turn, works in the office of Under Secretary Douglas Feith, a career lawyer who, before he became the Pentagon's No. 3, was a sometime consultant for Likud, Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's political party. Officials say they have no evidence that either Feith or Luti had any knowledge of Franklin's discussions with the Israelis.

Franklin has also been among the subjects of a separate probe being conducted by the Senate intelligence committee. Part of that investigation concerns alleged "rogue" intelligence activities by Feith's staff. Among these activities was a series of meetings that Franklin and one of his colleagues, Harold Rhode, had in Paris in late 2001 with Manucher Ghorbanifar, the shadowy Iranian arms dealer made infamous during the Iran-contra scandal of the 1980s. One purpose of those meetings was to explore a scheme for overthrowing the mullahs in Iran, though Rumsfeld later said the plan was never seriously considered. But so far, there is no evidence that the Ghorbanifar contacts are related to the espionage probe. And officials familiar with the case suggest that the political damage to Bush and the Pentagon may prove to be more serious than the damage to national security.

With Michael Hirsh and Daniel Klaidman in Washington and Dan Ephron in Jerusalem

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Philadelphia Inquirer
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FBI Looking Deep Into Defense Office

A probe goes beyond whether a midlevel analyst gave an Iran policy document to Israel, sources said.

By Warren P. Strobel, Inquirer Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON - An FBI investigation into the handling of classified material by Pentagon civilians is broader than previously reported and goes well beyond allegations that a single midlevel analyst gave a top-secret Iran policy document to Israel; three sources familiar with the investigation said yesterday.

The probe, more than two years old, also has focused on other Pentagon civilians, the sources, who have firsthand knowledge of the subject, said on condition of anonymity.

In addition, one said, FBI investigators in recent weeks have conducted interviews to determine whether Pentagon officials gave classified U.S. intelligence to a leading Iraqi exile group, the Iraqi National Congress, which may have in turn passed it to Iran. The exile group's leader, Ahmed Chalabi, has denied his group was involved in any wrongdoing.

The link, if any, between the two investigations remains unclear.

But they both center on the office of Undersecretary of Defense Douglas Feith, the Pentagon's No. 3 official.

Feith's office, which oversees policy matters, has been the source of numerous controversies in the last three years. His office had close ties to Chalabi and was responsible for postwar Iraq planning that the administration has acknowledged was inadequate.

Before the war, Feith and his aides pushed the now-discredited theory that Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein was in league with al-Qaeda.

No one is known to have been charged with any wrongdoing in the investigations. Officials said the investigations could result in charges of mishandling classified information, rather than the more serious charge of espionage.

The Israeli government strenuously denied yesterday that it had spied on the United States, its main benefactor on the global scene.

The American Israel Public Affairs Committee, the powerful pro-Israel lobby that top officials said was suspected of serving as a conduit to Israel for the midlevel analyst, also has denied any wrongdoing.

The sources indicated that the analyst being investigated is Larry Franklin, who works for Feith's deputy, William Luti. Franklin served as an important, albeit low-profile, adviser on Iran issues to Feith and

Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz.

Franklin, a former Defense Intelligence Agency analyst who lives in West Virginia, could not be reached for comment yesterday.

Investigators are said to be looking at whether Franklin acted with authorization from his superiors, one official said.

Two sources disclosed yesterday that the information believed to have been passed to Israel was the draft of a top-secret presidential order on Iran policy known as a National Security Presidential Directive. Because of disagreements over Iran policy among President Bush's advisers, the document is not believed to have been completed.

Having a draft of the document - which some Pentagon officials may have believed was insufficiently tough toward Iran - would have allowed Israel to influence U.S. policy as it was being made. Iran is among Israel's main security concerns.

Two or three staff members of the pro-Israel lobby have been interviewed in the case. In a prepared statement, the lobby said any allegation of criminal conduct was "false and baseless." It is cooperating fully with investigators, the statement said.

Israeli officials insisted they stopped spying on the United States after the exposure of Jonathan Pollard, who was arrested in 1985 and sentenced to life in prison for spying for Israel.

White House spokesman Scott McClellan would not discuss the investigation.

"Obviously any time there is an allegation of this nature, it's a serious matter," he said while traveling with the President in Ohio.

Other sources said the FBI investigation was more wide-ranging than initial news reports suggested.

They said it had involved interviews of current and former officials at the White House, Pentagon and State Department.

Investigators have also asked about the security practices of several other Defense Department civilians, they said.

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Los Angeles Times
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Pentagon Spy Flap Isn't Open-And-Shut Case

U.S. and Israel often share data, officials say. But the latter has riled friendly nations before.

By Laura King and Tyler Marshall, Times Staff Writers

JERUSALEM — Not just in espionage thrillers, but in real life as well, it can be difficult to tell trusted friend from double-crossing spy.

That's especially true between close allies such as Israel and the United States, in a world where government officials, lobbyists, diplomats, think-tank analysts and intelligence veterans from both sides often move in overlapping political and social circles — a pattern that can blur the line between cordially informal exchanges of information and espionage.

After U.S. authorities disclosed that a Pentagon analyst specializing in Iranian affairs is under investigation for possibly spying for Israel, the government of Prime Minister Ariel Sharon flatly denied that it had illicitly acquired any classified American material.

But cases such as these are not always open and shut. Longtime observers of the intelligence scene note that the U.S. and Israel often share sensitive data, particularly when one has assets the other lacks.

For example, the ranks of Israel's diplomatic and intelligence corps are honeycombed with native Arabic speakers, many of them Jews whose families emigrated from elsewhere in the Middle East. They are in many cases far better equipped than their relatively sparse U.S. counterparts to carry out sophisticated analyses of political and military developments in the region, and the fruits of such labors are routinely handed over to America.

Before and during the war in Iraq, Israel and the United States engaged in intensive sharing of intelligence — some of which turned out to be tainted, military and intelligence officials on both sides have said.

Among American Jews, the subject of Israeli spying is fraught with tension because of fears of being tarred as a "fifth column" that puts Israel's interests ahead of America's. Some activists for Jewish and Israeli causes believe that it took years to recover from the damage done by the case of U.S. naval intelligence analyst Jonathan Jay Pollard, who was convicted of spying for Israel and sentenced in 1987 to life in prison.

In the current case, such concerns are complicated by investigators' suspicions that the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, the foremost lobby group in Washington for Israeli causes, may have served as a conduit for information improperly passed to the Israeli government. AIPAC has denied any wrongdoing.

For Israel, part of the problem when confronted with a spy scandal like this is that in the past, its protestations of innocence sometimes proved less than credible.

In recent years, under the watches of several prime ministers, Israel has antagonized a string of friendly nations, including Switzerland, Cyprus, Jordan and Canada, either by using their soil as a staging ground for spy activity or by having Mossad agents pass themselves off as these countries' nationals.

Israel suffered one of its worst cases of "blowback" — espionage parlance for unanticipated and highly unwelcome consequences — when Mossad agents tried, ineptly, to assassinate Hamas leader Khaled Meshaal in Jordan in 1997 by injecting him in the ear with poison.

To retrieve its disgraced agents, Israel was forced to free Hamas leader Sheik Ahmed Yassin, who returned to the Gaza Strip in triumph and was a driving force behind the campaign of Palestinian suicide bombings until he was assassinated by Israel in March.

Authorities in New Zealand were infuriated last spring when two Israelis were caught trying to fraudulently procure a New Zealand passport. Prosecutors said a disabled New Zealand man was unwittingly used as the phony passport applicant.

Israel has not acknowledged that its nationals were spies, but New Zealand says there is little room for doubt.

Bungles such as these have done much to dent the Mossad's image as a skilled and subtle practitioner of the art of espionage, and high-profile errors have prompted calls in Israel to rein in the spymasters:

In the aftermath of the Pollard case, Israel made strenuous pledges to refrain from spying on the United States. Senior diplomatic sources and analysts interviewed Saturday expressed doubt that Israel would have risked involving itself in such an operation at this juncture.

"Israel is not spying on American soil, full stop, in the sense that it's not trying to locate potential agents, it's not approaching them, it's not recruiting them, it's not running them, and it's not paying money for information," said Yossi Melman, an author who specializes in Israel's intelligence community.

"And it very much depends on the extent and detail of the information involved," Melman added. "If someone at the Pentagon actually passed a confidential document directly to Israel, it would be very, very serious, but if someone simply tells a third party, 'Well, it seems the American thinking on this subject is such and such,' then it's all much more murky."

In Washington, the reports of the FBI investigation also raised questions about why Israel might be willing to risk a major spy scandal involving its closest ally. After all, Sharon's government can open doors even at the highest levels of the Bush administration, Washington-based diplomats and Middle East experts noted.

"It would be kind of reckless for Israel to do this considering the access they have within this administration," said William B. Quandt, a Middle East specialist at the University of Virginia who served under President Carter.

But others noted that the investigation comes at a time of tensions between the two allies on an issue vital to Israel's security: Iran's nuclear weapons capabilities. Israeli intelligence estimates have consistently concluded that Tehran is much closer to building a nuclear weapon than Washington

believes.

Earlier this year, senior Israeli officials predicted that Iran could gain nuclear weapons capability by next year, and some hinted that Israel would be prepared to attack facilities at the Iranian port of Bushehr if Tehran achieved that capacity. Iran has threatened Israel as well.

"If the Zionist entity attacks us, we are capable of striking its nuclear reactors," Iranian news reports quoted Gen. Yedalla Jawani, a senior commander in the Revolutionary Guard, as saying recently.

A U.S. intelligence estimate this year suggested that Iran was still several years away from building a nuclear bomb.

"Some Israelis have recently adjusted to a prediction of two to three years, but they have taken a much more alarmist position on this [than the U.S.] all along," said Joseph Cirincione, senior associate and director of the nonproliferation program at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace in Washington. "There are clearly differences."

Understanding details of the U.S. assessment of Iran's nuclear program or gaining inside knowledge of how America might react to a possible Israeli preemptive military strike against Iranian nuclear facilities would be extremely valuable for the Jewish state, regional experts say.

The subject of the FBI's investigation is believed to have dealt with Iran policy in a part of the Pentagon that has had considerable influence on U.S. policy in the region.

Almost no one in the Israeli leadership echelon believes that intelligence-gathering in and of itself is necessarily a hostile act, even when conducted in friendly countries. Part of any diplomat's job is to read the newspapers, talk to politicians and policymakers, visit military and industrial installations when invited to do so — and report back.

"All over the world, in the embassies of any country, you have people with job titles like cultural attaché or agricultural liaison, and in reality, they gather information of use to their home country's intelligence apparatus," said a former Israeli diplomat, speaking on condition of anonymity. "Everyone does it."

Israel has dozens of military and military intelligence officials, and at least two ranking Mossad agents, as part of its overt operations in the United States. The Mossad has a liaison to the CIA, who also acts on behalf of Israel's domestic security agency, the Shin Bet, in dealings with the FBI.

Because Israel is such a melting pot, with immigrants from all over the world, it has many citizens who hold dual nationality. When smart, multilingual young Israelis holding foreign passports are ready to enter the job market, they sometimes find themselves approached — albeit discreetly — by Mossad recruiters. Separately, the Mossad is known to seek out foreign Jews to serve informally as volunteer tipsters, known in Hebrew as *sayanim*, or "helpers."

Whatever its outcome, the spy flap comes at an awkward time for both Sharon and President Bush. The Israeli prime minister is on far friendlier terms these days with Washington than he is with members of his own party and has no wish to jeopardize that. And in an election season, no U.S. leader would court a public spat with Israel.

Bush has lately gone far out of his way to support Sharon.

Four months ago, he reversed decades of U.S. policy to support to the prime minister's plan to eventually annex large Jewish settlement blocs in the West Bank in exchange for Israel relinquishing settlements in the Gaza Strip.

Washington also refrained from public criticism this month of Israel's issuing of tenders to build nearly 2,000 homes in the West Bank, even though long-standing U.S. policy explicitly opposes settlement expansion.

King reported from Jerusalem and Marshall from Washington.

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Analyst Who Is Target Of Probe Went To Israel

By Thomas E. Ricks and Robin Wright, Washington Post Staff Writers

The FBI investigation into whether classified information was passed to the Israeli government is focused on a Pentagon analyst who has served as an Air Force reservist in Israel, and the probe has been broadened in recent days to include interviews at the State and Defense departments and with Middle Eastern affairs specialists outside government, officials and others familiar with the inquiry said yesterday.

At the center of the investigation, sources said, is Lawrence A. Franklin, a career analyst at the Defense Intelligence Agency who specializes in Iran and has served in the Air Force Reserve, rising to colonel. Early in the Bush administration, Franklin moved from the DIA to the Pentagon's policy branch headed by Undersecretary Douglas J. Feith, where he continued his work on Iranian affairs.

Officials and colleagues said yesterday that Franklin had traveled to Israel, including during duty in the Air Force Reserve, where he served as a specialist in foreign political-military affairs. He may have been based at the U.S. Embassy in Tel Aviv on those tours, said a former co-worker at the DIA, but was never permanently assigned there.

Messages left at Franklin's Pentagon office were not returned yesterday, and nobody answered the door at his house in West Virginia. No one has been charged in the case.

FBI officials have been quietly investigating for months whether Franklin gave classified information -- which officials said included a draft of a presidential directive on U.S. policies toward Iran -- to two Israeli lobbyists here who are alleged to have passed it on to the Israeli government. Officials said it was not yet clear whether the probe would become an espionage case or perhaps would result in lesser charges such as improper release of classified information or mishandling of government documents.

On Friday, Pentagon officials said Franklin was not in a position to have significant influence over U.S. policy. "The Defense Department has been cooperating with the Department of Justice for an extended period of time," a Pentagon statement said. "It is the DOD's understanding that the investigation within DOD is very limited in its scope."

At the Pentagon and elsewhere in Washington yesterday, people touched by the case said they were baffled by aspects of it.

Colleagues said they were stunned to hear Franklin was suspected of giving secret information to a foreign government. And foreign policy specialists said they were skeptical that the pro-Israel group under FBI scrutiny, the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, would jeopardize its work with classified documents from a midlevel bureaucrat when it could find out almost anything it wanted to by calling top officials in the Bush administration.

"The whole thing makes no sense to me," said Dennis Ross, special envoy on the Arab-Israeli peace process in the first Bush administration and the Clinton presidency. "The Israelis have access to all sorts of people. They have access in Congress and in the administration. They have people who talk about these things," said Ross, now a senior fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy.

Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's office issued a statement yesterday saying Israel was not involved in the matter and conducts no espionage in the United States. AIPAC has strongly denied any wrongdoing and said it is "cooperating fully" with the probe.

The FBI investigation was touched off months ago when a series of e-mails was brought to investigators' attention, said a U.S. official familiar with the case. The investigation moved into high gear in recent days, another official said. On Friday, Justice Department officials briefed some Pentagon officials about the state of the inquiry.

"I think they are at the end of their investigation and beginning to brief people in the chain of command, partly to make sure that the acts weren't authorized," one official said.

Pentagon co-workers expressed shock at the news. "It's totally astonishing to all of us who knew him," said a Defense Department co-worker who asked not to be identified because of the investigation. "He is a career guy, a mild-mannered professional. No one would think of him as evil or devious."

Franklin works in the office of William J. Luti, deputy undersecretary of defense for Near Eastern and South Asian affairs. For years a bureaucratic backwater, the office has been in the thick of the action since 2001 because it formulates Pentagon policy on Iraq. It played a central role as the U.S. military prepared for the spring 2003 invasion and since then as the Pentagon has overseen the occupation.

Luti's office is part of the policy operation under Feith.

Feith has been a controversial figure in U.S.-Israeli affairs since the mid-1990s, when he was part of a study group of American conservatives, then out of government, who urged Israel's then prime minister, Binyamin Netanyahu, to abandon the Oslo peace accords and reject the basis for them -- that Israel should give up land in exchange for peace.

More recently, Feith has been a target of criticism from Democrats who claim that two offices in his branch -- the Office of Special Plans, headed by Luti, and the Counterterrorism Evaluation Group -- sought to manipulate intelligence to improve the Bush administration's case for war against Iraq. House and Senate intelligence committee investigators found no evidence for allegations that the Pentagon offices tried to bypass the CIA or had a major impact on the prewar debate. But in the Senate panel's report on prewar intelligence, three Democratic senators -- John D. Rockefeller IV (W.Va.), Carl M. Levin (Mich.), and Richard J. Durbin (Ill.) -- specifically criticized Feith's operation.

In Kearneysville, W.Va., about 80 miles from the Pentagon, neighbors of the Franklins interviewed yesterday said they did not know the family well. Though nobody answered the door, voices were heard in the house, which had a "God Bless Our Troops" sticker and an American flag in the window.

People who know Franklin from different phases of his life offered contrasting accounts of his political views.

A U.S. government official familiar with the investigation said Franklin was very outwardly supportive

of Israel, for example. But a former co-worker at the DIA disputed that characterization, saying that he did not recall in years of working with him any strong political statements about Israel or anything else. Franklin, he said, was a solid, competent analyst specializing in Iranian political affairs, especially the views of top leaders and the course of opposition movements.

In February 2000, Franklin wrote an op-ed piece for the Wall Street Journal's European edition that was sharply critical of Iranian President Mohammad Khatami, arguing that the leader was launching a "charm offensive" that was simply a "ruse" to make the Iranian government look better to Westerners while it continued to abuse human rights.

Details of Franklin's Air Force service, and especially his time in Israel, could not be learned yesterday. A spokesman for the U.S. Embassy in Tel Aviv declined to comment.

In Israel yesterday, Sharon's office issued a statement. "Israel does not engage in intelligence activities in the U.S. We deny all these reports," the statement said, according to the Associated Press. That followed a strong statement Friday by the Israeli Embassy in Washington denying any wrongdoing.

One Israeli official familiar with the situation said yesterday that his government had checked "every organ here" to make sure that no part of government was involved. "We checked everything possible, and there's absolutely nothing. It's a non-event, from the Israeli point of view. Someone leaked this to [hurt] . . . the president, AIPAC and the Jews on the eve of the Republican convention," he speculated.

He added that Israel would not have been involved in such activities, "because we have a trauma here in Israel. It's called Pollard."

That was a reference to the case in which a U.S. Navy intelligence analyst, Jonathan J. Pollard, admitted in 1987 to selling state secrets to Israel. Pollard was sentenced to life in prison, and Israeli officials have said since then they do not conduct espionage against the United States.

At AIPAC, spokesman Josh Block said the organization had no comment yesterday beyond its Friday statement that the organization and its employees denied any wrongdoing and were cooperating with the government. A former AIPAC employee also said he was baffled by the news of the FBI investigation. "I have a hard time figuring out what this is about," he said. If the Israelis or their supporters want to know about deliberations in the Bush administration, he said, "all they have to do is take people to lunch."

Others in Washington, however, maintained that Israel does present a problem for the United States in certain aspects of intelligence, such as sensitive defense technologies and Iran policy.

Israel sees Iran as the single biggest threat to its existence, and so closely monitors all possible moves in Washington's Iranian policy -- especially as the Bush administration presses Tehran to disclose more about the state of its nuclear program.

One former State Department officer recalled being told that U.S. government experts considered the countries whose spying most threatened the United States were Russia, South Korea and Israel. "I also know from my time in Jerusalem that official U.S. visitors to Israel were warned about the counterintelligence threat from Israel," he said.

Taking a slightly different view, others speculated that the very closeness of the relationship between the United States and Israeli governments -- and especially the tight connections between the Israelis and Feith's policy office -- may have led officials to become sloppy about rules barring release of sensitive

information.

Staff writers John Ward Anderson in Jerusalem, Dan Eggen, Amit R. Paley, Steven Ginsberg and Jerry Markon in Washington and staff researcher Madonna Lebling contributed to this report.

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Report On Iran Key To Spying Inquiry

Investigators are looking closely at Pentagon policy analyst Larry Franklin's relationships with advocates for Israel.

By Mark Mazzetti and Richard B. Schmitt, Times Staff Writers

WASHINGTON — The man at the center of an FBI investigation into possible Israeli espionage in Washington is a career Pentagon employee, a colonel in the Air Force reserves and a national security analyst who at the end of the Cold War taught himself Farsi and refashioned himself as an expert on Iran, officials said Saturday.

The FBI is trying to determine whether he is also a spy.

U.S. officials confirmed Saturday that the target of the investigation was Larry Franklin, the Pentagon's top Iran policy analyst and a confidant of Deputy Defense Secretary Paul D. Wolfowitz and Douglas J. Feith, who, as undersecretary for policy, was the Pentagon's third-ranking official.

The FBI is trying to ascertain whether Franklin turned over a draft presidential directive on policy toward Iran last year to two people affiliated with the Washington-based American Israel Public Affairs Committee, which may have given the information to Israel.

Officials are concerned because the directive was still being debated by U.S. policymakers at the time, possibly putting the Israeli government in a position to influence the final document, officials said. U.S. policy toward Iran is vital to Israel, which is gravely concerned about the expanding nuclear capability of the country run by Shiite Muslim clerics.

The probe, which is being handled by the FBI's counter-espionage division, might not result in espionage charges against Franklin.

Instead, the Pentagon analyst could be charged with lesser offenses such as improper disclosure or mishandling of classified information. Or he could be exonerated.

A U.S. official with knowledge of the case expressed doubts Saturday that Franklin's alleged actions rose to the level of espionage. Instead, he said it was more likely that Franklin, who maintains close ties with Israeli officials, passed documents to Israel without knowing the seriousness of his actions.

"From everything I've seen, the guy's not a spy," the official said. "The guy's an idiot."

According to the official, the closeness of the U.S. relationship with Israel means that top officials of the two nations often share sensitive information. Nevertheless, Franklin should have known what information was and was not permissible to be shared, he said.

"We knew this guy had the relationship for a while, and he shared some stuff beyond what he should be sharing," the official said.

Franklin did not respond to phone messages Saturday seeking comment.

Sources said that Franklin, a longtime official with the Defense Intelligence Agency, three years ago joined the Pentagon's Office of Near East and South Asian Affairs, the group charged with developing the Pentagon's policy for the Middle East. The office is run by William J. Luti, who in turn reports to Feith.

Since joining Luti's office, Franklin has been the Pentagon's leading Iran policy analyst, a job that took on greater importance after President Bush included Iran in his "axis of evil" and his appointees at the Pentagon advocated a hard line toward Iran.

As a member of the Air Force reserves, Franklin is assigned to a DIA reserve unit based in Washington.

A Pentagon statement released Friday characterized Franklin as a "desk officer" with no significant influence on U.S. policy. Yet some who have worked with him offer a different picture, saying he was very influential in high-level Pentagon policy debates.

"You're not talking about someone toiling away in the bowels of the U.S. government," said a former Pentagon official who worked for Feith until last year and spoke on condition of anonymity.

"Franklin was the go-to guy on Iran issues for Wolfowitz and Feith."

In addition, the former official characterized Franklin as an ideological ally of Wolfowitz, Feith and Luti. The three men were among the Bush administration's leading advocates of war with Iraq, and the Middle East policy office and the Office of Special Plans, both of which reported to Luti, produced analyses bolstering the U.S. case against Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein.

"Their analysis wasn't whether we should invade Iraq, but whether we should do it on Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday," the former official said.

FBI investigators fear that Franklin — given his influential position and high-level security clearance — may have been in a position to compromise government information about Iraq and the U.S. war effort.

Sometime after the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, Franklin took a secret trip to Rome with Harold Rhode, another civilian official in the Pentagon, to meet with Iranian dissidents who reportedly promised to provide information to them that would aid the U.S.-declared war on terrorism.

One of the dissidents the pair spoke to was Manucher Ghorbanifar, an arms dealer and former Iranian spy who was a central figure in the Iran-Contra scandal of the 1980s.

The White House blessed the trip. Yet when news of the meeting leaked two years later, officials said they had not known that Ghorbanifar would be among the dissidents Franklin and Rhode met.

According to Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld, that meeting and a subsequent one between Rhode and Ghorbanifar "went nowhere."

Michael Ledeen, a scholar at the American Enterprise Institute in Washington who specializes in Mideast affairs, arranged the contacts between the Pentagon officials and the Iranian dissidents, which he said led to American lives being saved in Afghanistan.

Asked Saturday for comment on the investigation, Ledeen said he expected the FBI probe to yield nothing incriminating about Franklin, whom Ledeen has known for years.

"I don't believe Larry Franklin would ever do anything improper with classified information," said Ledeen, who worked as a consultant to the National Security Council and the State and Defense departments during the administration of Ronald Reagan.

Ledeen said the information Franklin was suspected of transferring was well known among foreign policy observers. The U.S. had not developed a coherent Iran policy, he said, and the divergent views of various administration officials were publicly known and available.

"There is no American policy on Iran," Ledeen said. "What is he telling them? What can there possibly be that is classified about American policy on Iran that we do not know about from the public debate?"

Franklin and Rhode also have close ties with Iraqi politician Ahmad Chalabi, whose Iraqi National Congress was the dissident organization most favored by Pentagon officials during Hussein's rule.

Chalabi met often with top officials at the Pentagon and Vice President Dick Cheney's office to advocate regime change in Iraq.

Chalabi himself has been investigated by American officials in connection with the transmission of U.S. secrets to Iran. It is unclear whether the investigations into Franklin and Chalabi are connected.

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Jerusalem Post
August 30, 2004

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Sharansky: Pentagon-CIA Rivalry Led To Spy Charge

By Associated Press

Allegations of Israeli spying in the United States are false and may be the result of internal conflicts between the Pentagon and the CIA, Diaspora Affairs minister Natan Sharansky said Sunday, but analysts admitted that even so, damage has been done to crucial ties between the two countries.

American officials said Saturday that the FBI has spent more than a year investigating whether a Pentagon analyst funneled highly classified material to Israel.

The material described White House policy toward Iran. Israel says Iran - and its nuclear ambitions - pose the greatest single threat to the Jewish state.

Sharansky, the first Israeli Cabinet minister to speak in public about the matter, told Canadian Broadcasting Corp. television that Israel enforces a ban on spying in the United States.

"I hope it's all a mistake or misunderstanding of some kind, maybe a rivalry between different bodies," he said, singling out "the Pentagon and the CIA."

Sharansky said the ban on espionage in the United States dates to the scandal over Jonathan Pollard, an American Jew caught spying for Israel in 1985. Sharansky, who belongs to Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's ruling Likud Party, said he has "personal experience" with the ban, but he did not elaborate.

"There are absolutely no attempts to involve any member of the Jewish community and any general American citizens to spy for Israel against the United States," he said.

Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's office issued a denial late Saturday, saying "Israel does not engage in intelligence activities in the U.S."

The scandal dominated Israeli news media on Sunday. In numerous interviews, both current and former Israeli intelligence officials said it was highly unlikely that Israel would have to spy on the U.S. government.

Legislator Ehud Yatom, chairman of the parliamentary subcommittee on covert intelligence, said he expected the allegations to be quickly withdrawn.

"I imagine that within a few days the United States will come out with an announcement that Israel has no connection whatsoever with the supposed spy and his activities," he told Israel Radio.

Uzi Arad, a former senior official in the Mossad spy agency, said the allegations were leaked to hurt the pro-Israel lobby in Washington.

"They way it was reported, they pointed out in which office (Franklin) worked," Arad told Israel Radio.
"They pointed at people like Doug Feith or other defense officials who have long been under attack within the American bureaucracy."

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Christian Science Monitor
August 30, 2004

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Spy Probe Tests US-Israel Ties

At issue: whether a Pentagon analyst passed secrets to an Israeli lobby group, and whether that group passed the material to Israel.

By Faye Bowers, Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor

WASHINGTON — The nascent spy probe unfolding in the nation's capital could end up complicating ties between the US and Israel at a critical time in the war on terror for the Bush administration - and raise new questions about how closely the two allies should cooperate on sensitive issues.

Word leaked over the weekend that for more than a year the FBI has been investigating a Pentagon official for possibly providing Israel classified information - including a draft of a presidential directive on US policies toward Iran - through an Israeli lobby in Washington, the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC).

Whether true or not, the revelations could sour relations between the US and one of its closest allies in the war on terror. The two countries have long shared intelligence - the US passes Israel information to help prevent attacks on its homeland and Israel shares intelligence from a stable of native Arab speakers who operate in parts of the world the US can't.

Moreover, at a time when the US is the sole superpower, wielding enormous influence, particularly in areas like the Middle East, experts say it is not unusual for friendly allies to go one step further and spy on Washington. The problem is, as perhaps happened in this case, when the snooping goes beyond acceptable bounds.

"If they are found to be spying on us, it wouldn't be a shock," says Jim Walsh, an international security expert at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government. "But the closer the friendship, and the more sensitive the information, the more likely it is to leave an impression on the personal relationships. People will feel betrayed, particularly government leaders."

The Pentagon official identified as being at the center of the probe is Lawrence Franklin, an Iran specialist at the Defense Intelligence Agency and a former colonel in the Air Force Reserves. Reports indicate that Mr. Franklin is being investigated for allegedly passing on sensitive papers about US policy toward Iran to AIPAC, which then supposedly handed them on to the Israeli government. Franklin works in the office of William Luti, who reports to Douglas Feith. Mr. Feith and the policy branch he heads at the Pentagon have been under scrutiny because of the role they played in formulating the Pentagon's Iraq war strategy.

Franklin hasn't been available for comment. Some people who know him have said they think the accusations are groundless. The Pentagon released a statement saying it is fully cooperating with the FBI investigation, which it insists is "limited in scope." The Israelis, for their part, are vehemently denying complicity in any espionage activity. "Israel does not engage in intelligence activities in the US," Israeli

Prime Minister Ariel Sharon said in a statement.

AIPAC, too, proclaims innocence. "Any allegation of criminal conduct by AIPAC or our employees is false and baseless," a statement says.

Still, now that the probe has become public, speculation will continue until a conclusion is reached. And whether Israel is guilty or not, there will be residual damage to the relationship, experts say. For one thing, it reminds people of the time Israel was caught spying on the US once before. In 1987, a US Navy intelligence analyst, Jonathan Pollard, admitted to selling state secrets to the Israelis. "I think this will escort us for many years to come," says Danny Yatom, a former chief of the Mossad, Israel's foreign intelligence arm. "There was one attempt made by Pollard, and since then there is still an assessment that Israel will try again whenever it is pushed into a corner."

In addition, experts say the relationship between the US and Israel has become so lax - because of the cozy ties between the two countries at the moment - that there was bound to be this sort of problem. "The Israelis have always had more access than other friendly countries," says Patrick Lang, former head of Middle East intelligence at the Defense Intelligence Agency. "The liaison relationships between the Israeli and American services are highly developed, codified, and have functioned for many years."

In this climate, he says, it is easy to share information without checking the rulebook, which can lead to problems. Indeed, some experts say the level of sharing will provoke other questions, even if the incident turns out not to be serious.

"Why does this guy think he should share this type of information? asks Mr. Walsh. "If this is just standard operating procedure, then it does raise serious policy issues."

It is still not clear whether the charges will be serious (possibly espionage), or something more mundane (mishandling of documents), or whether there will be charges at all. FBI officials reportedly were tipped to a potential problem months ago by a series of email exchanges. The investigation recently ratcheted up to the point where Justice Department officials have begun briefing Pentagon officials.

Josh Mitnick contributed from Tel Aviv.

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New York Times
August 29, 2004

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Israel Denies Spying Against U.S.

By Steven Erlanger

JERUSALEM, Aug. 28 - News that the F.B.I. has been investigating a Pentagon official on suspicion of passing secrets to Israel has caused a diplomatic scramble here, with officials rushing to deny spying on Washington and to assure the United States of its friendship.

Administration officials say the Pentagon official, who has been identified in some news reports but who could not be reached for comment early Saturday, works in the office of Douglas J. Feith, the under secretary of defense for policy.

Officials who have been briefed about the inquiry say the official is suspected of passing a classified policy draft on Iran to the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, a pro-Israel lobby group, which in turn is thought to have provided the information to Israeli intelligence.

Publicly, the Israeli government, through its spokesmen here and in Washington, have called the allegations wrong and outrageous, as has Aipac, the lobbying group.

"The United States is Israel's most cherished friend and ally," said David Siegel, the Israeli Embassy spokesman. "We have a strong ongoing relationship at all levels, and in no way would Israel do anything to impair this relationship."

Aipac called the allegations "baseless and false."

After the hugely embarrassing spying scandal of 1985, when Jonathan Pollard, an American intelligence analyst, was arrested and convicted of spying for Israel, the Israeli government made a firm decision to stop all clandestine spying in the United States, Yuval Steinitz, the chairman of the foreign and defense committee in Parliament, said Saturday.

Mr. Steinitz is chairman of the most powerful committee in Parliament, with oversight of all Israeli military and intelligence agencies, and is chairman of the subcommittee on intelligence. He says he has access to as much secret information as Prime Minister Ariel Sharon.

"This was a firm decision," Mr. Steinitz said, "and I'm 100 percent confident - not 99 percent, but 100 percent - that Israel is not spying in the United States. We have no agents there and we are not gathering intelligence there, unlike probably every other country in the world, including some of America's best friends in Europe."

Mr. Sharon's office emphasized the same point on Saturday, issuing a statement saying: "Israel has no connection to this matter. The United States is Israel's greatest ally. Israel is not engaged in intelligence activities in the United States and denies reports to the contrary."

But Israeli officials also acknowledged that Iran is a vital security issue for them as well as for the United States, and that the views of Washington policy makers and analysts are of great interest to Israel.

Mr. Steinitz in particular considers Iran a nuclear superpower in the making, working on weapons that can hit Europe, as well as Israel, and he urged Washington and Europe to deal with Iran "before it is too late."

Still, reports of the F.B.I. investigation caused a furor here. And officials went to pains on Saturday to say that despite the importance of such intelligence, Israel only works openly in America, including diplomatic conversations and relationships with a full range of sources, from the White House and Congress to Aipac, which has its own sources. "America is the great exception," one official said. Mr. Steinitz said, "People leak sometimes when they shouldn't, that goes on everywhere, but that's a different matter."

While Israel has representatives of the Mossad, its intelligence agency, and military intelligence in Washington, they are attached to the embassy and their presence is known to American authorities, officials said.

Yossi Melman, an intelligence and terrorism expert with the Israeli daily Haaretz, said Saturday that since the case of Mr. Pollard, who remains in prison in the United States, "I know there has been a decision not to run any operations on American soil or to recruit Americans to spy for Israel."

Mossad, he said, is under instructions to have no direct contact even with officials from Aipac, "and I know that Israel is very, very sensitive about having even open contacts with Jewish members of the administration, because of the ramifications of Pollard" and the concern that Israel would be accused of playing on any dual loyalty that an American Jew might feel.

This is a case of an American accused of passing information to an American organization, Mr. Melman said. "While Aipac is pro-Israel, and maintains contacts with the Israeli Embassy and shares analysis, it does not deal with Israeli intelligence services," he said. "If Aipac passed on a secret document, that would be a sensitive matter for Israel. But if Aipac said, 'It's our understanding that the Americans in Doug Feith's office are thinking this and that,' that's different," he said.

But the lines are often hard to draw, especially with an issue as sensitive as the one involving Iran, which is considered by American and Israeli officials to be working on nuclear weaponry even though it has said its program is only to generate electricity - in a sense, presenting a publicly ambiguous stance, much as does Israel, which has developed nuclear weapons as a deterrent but refuses to discuss the matter. Iran is also interesting to Israel, although less so to the United States, for the financial and military support it provides Hezbollah, the militant anti-Israel group based in Lebanon and active in the West Bank.

For Mr. Steinitz, a hawk with Likud, Iran is a clear and present danger for the entire West. "The Iran nuclear program is so ambitious that after producing a first bomb, they could produce 20 bombs a year," he said. "This isn't North Korea or Iraq or even Pakistan. Iran will soon become a global power with intercontinental missiles that will threaten Europe and NATO, with disastrous political results for Israel, the moderate Arab world and the United States," he said.

But the problem of Iran is global, he said. "It's up to the Americans and Europeans to solve Iran, not little Israel."

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Officials Worry About Effects Of Spy Accusations

Hope Pentagon reports are found to be a 'misunderstanding'

By Abraham Rabinovich; The Washington Times

JERUSALEM — Israeli officials yesterday said reports that a Pentagon analyst passed classified information to Israel seriously could damage the nation's image in America, even as they denied any role in such an operation.

"There is no doubt that these publications are damaging, [and] even though they are false, they are damaging," said Natan Sharansky, who as minister for diaspora affairs is responsible for the effects of anti-Semitism on Jews worldwide.

American officials said this weekend that the FBI has spent more than a year investigating whether a Pentagon analyst funneled highly classified material to Israel concerning U.S. policy toward Iran.

Both Israel and the United States are worried that Iran's nuclear-energy program is a front for an effort to develop nuclear weapons.

"I hope [the investigation] is all a mistake or misunderstanding of some kind," Mr. Sharansky told the Canadian Broadcasting Corp.

Mentioning "the Pentagon and the CIA" specifically, Mr. Sharansky suggested that the probe might have resulted from "a rivalry between different bodies."

Former Mossad chief Danny Yatom said the Israeli government laid down strict guidelines to prohibit espionage against its major ally after the arrest in 1985 of Israeli spy Jonathan Pollard.

Pollard, a former official in U.S. Naval Intelligence, is serving a life sentence in the United States.

Although the two countries have very close defense and political ties, the American intelligence community has been sensitive to the possibility of Israeli intelligence penetration ever since Pollard's arrest.

With the issue dominating Israeli public-affairs shows yesterday, Mr. Yatom pointed out that Israeli and American officials and academics have hundreds of formal and informal meetings every year.

"It could be that someone [in the United States] innocently did something that is forbidden by American law. But there was no mobilization of agents by Israel or instructions given to them about what to look for, as with Pollard," he said.

Mr. Yatom said he hoped the latest episode would prove to be no more serious than "an unnecessary initiative on the part of an American official."

Another former senior Mossad official, Uzi Arad, said he had met with the Pentagon analyst named in press reports as the suspect, Larry Franklin, along with other Pentagon officials as part of his ongoing contacts in the United States.

"Our two countries have open relations," he said. "Collegial relations. It's clear that when we get together we don't talk about the Olympics."

Nevertheless, the investigation provides ammunition to those who charge that Israel has undue influence in the United States and that it influenced Washington to undertake the war in Iraq — a charge dismissed as absurd by both the Bush administration and Israel.

The episode also has renewed concerns about conflicted loyalties among American Jews, which were brought to the fore by the Pollard affair.

Although Mr. Franklin is not Jewish, the purported mole is suspected of having passed on secrets regarding American policy on Iran to two members of the pro-Israeli lobby, the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, who in turn passed them on to an Israeli official.

Senior Jewish officials in the Bush administration — including Mr. Franklin's boss, Undersecretary of Defense Douglas J. Feith — also have been accused of promoting the war with Iraq as a way to help Israel.

Mr. Arad seemed to suggest in an interview with Israeli radio that the press reports were deliberately leaked to hurt Israel's supporters in Washington.

"They pointed out in which office [Mr. Franklin] worked," he said. "They pointed at people like Doug Feith or other defense officials who have long been under attack within the American bureaucracy."

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USA Today
August 30, 2004
Pg. 13

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Information-Passing Inquiry Could Expand

U.S. secrets may have gone to Israel

By Toni Locy and Barbara Slavin, USA Today

WASHINGTON — An investigation into whether a midlevel Pentagon analyst passed information about U.S. policy on Iran to pro-Israel lobbyists could expand into a broader inquiry into whether more U.S. secrets were shared with Israel, two federal law enforcement officials said Sunday.

Pentagon analyst Lawrence Franklin is suspected of having given either an internal administration document or an oral summary of its contents to the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), said the officials, who have knowledge of the case but asked not to be named because the investigation is ongoing. One official said charges as serious as espionage could be filed soon. The other official said the FBI hopes Franklin will cooperate. If he does, he may face a lesser charge such as mishandling classified documents.

Spokesmen for AIPAC and the Israeli government have denied the notion, first reported Friday by CBS News, that Franklin shared the contents of a draft U.S. policy document on Iran with AIPAC members who then passed the information to Israel.

"Any allegation of criminal conduct by AIPAC or our employees is false and baseless," the organization said in a statement on its Web site. "Neither AIPAC nor any of its employees has violated any laws or rules, nor has AIPAC or its employees ever received information they believed was secret or classified."

Much about the case is puzzling. The document Franklin is suspected of having shared, an internal statement on U.S. policy on Iran, was never published because of differences within the Bush administration about how to deal with that country.

Israel, which fears Iran is close to developing nuclear weapons, has myriad ways of finding out and influencing U.S. policy, as does AIPAC, a half-century old organization considered the most influential foreign affairs lobby in the United States.

"AIPAC doesn't need to deal with midlevel people like this guy," says Dennis Ross of the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, a think tank whose trustees include AIPAC members. "Why create a risk by dealing with someone who is not at the policy level? It doesn't add up to me at all."

The investigation is taking place in an atmosphere of political recriminations in Washington focused on so-called neoconservatives — strong supporters of Israel who lobbied for the U.S. invasion of Iraq and downplayed the difficulties U.S. forces would face there.

The Franklin investigation comes as a separate inquiry looks into who leaked information about U.S.

methods of spying on Iran to Ahmad Chalabi, an Iraqi politician who was once favored by the neoconservatives as a likely leader of the new Iraq. One of the law enforcement officials said "there may be some crossover" between the two investigations, but only because the information in both deals with Iran.

Franklin is an Air Force reservist who served in Israel and also worked for the Defense Intelligence Agency, the Pentagon's in-house intelligence organization. An Iran analyst, Franklin works for Douglas Feith, undersecretary of Defense for policy.

Before becoming the Pentagon's No. 3 official, Feith was a private attorney in Washington who represented Israeli companies. In 1996, Feith co-authored a study for an Israel-based institute that advocated overthrowing Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein as a means of weakening another Israeli enemy, Syria.

Franklin, who lives in West Virginia, could not be reached for comment.

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FBI's Pentagon Probe Is Another Burden For Rumsfeld

Dow Jones Newswires

WASHINGTON (AP)--The FBI investigation into whether a Pentagon analyst passed classified information to Israel is yet another political weight on Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld, still fending off criticism over the Iraq war and prisoner abuse.

It is not clear whether the investigation will result in charges of espionage at the Pentagon. At the least, the probe complicates Rumsfeld's position as congressional committees that oversee the Defense Department prepare for more hearings on the abuse scandal.

Rumsfeld has not commented publicly on the FBI's investigation. While the FBI has spent more than a year on the case, it only became public Friday.

Officials, speaking on condition of anonymity, say the investigation is focused on Lawrence A. Franklin, an analyst of Iranian affairs who works in a policy office headed by Douglas J. Feith, the undersecretary for policy. Feith has been accused by Democrats of seeking to manipulate intelligence to help make the case for going to war in Iraq. Congressional investigations have found no evidence of that.

The New York Times reported on its Internet site in a story for Monday's editions that government officials say Franklin had been cooperating with federal agents for several weeks and was preparing to lead them to contacts inside the Israeli government when work of the investigation, first reported by CBS News, was leaked late last week.

The Israeli government has denied spying on the United States.

Efforts to reach Franklin by telephone have been unsuccessful. Local law enforcement officers have kept reporters and photographers away from his secluded home in rural West Virginia, about a 90-minute commute from Washington.

The Washington Post reported Sunday that the FBI investigation has broadened to include interviews with individuals at the State and Defense departments as well as Mideast affairs specialists outside the government. Israeli officials predicted that the allegation it got secret information on White House policy toward Iran from the Pentagon analyst would prove false.

Vincent Cannistraro, a retired CIA officer and former director of White House intelligence programs during the Reagan administration, said Sunday, "It's another scandal for the Pentagon," with the potential in this case of going beyond the single individual under investigation.

Larry Di Rita, Rumsfeld's chief spokesman, said Sunday that the Pentagon is sticking by its initial statement Friday that it understands the investigation is limited in scope. He said it would be inappropriate for him or Rumsfeld to comment further because it is an active investigation.

As for the possible political implications for Rumsfeld at the height of a presidential election campaign, Di Rita said, "I would not try to predict how the political season will affect this."

Early in his tenure at the Pentagon, Rumsfeld spoke out publicly against the unauthorized release of classified information. He undertook a special investigation when some elements of Pentagon planning for war in Iraq leaked to the news media in 2002.

In his 3 1/2 years as secretary, Rumsfeld has had a sometimes rocky relationship with Congress. When the administration began a global fight against terrorism in response to the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, his stock rose quickly and he gained popularity for his tough approach.

But as the insurgency in Iraq took hold in the summer of 2003 and the casualty toll for American troops mounted - more than 950 have been killed - Rumsfeld became a target of criticism on Capitol Hill.

A Time magazine poll released Saturday said 39% of those surveyed approve of the job Rumsfeld has done and 37% disapprove. They were split on whether President Bush should replace Rumsfeld : 49% said Rumsfeld should go and 48% preferred that he stay.

Rumsfeld, 72, took much political heat when the Abu Ghraib prisoner scandal came to light in April with photographs of U.S. soldiers abusing and sexually humiliating Iraqi prisoners.

Two official investigations found that the highest levels of the Defense Department shared blame for management lapses that may have contributed to the problems at Abu Ghraib. But those reviews found no evidence to suggest that Rumsfeld ordered, encouraged or condoned any abuse of Iraqis.

To the suggestion that Rumsfeld resign over the abuse scandal, former Defense Secretary James Schlesinger said last week that such a development would be a "boon to all of America's enemies."

Schlesinger headed an independent panel that looked into the abuse. A second panelist, former Defense Secretary Harold Brown, agreed that Rumsfeld acted appropriately.

"If the head of a department had to resign every time anyone down below did something wrong, it would be a very empty Cabinet table" Brown said.

That was just days before news broke of the FBI investigation at the Pentagon.

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Officials Say Publicity Derailed Secrets Inquiry

By David Johnston and Eric Schmitt

WASHINGTON, Aug. 29 - The Pentagon official under suspicion of turning over classified information to Israel began cooperating with federal agents several weeks ago and was preparing to lead the authorities to contacts inside the Israeli government when the case became publicly known last week, government officials said Sunday.

The disclosure of the inquiry late on Friday by CBS News revealed what had been for nearly a year a covert national security investigation conducted by the F.B.I., according to the officials, who said that news reports about the inquiry compromised important investigative steps, like the effort to follow the trail back to the Israelis.

As a result, several areas of the case remain murky, the officials said. One main uncertainty is the legal status of Lawrence A. Franklin, the lower-level Pentagon policy analyst who the authorities believe passed the Israelis a draft presidential policy directive related to Iran.

No arrest in the case is believed to be imminent, in part because prosecutors have not yet clearly established whether Mr. Franklin broke the law. But the officials said there was evidence that he turned the classified material over to officials at the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, a pro-Israel lobbying group. Officials of the group are thought to have then passed the information to Israeli intelligence.

The lobbying group and Israel have denied that they engaged in any wrongdoing. Efforts to reach Mr. Franklin or his lawyer have not been successful. Reporters who went to Mr. Franklin's residence in West Virginia on Sunday were asked by a local sheriff not to approach the house. Friends of Mr. Franklin's, like Michael Ledeen of the American Enterprise Institute, said the accusations against him were baseless.

As the overall outline of the case emerged more clearly, doubts about some aspects of it seemed to stand out in sharper relief. Investigators, the officials said, may never fully understand the role of two officials for the lobbying group who they believe were in contact with Mr. Franklin. Nor are they likely to be able to completely determine whether Israel regarded the entire matter as a formal intelligence operation or as a casual relationship that Mr. Franklin himself may not have fully understood.

Investigators do not know, for example, whether Israeli intelligence officers "tasked" intermediaries at the group to seek specific information for Mr. Franklin to obtain, which would make the case more serious. Officials said some investigators speculated that Israeli officials might have passively accepted whatever classified material that officials for the lobbying group happened to get from Mr. Franklin.

Moreover, Mr. Franklin appears to be an unlikely candidate for intelligence work. Although he was involved with Middle East policy, a defense official said Sunday that he had no impact on United States policy and few dealings with senior Pentagon officials, including the deputy defense secretary, Paul D.

Wolfowitz.

At one point in the run-up to the Iraq war in early 2003, Mr. Franklin was brought in to help arrange meetings between Mr. Wolfowitz and Shiite and Sunni clerics across the United States, a defense official said. But he was never regarded as an influential figure.

"He was at the bottom of the food chain, at the grunt level," a senior defense official said. Another defense official said Mr. Franklin "had a certain expertise and had access to things, but he wasn't a policy maker."

Still, as a desk officer, especially one with a background at the Defense Intelligence Agency, Mr. Franklin would have had top-secret security clearance. That would have given him access to most of the nation's most-sensitive intelligence about Iran, including that relating to its nuclear program, Pentagon officials said. He would also have had access to diplomatic cables and drafts of confidential documents about the administration's policies toward Iran.

While the facts of the case remained unclear and contradictory, the inquiry has stirred deeply emotional responses. On Sunday, in an event held on the eve of the Republican National Convention, Bernice Manocherian, the president of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, described the allegations against her group as "outrageous, as well as baseless."

In a speech in New York to Jewish Republicans, Ms. Manocherian said, "We will not allow innuendo or false allegations against Aipac to distract us from our central mission." The event was sponsored by the group, along with the Republican Jewish Coalition and the United Jewish Communities.

Even so, officials who discussed the case on Sunday, including three who have been briefed on it recently, said it began as a highly confidential inquiry into what counterintelligence agents from the Federal Bureau of Investigation regarded as a serious allegation of possible spying that appeared to go well beyond the extensive information-sharing relationship that exists between the United States and Israel.

The F.B.I. obtained warrants from a special federal court for surveillance under the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act and for months kept tabs on Mr. Franklin.

In an article on its Web site on Sunday, Newsweek magazine reported that the bureau first learned of Mr. Franklin when agents observed him walking into a lunch in Washington between a lobbyist for the American Israeli group and an Israeli embassy official.

American officials would not comment on the report. Israeli officials said Sunday that the lobbying group's main point of contact in Washington was Naor Gilon, who is described in a biography on the Israeli Embassy's Web site as the minister of political affairs. Israeli officials said Mr. Gilon had no involvement in intelligence matters. Efforts to reach him on Sunday were not successful.

Mr. Franklin began cooperating with agents this month in an arrangement that is still not completely understood. He agreed to help the authorities monitor his meetings with his contacts at the lobbying group. It is not clear whether the authorities in exchange agreed to grant him any form of leniency.

Current and former defense officials said this weekend that Mr. Franklin worked for the Defense Intelligence Agency for most of his career in the government until 2001, when he was detailed to the Pentagon's policy office, headed by Douglas J. Feith, the under secretary of defense for policy. Mr.

Franklin is one of about 1,500 people who work for Mr. Feith.

When he transferred to the Pentagon policy office, Mr. Franklin was assigned to the Northern Gulf directorate to work on issues related to Iran. After the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, that office was expanded and renamed the Office of Special Plans, and did most of the policy work on Iraq in the run-up to the war. Mr. Franklin was a part of that office but continued to work on Iran.

In his job, Mr. Franklin is one of two Iran desk officers in the Pentagon's Near Eastern and South Asian Bureau, one of six regional policy sections. The Near Eastern office is supervised by William J. Luti, a deputy under secretary of defense, who also oversaw the Pentagon's Office of Special Plans, which conducted some early policy work for the 2003 invasion of Iraq.

According to former colleagues, Mr. Franklin was originally a Soviet specialist at the D.I.A. who transferred to the agency's Middle East division in the early 1990's. He learned Farsi and became an Iran analyst, developing extensive contacts within the community of Iranians who opposed the Tehran government.

"He was very close to the anti-Iranian dissidents," one former colleague said. "He was a good analyst of the Iranian political scene, but he was also someone who would go off on his own."

Richard A. Oppel Jr. contributed reporting from West Virginia for this article, and Steven Erlanger from Jerusalem.

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FBI Interviews Senior Defense Officials In Probe Of Analyst

Investigators Looking At Contacts With Israelis

By Bradley Graham and Dan Eggen, Washington Post Staff Writers

The FBI has interviewed several senior Pentagon officials in recent days in connection with an investigation of a Defense Department analyst who is suspected of providing classified documents to Israel but has been cooperating with investigators for several weeks, government officials said yesterday.

Douglas J. Feith, undersecretary for policy, and Peter Rodman, assistant secretary for international security affairs, are among those who met with FBI agents on Sunday and Monday about the case, which has focused on contacts between a lower-level Pentagon analyst, Lawrence A. Franklin, and the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), officials said.

Higher-ranking government officials have also been briefed about the FBI investigation in recent days, including Secretary of State Colin L. Powell. State Department spokesman Richard Boucher said Powell was briefed over the weekend during a telephone call by James B. Comey, the deputy attorney general, and told his senior aides at a meeting yesterday to "cooperate in any way with any requests that might come from the investigators."

U.S. government officials familiar with the Pentagon interviews, who declined to be identified because of the sensitive nature of the case, characterized them as an attempt by FBI investigators to determine whether Franklin received authorization from any superior to engage in the actions that investigators are probing. The FBI has been forced to accelerate its investigation since the case broke into public view through media reports Friday.

Franklin is suspected of having passed classified information -- including a draft presidential directive on U.S. policy toward Iran -- to AIPAC, the major Israeli lobbying group in Washington, which in turn may have passed it to Israel. AIPAC and Israel have denied the allegations.

Law enforcement officials said yesterday that federal prosecutors in Alexandria were closer to filing charges in the case and that Franklin -- who has been cooperating with FBI agents from the Washington field office -- could be among those arrested. It was not clear whether Franklin would agree -- or be allowed -- to plead guilty to a lesser charge in exchange for cooperation.

"It appears they're wrapping this thing up, and so they were checking with the chain of command to make sure no one had authorized him to do any of this," said one official, who spoke on the condition he not be identified further.

Franklin, who has not responded to repeated requests for comment at his office and home, first came to the attention of the FBI more than a year ago, when he showed up at a lunch between an Israeli diplomat

and an AIPAC official that was being monitored by FBI counterintelligence agents, two law enforcement officials said yesterday.

Law enforcement and defense officials have declined to say what that original investigation was about, and whether it continues apart from the Franklin probe or has been abandoned. One law enforcement official who has been briefed on the Franklin case said it is part of a broader FBI inquiry, but the official declined to elaborate.

Defense officials familiar with the case emphasized yesterday that the number of those at the Pentagon approached by the FBI should not be taken as a sign that the investigation was widening. They characterized the meetings as part interview, part briefing session, used by FBI authorities not only to gain information for their probe but also to brief senior defense officials about the status of the case, which came as a surprise to many at the Pentagon.

The list of those interviewed over the past several days runs from William J. Luti, who heads the section on Near East and South Asian affairs where Franklin is assigned as a desk officer on Iran, through Rodman and Feith. All told the FBI that they did not give Franklin permission to give AIPAC or the Israelis any of the material at issue, officials said.

At the Pentagon, before Friday's disclosure, only Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld, Deputy Defense Secretary Paul D. Wolfowitz and department lawyers had been informed of the investigation, which has been underway for more than a year, officials said.

"The FBI is focused on one suspect," one official said. "The briefings and interviews that they're doing have been a routine part of their probe -- not a broadening of the list of suspects."

At the same time, several defense officials said the FBI has not told them everything that investigators have learned in the course of the probe, making it difficult to be certain of the outcome.

The premature disclosure has caused problems for investigators, according to numerous law enforcement officials speaking on the condition of anonymity because the probe is ongoing.

"This has severely hampered their investigation," one law enforcement official said. "It's impossible to tell what might have been lost because of all this."

An Israeli official in Washington said the embassy has not received any formal notice from U.S. authorities that there is an investigation of the Franklin case. He also said reports of the case were growing increasingly exaggerated.

"Given the level of dialogue between the United States and Israel, this makes little sense," the official said. "We basically pick up the phone and call when we want to discuss policy. We have formal and transparent and open discussions on all these issues. It's not like there are differences on these subjects."

Naor Gilon, the embassy's top political diplomat, who has been identified in several media accounts as having met with Franklin, said in an interview with the Israeli newspaper Maariv published yesterday that "my hands are clean."

"All my activities are well within the parameters of accepted diplomatic norms and procedures," he said, adding that he was concerned the scandal will affect his work in Washington: "Everyone would think twice now before talking to me."

In Jerusalem yesterday, Foreign Minister Silvan Shalom told members of the Israeli cabinet that there was no truth to allegations of spying and said the embassy "never deviated either from diplomatic norms or from the good and open dialogue between Israel and the U.S.," according to an official account of his statements.

An American not in government who was interviewed by the FBI last week described the line of questioning as a "fishing expedition" that did not include any mention of Franklin or Iran.

The FBI appeared more concerned about people this person knows who were looking for access to intelligence or classified information.

"I was left startled that in a town of award-winning journalists, law enforcement officials were asking if anyone I knew might be interested in classified information," the person said. "It was a fishing expedition. It was an extremely odd conversation."

Staff writers Molly Moore in Jerusalem and Robin Wright and Jerry Markon in Washington contributed to this report.

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Boston Globe
August 31, 2004

2d Probe At The Pentagon Examines Actions On Iraq

By Bryan Bender, Globe Staff

WASHINGTON -- The Pentagon office in which an analyst is the focus of an investigation into the possible passing of secret documents to Israel is at the heart of another ongoing probe on Capitol Hill.

The broader probe is trying to determine whether Defense Department officials went outside normal channels to gather intelligence on Iraq or overstepped their legal mandate by meeting with dissidents to plot against Iran and Syria, according to Bush administration and congressional officials.

Senate Intelligence and House Judiciary Committee staff members say inquiries into the Near East and South Asia Affairs division have found preliminary evidence that some officials gathered questionable information on weapons of mass destruction from Iraqi exiles such as Ahmed Chalabi without proper authorization, which helped build President Bush's case for an invasion last year.

The investigators are also looking into a more serious concern: whether the office engaged in illegal activity by holding unauthorized meetings with foreign nationals to destabilize Syria and Iran without the presidential approval required for covert operations, said one senior congressional investigator who has longtime experience in intelligence oversight.

Government officials seeking the cooperation of foreign nationals to take secret action against other countries need a so-called presidential finding to engage in such activity.

The office, led by William J. Luti, a former Navy captain and adviser to then-House Speaker Newt Gingrich, is a powerful cog in Bush administration policy making, populated by some ideologically-minded individuals who see their government service as a way to promote democracy in the Middle East and improve US-Israel ties, according to colleagues inside and outside government.

The recent investigation into whether analyst Larry Franklin provided documents on Iran to a pair of lobbyists with the pro-Israel American-Israel Public Affairs Committee -- who then allegedly passed them to the Israeli government -- has placed the little-noticed Pentagon office in the national spotlight at a time when the Bush administration is attempting to convince voters that the president has been a competent manager of national security affairs.

Douglas Feith, undersecretary of defense for policy, who oversees the Near East office, declined to comment. Luti and Franklin did not respond to messages.

Richard Perle, a former assistant secretary of defense in the Reagan administration and current adviser to the Pentagon, said the investigations are baseless and politically motivated.

"It's pretty nasty, and unfortunately the administration doesn't seem to have it under control," said Perle, calling on the administration to defend Feith more vigorously.

Both Perle and senior Defense officials, speaking on the condition of anonymity, deny that the policy office or two controversial subgroups have ever engaged in intelligence-gathering activities. The division's work, they said, has consisted only of drafting policy options for superiors.

They contend that the now-defunct Policy Counterterrorism Coordination Group, set up after the Sept. 11 attacks to search for links between Al Qaeda and state sponsors such as Iraq, never gathered intelligence; it only reevaluated previous government findings. The Iraq War planning group called the Office of Special Plans, meanwhile, did not engage in any wrongdoing or questionable contacts, they said.

But investigators for the Senate Intelligence Committee, which is closely scrutinizing the office as part of a formal probe of pre-Iraq War intelligence-gathering, and Democratic members of the House Judiciary Committee, who are conducting a preliminary probe, say that the full picture of the office's activities may include more than meets the eye. They are seeking additional documents and interviews from policy officials.

After months of delay, the investigators said, they are getting cooperation from Feith and his staff.

Some of the incidents that prompted the probes are already known.

Franklin and another employee, Harold Rhode, met secretly with Manucher Ghorbanifar, an Iranian arms dealer, in Italy in December 2001 and subsequently in Paris. The Paris meeting was not approved by Pentagon officials.

Ghorbanifar, who has been linked to the Iran-contra scandal of the 1980s, has said the men discussed ways to destabilize the Iranian regime, labeled a part of President Bush's "axis of evil" for support of terrorist groups and suspected development of weapons of mass destruction.

Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld said last fall that the meeting was requested by Iranian officials to discuss the war on terrorism, but nothing came of it.

But one congressional investigator said staffers are looking into whether there was an exchange of money between US officials and Ghorbanifar or other Iranians, and whether any proposals for cooperation included seeking assistance from the Mujahedin-e Khalq, a group in Iraq that is seeking to overthrow the Iranian regime but is labeled a terrorist group by the US State Department.

Another Near East policy official, F. Michael Maloof, was stripped of his security clearance a year ago after the FBI linked him to a Lebanese-American businessman under investigation by the FBI for weapons trafficking. A handgun registered to Maloof was found in the possession of Imad el Hage, a suspected arms dealer.

Investigators are seeking to learn whether Maloof's alleged contacts with Hage and a hard-line former Lebanese general, Michel Aoun, may have been part of a back-channel effort to destabilize Syria, which has occupied Lebanon for nearly two decades.

"People are concerned about covert action being conducted by a policy office with no legal mandate to do so," said one Democratic official involved in the Judiciary Committee inquiry. "If the Senate and House intelligence committees in their review only look at the Chalabi relationship but don't look at the office's role in what was in effect covert action to explore regime change in the entire arc of the Middle East, then their inquiry will be a joke."

The official said he is trying to determine if some of the office's activities may have been prohibited by the Hughes-Ryan Amendment, which holds that all activity to undermine a foreign government must be approved by the president in a specific document approving such activity.

Supporters of Feith and his policy advisers roundly deny accusations that the office is a rogue operation. They say the two ongoing FBI inquiries into alleged leaks of classified information amount to what one called "McCarthyism," a sustained campaign by opponents of Bush's policies to discredit their views and brand them as pawns for the Israeli lobby merely because they are pushing for stronger action against terrorist states.

They note that no arrests have been made, only charges and leaks to journalists from unnamed officials.

"It sounds to me that it is an investigation that was leaked for maximum adverse affect on the office, which has been subjected to a lot of other criticism," said Frank Gaffney, president of the conservative Center for Security Policy and a former assistant defense secretary under President Reagan. "You have people who are controversial. They are taking positions that last time I checked, the president . . . was closely associated with, that are opposed by other people in the bureaucracy.

"One of the tricks of bureaucratic warfare is to attack them in the press. It makes them less effective," Gaffney said. "I think that is going on here."

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August 31, 2004

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Israel's Albatross: U.S. Neocons

By Robert Scheer

With friends like these, Israel doesn't need enemies. The purported Israeli "spy caper" is another sign that the neoconservatives in the Bush administration, who claim to be big supporters of Israel, on the contrary, have increased the risks for the Mideast's only functioning democracy.

As the developing story goes, a neocon Pentagon official allegedly gave classified documents to the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, the pro-Israel lobby, which then passed them on to the Israeli Embassy.

So far, these are only unproved accusations. It is disturbing that some well-placed officials in the Bush administration have leaked to the media allegations of spying against the Pentagon official and a respected ally. As demonstrated in the phony, Clinton-era China spy case, in which Los Alamos nuclear weapons scientist Wen Ho Lee was smeared, such lurid charges may not stick. But the charges now circulating do call attention to the regime-change ideologues in the Pentagon, whose antics have left Israel more vulnerable than at any time in recent memory.

First, the Bush administration abandoned the Israel-Palestinian peace process and the United States' historical role as a good-faith broker between the two sides. Then, after 9/11, the tight band of so-called neoconservatives who had championed the invasion of Iraq for years, both in Israel and in the U.S., successfully completed their hijacking of U.S. foreign policy by landing us in the Iraq quagmire.

This has only served to inflame passions across the region, increasing the threat to Israel. Many Israelis concerned for their country are alarmed by President Bush's substitution of militarism for diplomacy, which they believe only benefits those who profit from fear and hate — such as arms brokers and political and religious extremists.

In addition, moderates across the Muslim world have seen their position eroded by popular anger over the U.S. occupation and Washington's uncritical support for Ariel Sharon. Al Qaeda and allied terror groups have seized on the chaos and fury to recruit a new generation of fighters. Extremists are now in control of crucial parts of Iraq and disrupting the rest, while rogue Iran is more politically influential among their co-religionists in the Shiite majority in Iraq than is the U.S. with its 120,000 troops on the ground.

Now, after the missing weapons of mass destruction and Abu Ghraib, comes the latest embarrassing blow to America's image — which polls show has been in free fall since the decision to invade Iraq. It centers on neocon Larry Franklin, the Pentagon's chief Iran analyst, who, according to unnamed officials, is under investigation for allegedly supplying the American Israel committee with a secret draft presidential directive on U.S.-Iran policy that was allegedly passed on to Israel.

Franklin is an ideological comrade of his bosses, Douglas J. Feith, undersecretary of Defense for policy,

and Deputy Defense Secretary Paul D. Wolfowitz, the two strongest promoters inside the administration of preemptively invading Iraq. He also was part of the unit that funneled intelligence chum up the food chain and into Bush's now-discredited speeches claiming Saddam Hussein's regime posed an imminent danger.

These are the folks who bought the disinformation pumped out by Iraqi exile Ahmad Chalabi, whom they promoted as the George Washington of the new Iraq state. Now the neocons distance themselves from Chalabi, who has been accused of spying for Iran and harangues radical Iraqi Shiite crowds with anti-American rhetoric. That can't be good for Israel, which is threatened by Iran's nuclear program.

The neocons are unstable ideologues, more in love with their own radical dream of breaking the world to remake it in their image than they are with protecting Israel or the U.S. Such unbounded arrogance, embraced by Bush, has greatly amplified the voices of those persistent anti-Semitic conspiracy theorists in the Muslim world and beyond who are now seizing upon the latest Israeli spy rumors.

"It revives the old charge that Israel is not an ally but a treacherous country," Nathan Guttman wrote Monday in the Israeli newspaper Haaretz.

That charge is false. What is true is that not every Bush administration hawk who claims to support Israel is actually a reliable friend.

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Washington Times

August 31, 2004

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The Iranian Bomb

By Frank J. Gaffney Jr.

One could be forgiven, in light of recent headlines and press accounts, for wondering precisely who the enemy is in this war on terror: For some people, it clearly seems the list should include — if not be headed by — a democratic ally that has been subjected, per capita, to considerably more sustained and deadly terrorist attacks than the United States: Israel.

This argument requires Israel to be seen not for what it is — namely, a longstanding U.S. partner in a strategically vital region of the world where few exist, one that shares America's values and is a bulwark against the rising tide of anti-Western Islamist extremism. Israel must, instead, be portrayed as perfidious, pursuing an international agenda divergent from (if not actually at odds with) that of the United States and a liability, rather than an asset.

Those who would portray Israel in such an unflattering light doubtless are gleeful over leaks claiming the Jewish State surreptitiously obtained state secrets from a U.S. government employee working for the Pentagon. At this writing, no evidence has been provided to support such charges. Nor has anyone been apprehended — although, for several days, the FBI has been described as poised to arrest someone employed by the Defense Department's policy organization. Only time will tell whether anyone actually is taken into custody, the type of charges and whether he is actually found guilty.

In the meantime, these leaks have already diverted attention from a nation that genuinely should head the list of America's foes: the terrorist-sponsoring, nuclear-arming and ballistic missile-wielding Islamist government of Iran. This effect has been all the more ironic insofar as, according to press accounts, the classified information the FBI thinks was improperly purveyed to Israel involved documents shedding light on America's evolving policy toward the Iranian mullahocracy.

Strategic analyst Steven Daskal recently offered a reminder of the peril posed by Iran: "While the Islamic Republic of Iran as a state is technically not at war with the U.S., Ayatollah Khomeini's fatwa calling for total war by all Shi'ites, regardless of citizenship, against the 'Great Satan America' remains in effect — it has never been rescinded, and in fact was expanded to include killing Americans as being a necessary part of a defensive jihad to make the world safe for Islam. Khomeini's pioneering pseudo-theology was later picked up by Sunni extremists, including Osama bin Laden."

In a thoughtful article in the Aug. 23 New York Post, Amir Taheri recounted how Khomeini and his successors have translated that fatwa into a 25-year-long war against the United States — waged asymmetrically, both directly (for example, in attacks against U.S. embassies and personnel) and indirectly (through terrorist proxies like Hezbollah in Lebanon, Sheik Muqtada al-Sadr in Iraq and Shi'ite warlords in Afghanistan). Mr. Taheri correctly observes "the Khomeinist revolution defines itself in opposition to a vision of the world that it regards as an American imposition. ... With or without nuclear weapons, the Islamic Republic, in its present shape, represents a clear and present threat to the kind of

Middle East that President Bush says he wants to shape."

Therefore, for the U.S., stopping Tehran's Islamist government before it obtains the means to carry out threats to attack Americans forces in Iraq and elsewhere should be an urgent priority. For Israel, however, denying the ruling Iranian mullahs nuclear arms is literally a matter of national life and death.

Israel's concern about the growing existential threat from Iran can only be heightened by overtures Sen. John Kerry and his running mate have been making lately to Tehran. In remarks Monday, vice presidential candidate John Edwards said a Kerry administration would offer the Iranians a "great bargain": They could keep their nuclear energy program and obtain for it Western supplies of enriched uranium fuel, provided the regime in Tehran promised to forswear nuclear weapons. According to Mr. Edwards, if Iran did not accept this "bargain," everyone — including our European allies — would recognize the true, military purpose of this program and would "stand with us" in levying on Iran "very heavy sanctions."

There is just one problem: Based on what is known about Iran's program and intentions — let alone its history of animus toward us — only the recklessly naive could still believe such a deal is necessary to divine the mullahs' true purposes.

While it may be inconvenient to say so, Iran is clearly putting into place a complete nuclear fuel cycle so as to obtain both weapons and power from its reactor and enrichment facilities. And a deal like that on offer from Messrs. Kerry and Edwards failed abysmally in North Korea.

If the United States is unwilling to take concrete steps to prevent the Iranian Bomb from coming to fruition, its Israeli ally will likely feel compelled to act unilaterally — just as it did with the 1981 raid that neutralized Saddam Hussein's nuclear infrastructure. At the time, the Reagan administration joined the world in sharply protesting Israel's attack.

A decade later, however, the value of the contribution thus made to American security was noted by then-Defense Secretary Dick Cheney, who said he thanked God every day during Operation Desert Storm that Israel had kept Iraq a nuclear-free zone. If such a counterproliferation strategy becomes necessary once again, it will be in all of our interests to have Israel succeed.

Frank J. Gaffney Jr. is president of the Center for Security Policy and a columnist for The Washington Times.

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Seattle Post-Intelligencer
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Hand Rumsfeld His Walking Papers

By Helen Thomas, Hearst Newspapers

WASHINGTON --The time has come for Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld to leave his Pentagon post, either by dismissal or resignation.

Two separate reports last week make it clear that Rumsfeld and other top Pentagon officials were ultimately responsible for the sadistic abuse of prisoners in Iraq's infamous Abu Ghraib.

A report by a four-member panel headed by former Defense Secretary James Schlesinger traced the mistreatment of prisoners in Iraq to failures that went all the way up the chain of command in the Pentagon.

Another military report Wednesday said 27 people attached to intelligence agencies as well as four private contractors participated in abuses, some tantamount to torture, of prisoners.

"We discovered serious misconduct and a loss of moral values," said Army Gen. Paul Kern, head of the investigation. This gives the lie to early Pentagon efforts to paint the prison abuses as the work of a handful of low-level MPs, acting out their frustrations.

The Kern report also noted that eight "ghost detainees" were concealed from the International Committee of the Red Cross. One of them died in custody.

The origin of the scandal traces back to Feb. 2, 2002, when President Bush abrogated the Geneva Conventions requiring humanitarian treatment of prisoners. Bush declared that those rules didn't apply to the U.S. war against terrorism. Bush has been scrapping our international agreements since he came into office, but for this one he has paid dearly in terms of just plain decency.

When he canceled the Geneva accords, the U.S. focus was in Afghanistan where American forces were rounding up al-Qaida and Taliban suspects.

Later that year, in December, Rumsfeld authorized ruthless interrogation practices against detainees rounded up in Afghanistan and held at the U.S. Navy base at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. Those approved practices included the use of dogs to terrify prisoners, forcing prisoners into prolonged painful stress positions, stripping them naked, solitary confinement, shaving them, hooding them.

The train then completely left the tracks after the U.S. invasion of Iraq where U.S. military personnel at the Abu Ghraib prison adopted the same interrogation tactics used in Afghanistan and at Guantanamo Bay.

The photos provided the shocking evidence earlier this year and the investigations, courts-martial and congressional hearings began.

Top military officials ignored the mistreatment of prisoners until the graphic photographs of naked prisoners piled in a pyramid at Abu Ghraib horrified the public.

Red Cross reports about prison abuses fell on deaf ears at the Pentagon until the administration was faced with exposure.

Several reviews of the military mistreatment of prisoners have been under way but the Schlesinger panel was the first to assign any responsibility to the highest levels of the Pentagon.

"There is both institutional and personal responsibility at higher levels," the Schlesinger report said.

Schlesinger said the prison problems were "well known" and corrective actions "could have been taken and should have been taken."

Despite all of this, the report concluded that Rumsfeld and other senior leaders, including Air Force Gen. Richard Myers, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, should not be forced to resign.

Since he is a Washington "establishment" figure who headed the Pentagon in the Nixon era, Schlesinger was not about to go any higher than a brigade commander to parcel out responsibility.

Schlesinger said Rumsfeld's resignation would be "a boon to all of America's enemies and consequently, I think that it would be a misfortune if it were to take place."

Wrong. It would show the world that Americans are not afraid to topple leaders when the country is dishonored on their watch. For those who have lived under totalitarian rule, a challenge to the leadership could have dire consequences. But that's not our system. In a democracy, public servants must be held accountable.

Rumsfeld should have thrown in the towel months ago for this scandal.

In the run-up to the invasion of Iraq, the Rumsfeld coterie bragged about the "shock and awe" of the planned U.S. invasion. The secretary has since lost some of his swagger and is no longer a TV rock star. As the gravity of the scandal gradually sunk in around the world, Rumsfeld has become virtually invisible to the public.

Rumsfeld stands indicted by the very panel that he appointed to assess responsibility. The fact that the Schlesinger panel veered sharply at the last curve and said Rumsfeld should keep his job can't bury the reality that they traced the footprints right to Rumsfeld's office.

It's time for him to take responsibility for this scandal. It's time for him to leave office.

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Tel Aviv Haaretz
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Analyst At Center Of Spy Flap Called Naive, Ardently Pro-Israel

By Nathan Guttman

WASHINGTON - Larry Franklin, the Pentagon analyst suspected of passing classified material about Iran to the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, has never hidden his unequivocal support of Israel. Colleagues from the Near East and South Asia desk at the Defense Department said yesterday that his sympathy for Israel was overt and public - he didn't refrain from praising Israel and he held aggressive views about several Arab governments, primarily the ayatollahs' regime in Iran and Saddam Hussein's dictatorship in Iraq.

"Everyone knew he was a friend of Israel, but he didn't go about it in any unusual way," a Pentagon coworker said. "He was always accessible to everyone."

Franklin's resume describes his current position, which he has held since 2001, as: "Office of the Secretary of Defense, Policy, Near East/South Asia, Iran desk analyst, Office of Special Plans Iraq. Focus Projects: Hizbollah, Islam, Saudi Arabia." But the official resume reveals only a few details about the man at the center of the affair.

Franklin, a religious Catholic in his late 50s, lives in Kearneysville, West Virginia, a 90-minute drive from the Pentagon. But living in the distant suburb assured a high quality of life for Franklin, his wife Patricia and their five children, some of whom are college-age. Franklin has a doctorate in East Asian studies from St. John's University, a Catholic university in New York City, and speaks Farsi, Arabic, French, Spanish, Russian and Chinese (in addition to English). On top of his work at the Pentagon, Franklin teaches history at Shepherd University in West Virginia.

In conversations about Franklin with his colleagues, one of the words that comes up again and again is "naive." He is described as an ideologue who believes wholeheartedly in the neo-conservative approach. "Everything by him is black and white," said someone who has worked with Franklin in the Pentagon. "He is a very nice person, very conservative, not at all arrogant," said the colleague, adding that one of the reasons he was brought into the Near East and South Asia desk was his political beliefs.

Franklin's political opinions are similar to those of his bosses - Douglas Feith, undersecretary of defense, and William Luti, the deputy undersecretary of defense responsible for Near Eastern and South Asian affairs. Like them, Franklin supports the policy of acting to bring democracy to Arab regimes and build up pro-American allies in the Middle East.

But those who have worked with Franklin also say he was a bit extreme in his work patterns, attitude and behavior. They occasionally referred to him as "Planet Larry" as a way of expressing the extent to which he "lives in a world of his own," colleagues said.

People who have worked with Franklin believe that it was his trademark naivete that got him in trouble, saying Franklin was not aware of the severity of his activities, and so did not try to hide or mask them.

Franklin visited Israel eight times while he served in the U.S. Air Force and worked at the Pentagon. Most of his visits appear to have been related to his reserve duty service as an officer dealing with international contacts. According to his resume, Franklin served as a reserve air force colonel between 1997 and 2004, working with the U.S. military attache in Tel Aviv. Beforehand he was involved in analyzing counter-intelligence in the air force.

Had the current accusations not come to light, Franklin's job at the Pentagon would have depended on the presidential elections, his coworkers said. If Democratic candidate John Kerry wins the next election, colleagues said, it's doubtful that Franklin will move up, due to his well-known political views.

"He was considered a little strange even for the neo-cons," a coworker said. "They're probably saying to themselves - oh, Larry again."

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August 31, 2004ALL FBI INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED
DATE 07-29-2010 BY 60324 uc baw/sab/lsgAnalysis:**Affair Won't Harm Strong US-Israel Ties**

By Gerald M. Steinberg, The Jerusalem Post

By their very nature, allegations of espionage and abuse of classified material get huge headlines, although the evidence – if any – usually remains murky and hidden from public scrutiny. This is particularly the case regarding the US and Israel, reflecting the wide security cooperation that has developed in response to terrorism, nuclear proliferation, and other mutual threats. Mixed with hints of conspiracy and dual loyalty, such cooperation presents a huge target for the relatively small number of American officials and journalists who want to see this relationship halted.

For many years, claims involving Israel and spying have been manipulated in the effort to drive a wedge between Washington and Jerusalem, particularly after the Pollard fiasco. The damage to relations in that case was extensive, and its echoes are still being felt today, making another "affair" the dream of all those who wish to disrupt US-Israel cooperation. But the lessons from Pollard appear to have been learned by both the Israeli government and the US. At the same time, the absence of real and juicy spy scandals has spurred the invention of fictitious ones.

A few years ago, false charges that Israel was stealing and selling the Pentagon's technical secrets to China were later revealed to have been part of a personal campaign of revenge involving two American officials working for different branches of the government. And headlines claiming that Israel was eavesdropping on the US were also exposed as nonsense. In another case, the head of the CIA – George Tenet – sent an apology to then Mossad head Danny Yatom apologizing for accusations linking Israel to espionage.

These periodic leaks and allegations, including the current case, reflect a wider agenda. The Arab lobby in Washington is gaining influence and access to the media, and peddling such stories is one means of moving the focus away from terrorism and the growing pressure from many Americans to end support for the corrupt regimes in the Middle East. In addition, fringe Republican Pat Buchanan and his adherents cling to the classical anti-Semitic myths in which Jews are portrayed as all powerful, and secretly manipulating US policy.

The post-war complications in Iraq and the charge that a neo-conservative kabal (code for Jews and Zionists, even though the top two neo-cons – Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld and Vice President Cheney are neither) led America into this confrontation have revived these myths. This may explain the attempt to involve AIPAC – the "powerful" pro-Israel lobby – and the timing of this leak at the height of the US election campaign.

Yet despite these efforts and short-lived headlines, US-Israel security cooperation has become stronger, reflecting an understanding of the necessity of sharing resources and knowledge in order to counter the threats to both. In addition, the underlying shared values of democracy and freedom remain central, and

mark the difference between American and European attitudes towards Israel.

As a result, in the earlier alleged espionage cases, including the Pollard affair, after the dust cleared, this common core remained intact, and there is no reason to expect the outcome to be different this time. Indeed, investigations into the sources of the allegations and the embellishment added by CBS News may deter the next round of this game.

Prof. Gerald M. Steinberg directs the Program on Conflict Management at Bar-Ilan University.

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Boston Globe
August 31, 2004

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Iran Intrigue

THE MOST instructive aspect of the FBI's interest in Larry Franklin, an Iran desk officer in the Defense Department, is the light it casts on the incoherence of policy-making in the Bush administration rather than any conspiracy to pilfer American secrets for Israel.

There is a crucial background to the FBI's investigation of Franklin, who has come under suspicion for supposedly passing a classified presidential policy directive about Iran to a leader of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee who allegedly passed the material on to an Israeli official.

A neoconservative colleague of Franklin in the Defense Department, Harold Rhode, and the neocon promoter Michael Ledeen had been involved in secret back-channel meetings in Paris starting as early as December 2001 with the shady Iranian arms dealer Manucher Ghorbanifar, a key figure in the Reagan-era folly remembered as the Iran-Contra affair.

The CIA had long since proscribed dealings with Ghorbanifar. The agency had him classified as a chronic liar. When a US ambassador in Italy got wind of the meetings, he and the CIA station chief in Rome notified superiors at the State Department and the CIA. George Tenet, the former CIA director, in turn persuaded the number two official on the National Security Council, Stephen Hadley, to prohibit further meetings with the Iranian arms merchant and the so-called Iranian dissidents he was presenting to neocons avid for regime change in Tehran.

This White House prohibition against the back-channel meetings arranged by Ghorbanifar was to no avail. There were at least two and possibly several more meetings. Ghorbanifar, living up to his reputation for indiscreet gabbiness, has boasted about further meetings to reporters for the Washington Monthly.

This is the outline of a policy quarrel that one faction has been waging surreptitiously. Not only the FBI but also the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence have been investigating the neocons' secret meetings in Paris to promote regime change in Tehran.

The regime in Tehran does pose a threat by virtue of its nuclear program, its sponsorship of the Lebanese Shi'ite militia Hezbollah, and its meddling in Iraq. The Bush administration, however, has been unable to settle on a coherent strategy to cope with the challenge from Tehran.

It is quite possible that no prosecution will result from the FBI's interest in Franklin's suspected disclosure of classified information about President Bush's Iran policy, as it is unlikely Israel would permit an intelligence operation that targeted the Bush administration. But if Bush does not take control of his own administration's policy-making process, the nation could be drawn into another Gulf war by one faction of the conservative constellation in his own administration.

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Baltimore Sun
August 31, 2004

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Espionage Intrigue

THE DENIALS are loud and resounding. The American Israel Public Affairs Committee called allegations that the American Jewish lobby received secret information about U.S. policy on Iran from a Pentagon analyst, and passed it onto Israel, "baseless and false." The government of Israel was just as emphatic about the charge: "false and outrageous." The reported FBI investigation touched a nerve. It raised the specter of divided loyalties, Israel spying on its chief ally and benefactor, mudslinging at a pro-Israel president on the eve of his renomination.

There's plenty there to provoke alarming headlines, sharp rhetoric and legitimate cause for concern -- if the allegations prove true. Iran's nuclear program poses a threat to the United States and Israel, though for the Americans it's strategic and for the Israelis it's considerably more immediate. Tehran's insistence on producing nuclear material has pushed Israel to threaten a strike on an Iranian nuclear facility. In 1981, Israel took out Iraq's nuclear reactor to quell similar ambitions.

Yet an Iranian-Israeli face-off would have devastating consequences for the West and for the Islamic world.

The reports about Pentagon analyst Lawrence Franklin, who is at the center of the investigation, are contradictory. But the fact that he works in a policy office overseen by the ideological Douglas J. Feith clouds the issue. Mr. Feith is a controversial neo-conservative who trumpeted the fall of Saddam Hussein as an engine for democracy in the Mideast. He was an ardent champion of Ahmad Chalabi, the discredited Iraqi expatriate now thought to have had links to Iranian intelligence.

The contradictions also extend to Israel. President Bush is such an unabashed supporter of Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon that it's unfathomable that Israel couldn't get information on U.S.-Iranian policy if it asked. Would it risk an espionage scandal like the Pollard affair of 1985?

What's ironic is that if the espionage allegations are true, Israel will have likely confirmed that the United States in fact has no coherent or cogent policy on Iran. And the need for one is urgent, given Iran's nuclear ambitions and its less-than-candid dealings with international atomic energy inspectors. The campaign of Democratic presidential candidate John Kerry has unveiled its plan to persuade Iran to give up its nuclear weapons capability -- it would retain its nuclear energy plants in exchange for any nuclear bomb-making fuel.

Mr. Bush has painted himself into a corner with his harsh position on Iran and its inclusion in the "axis of evil." The International Atomic Energy Agency is expected in early September to release its report on Iran's nuclear program. Mr. Bush should be prepared to respond with a substantive plan to engage Iran instead of his usual, polarizing rhetoric.

Sunday, Sep. 05, 2004

A Web Of Intrigue

Inside the Israel espionage investigation

By BRIAN BENNETT, ELAINE SHANNON AND ADAM ZAGORIN
TIME MAGAZINE

It was a hot, late August afternoon when the Iraqi exile got a call on his cell phone. Over the crackling line, the Iraqi says, the caller identified himself as Larry Franklin, an analyst for the Defense Department in Washington. Franklin rattled off a series of questions. He wanted to know if the Iraqi, who had spent the past decade working with Ahmad Chalabi's Iraqi National Congress (I.N.C.), could recall whether anyone at the I.N.C. had discussed the U.S.'s ability to intercept and decode Iran's secret communications. The Iraqi, who knew Franklin's name but had never met him, was startled by the call. "How about discussing Iranian codes with a drunken American? Had anyone ever done that?" Franklin wanted to know. For nearly half an hour, Franklin quizzed him about Pentagon officials and Iranian spycraft. "That was really scary," recalls the Iraqi. "I told him, 'I don't remember anything.'"

That phone call, which the Iraqi described to TIME last week, seems to be an indication that two complicated spy cases have become linked. Several weeks ago, according to federal law-enforcement officials, Franklin, who had been under investigation by the FBI for giving classified information to the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), agreed to cooperate in a probe into whether the pro-Israel group was passing sensitive U.S. secrets to Israel.

Franklin's call to the ex-I.N.C. man, who has provided TIME with credible information in the past, suggests that Franklin was also assisting the FBI in a separate inquiry into how highly classified details of America's ability to decode Iranian intelligence messages may have fallen into the hands of Chalabi's organization and been passed on to Iran in February. A U.S. law-enforcement official confirms that the Iraqi's account of the conversation is consistent with the types of calls Franklin was making on behalf of the FBI.

According to law-enforcement officials, Franklin began cooperating with the FBI after agents first confronted him with evidence that he had given classified material to AIPAC, one of Washington's most powerful lobbying organizations. Israel and AIPAC have denied the spy allegations; neither the Pentagon nor Franklin would comment. The law-enforcement officials say Franklin was persuaded in recent weeks to make "pretext calls"-scripted conversations monitored by FBI agents and designed to tease out incriminating evidence about other suspects. It was within this time frame that Franklin approached the ex-I.N.C. official who spoke to TIME.

The two investigations are among the most politically charged espionage cases in years. Israel and the I.N.C. are longtime allies of the U.S., though the CIA has for years warned that Chalabi was not to be trusted. Allegations of Israeli espionage have been a hot-button issue since American naval intelligence analyst Jonathan Pollard was imprisoned for life in 1987 for passing U.S. military secrets to Israel. Ever since the Pollard affair, Israel has publicly insisted it no

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longer spies on the U.S. "I can tell you here very authoritatively, very categorically, Israel does not spy on the United States," Israel's U.S. ambassador, Daniel Ayalon said last week. "We do not gather information on our best friend and ally."

Federal law-enforcement officials say they remain on the lookout for signs that Israelis still pursue U.S. secrets. A former congressional official told TIME that in the 1990s Israelis in Washington were known to routinely seek copies of classified documents such as secret portions of the annual Javits report, a U.S. compilation on arms sales.

National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice and her deputy Stephen Hadley were informed of the FBI's probe into AIPAC at least two years ago, according to a U.S. official. But that did not hinder numerous contacts between AIPAC and top Administration officials as well as congressional leaders of both parties. The lobbying group derives its power from its backing among influential Jewish Americans. Just last May, President George W. Bush attended AIPAC's annual conference in Washington and thanked the organization for "serving the cause of America" and bringing to public attention the threat of Iran's development of nuclear weapons.

At that time, the FBI was already deep into its investigation of AIPAC. A former U.S. official interviewed by the FBI more than a year ago told TIME that the bureau sought information on key AIPAC personnel, their meetings with White House and other national-security officials in Washington and even details about their personal lives. At one point, the FBI was surveilling a meeting between an Israeli diplomat and an AIPAC official when the Pentagon's Franklin suddenly appeared, igniting concerns. Franklin, a former Air Force Reserve officer, served briefly in the U.S. military attache's office in Israel in the late 1990s. Since the summer of 2001, he has worked as an Iran expert for Douglas Feith, the Pentagon's third ranking official, a neoconservative long in favor of tougher measures against Iran. In 2001 Franklin and a Pentagon colleague were dispatched to Rome for a meeting with Manucher Ghorbanifar, an Iranian arms dealer who had been a key figure in the 1980s' Iran-contra scandal. They were seeking intelligence on Iran from him. But the CIA has long considered Ghorbanifar unreliable, and the Bush Administration later cut off the contacts.

According to a former U.S. government source, the material Franklin passed to AIPAC included a draft of a National Security Presidential Directive dealing with U.S. policy on Iran. The document, a source says, had gone through several versions without ever achieving the status of official U.S. policy because of deep disagreements within the Administration over how to cope with Iran. A source familiar with multiple drafts of the document said it was a "glorified Op-Ed looking at how engagement [with Iran] doesn't work and how the U.S. needs a more robust strategy." A former senior U.S. official who also saw the drafts told TIME the directive did not explicitly call for regime change in Tehran and left open the possibility of cooperation with the Iranians on matters of mutual interest.

Meanwhile, a former case officer at the Defense Intelligence Agency says that when he was questioned in the I.N.C. case, the FBI seemed frustrated in that investigation. That case officer, who worked alongside I.N.C. intelligence gatherers at the time of the alleged breach, says he was interrogated and polygraphed by the FBI. He contended to TIME that the allegations against the

September 6, 2004

Spy Case Renews Debate Over Pro-Israel Lobby's Ties to Pentagon

By JAMES RISEN and DAVID JOHNSTON

ASHINGTON, Sept. 5 - It began like most national security investigations, with a squad of Federal Bureau of Investigation agents surreptitiously tailing two men, noting where they went and whom they met. What was different about this case was that the surveillance subjects were lobbyists for the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, and one of their contacts turned out to be a policy analyst at the Pentagon.

The ensuing criminal investigation into whether Aipac officials passed classified information from the Pentagon official to Israel has become one of the most byzantine counterintelligence stories in recent memory. So far, the Justice Department has not accused anyone of wrongdoing and no one has been arrested.

Aipac has dismissed the accusations as baseless, and Israel has denied conducting espionage operations in the United States.

Behind the scenes, however, the case has reignited a furious and long-running debate about the close relationship between Aipac, the pro-Israel lobbying organization, and a conservative group of Republican civilian officials at the defense department, who are in charge of the office that employs Lawrence A. Franklin, the Pentagon analyst.

Their hard-line policy views on Iraq, Iran and the rest of the Middle East have been controversial and influential within the Bush administration.

"They have no case," said Michael Ledeen, a conservative scholar at the American Enterprise Institute and a friend of Mr. Franklin. "If they have a case, why hasn't anybody been arrested or indicted?"

Nearly a dozen officials who have been briefed on the investigation said in interviews last week that the F.B.I. began the inquiry as a national security matter based on specific accusations that Aipac employees had been a conduit for secrets between Israel and the Pentagon. These officials said that the F.B.I., in consultation with the Justice Department, had established the necessary legal foundation required under the law before beginning the investigation.

A half dozen people sympathetic to Aipac and the civilian group at the defense department said they viewed the investigation in different terms, as a politically motivated attempt to discredit Aipac and the Pentagon group. Supporters of Aipac have said the organization is being dragged into an intelligence controversy largely because of its close ties to a Republican administration and the Israeli government of Prime Minister Ariel Sharon.

Friends and associates of the civilian group at the Pentagon believe they are under assault by adversaries from within the intelligence community who have opposed them since before the war in Iraq. The Pentagon civilians, led by Paul D. Wolfowitz, the deputy defense secretary, and

Douglas J. Feith, the undersecretary for policy, were among the first in the immediate aftermath of the Sept. 11 attacks to urge military action to topple the regime of Saddam Hussein in Iraq, an approach favored by Aipac and Israel.

Mr. Wolfowitz and Mr. Feith were part of a larger network of policy experts inside and out of the Bush administration who forcefully made the case that the war with Iraq was part of the larger fight against terrorism.

The Pentagon group circulated its own intelligence assessments, which have since been discredited by the Central Intelligence Agency and by the independent Sept. 11 commission, arguing that there was a terrorist alliance between the Hussein regime and Al Qaeda.

The group has also advocated that the Bush administration adopt a more aggressive policy toward Iran, and some of its members have quietly begun to argue for regime change in Tehran. The administration has not yet adopted that stance, however, and the Pentagon conservatives have been engaged in a debate with officials at the State Department and other agencies urging a more moderate approach to Iran.

To Israel, Iran represents a grave threat to its national security. Pushing the United States to adopt a tougher line on Tehran is one of its major foreign policy objectives, and Aipac has lobbied the Bush administration to support Israel's policies.

Mr. Franklin was an expert on Iran in the office of Mr. Feith and among the material he is suspected of turning over to Aipac is a draft presidential policy directive on Iran, which would have provided a glimpse at the Bush administration's early plans.

But skeptics of the case have said that the United States and Israel routinely share highly sensitive information on military and diplomatic matters under an officially sanctioned understanding. In addition, most of the contents of policy drafts affecting either country are well known to people outside the government who follow American-Israeli affairs.

As a result, some of Mr. Franklin's associates regard his efforts as an attempt to obtain Aipac's help to influence the Bush administration rather than an effort to provide Israel with information. They believe the case is the latest in a series of assaults by intelligence and law enforcement agencies, who they believe are determined to diminish the influence of conservative civilians at the Pentagon.

In their view, there have been other attempts to embarrass them. In May, American officials said that Ahmed Chalabi, the leader of the Iraqi National Congress and a longtime ally of the Pentagon conservatives, had told Iranian intelligence officials that the United States had broken Iran's communications codes.

The F.B.I. began a still-open investigation to determine who in the government had told Mr. Chalabi about the secret code-breaking operation. The investigation, which has included the use of polygraph examinations, has focused on Defense Department employees who both knew Mr.

Chalabi and knew of the highly classified code-breaking operation.

The F.B.I.'s inquiry of the Chalabi leak may overlap with the Franklin case because some of the same Defense Department officials had access to information that was believed to be compromised.

But officials who have briefed on the case say they remain two separate inquiries being conducted by separate teams of investigators, one with jurisdiction over Iranian matters and one with jurisdiction over Israel issues.

The focus and direction of the Franklin investigation, which was publicly disclosed Aug. 27, remains unclear. The officials said the inquiry first focused on Aipac, but later became more intense after F.B.I. agents gathered evidence indicating that Aipac officials had obtained classified information from Mr. Franklin, which was turned over to Israel.

But it is unclear who, if anyone, is likely to be charged with wrongdoing and whether the government is more interested in Aipac, Mr. Franklin or the Israelis who may have received the classified material. Officials say Mr. Franklin has been cooperating with the F.B.I. since being confronted by agents several weeks ago.

Two officials at Aipac, Steven Rosen and Keith Weissman, have also been interviewed by the bureau.

"I know that this is part of a campaign against us," said Michael Maloof, a former Pentagon analyst who worked in a special-intelligence unit created by Mr. Feith after Sept. 11. Mr. Maloof lost his security clearances because of an investigation that he believed was unfair.

He now believes that Mr. Franklin is being unfairly targeted as well. "They are picking us off, one by one," Mr. Maloof said.

But leading critics of the Pentagon hard-liners have repeatedly argued that Mr. Wolfowitz, Mr. Feith and others have used the Sept. 11 attacks as a pretext to pursue issues that in some ways mirror the interests of Israel's conservative Likud government.

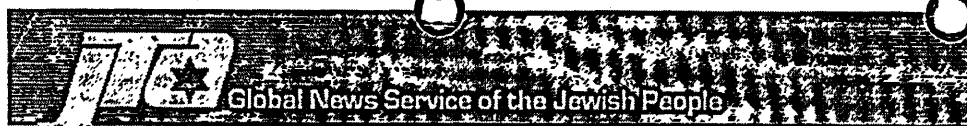
One piece of evidence repeatedly cited by the critics is a 1996 paper issued by the Institute for Advanced Strategic and Political Studies, an Israeli think tank, calling for the toppling of Saddam Hussein in order to enhance Israeli security. Entitled "A Clean Break," the 1996 paper was intended to offer a foreign policy agenda for the new Likud government of Benjamin Netanyahu.

The paper argued: "Israel can shape its strategic environment, in cooperation with Turkey and Jordan, by weakening, containing and even rolling back Syria. This effort can focus on removing Saddam Hussein from power in Iraq - an important Israeli strategic objective in its own right - as a means of foiling Syria's regional ambitions."

Among those who signed the paper were Mr. Feith; David Wurmser, who later worked for Mr.

Feith at the Pentagon and now works for Vice President Dick Cheney; and Richard Perle, a leading conservative who previously served as chairman of the Defense Policy Board, a group of outside consultants to Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld.

In the Reagan administration, Mr. Feith served as Mr. Perle's deputy at the Pentagon.



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BEHIND THE HEADLINES

Used to working behind the scenes, AIPAC suddenly thrust into limelight

By Matthew E. Berger

NEW YORK, Aug. 30 (JTA) — In its outreach to potential supporters and to the media, the American Israel Public Affairs Committee touts its access to the highest levels of government.

Now it's that very access that has thrust the pro-Israel lobby, accustomed to working behind the scenes, into the limelight.

Accusations that AIPAC officials received classified information from a Pentagon staffer and forwarded it on to Israel broke on the eve of this week's Republican National Convention in New York, where AIPAC is hosting several policy forums for Republican contributors.

According to media accounts, a non-Jewish officer on the Iranian desk at the Pentagon, Larry Franklin, is being investigated for passing at least one classified document to AIPAC officials, which may then have been forwarded to Israeli officials in Washington.

Reports have suggested that Franklin could face charges ranging from espionage to the mishandling of classified information.

The Jerusalem Post reported that the AIPAC officials involved were Steven Rosen and Keith Weissman, and that they have spoken to federal investigators.

Rosen is AIPAC's director of research and considered one of the most influential people in the organization. He has been with AIPAC since 1982, and mentored both Howard Kohr, AIPAC's current executive director, and Martin Indyk, the former U.S. ambassador to Israel.

Weissman is deputy director of foreign policy issues and specializes in relations with Iran, Syria and Turkey.

AIPAC would not confirm or deny the reports.

New reports also suggested that Naor Gilon, minister of political affairs of the Israeli embassy in Washington, was the subject of an FBI investigation on suspicion of espionage for Israel when Franklin came to the investigators' attention more than a year ago.

Both Israel and AIPAC deny any impropriety in the case. Many U.S. Jews believe, or hope, that no charges will be filed and that the issue will fade from the headlines in coming days.

But the charges, and their prominent play in the media, have reopened questions about the way AIPAC does business with the U.S. and Israeli governments.

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AIPAC's grassroots advocacy and political lobbying departments get most of the attention, but the organization also has a thriving think tank that works to influence Middle East policy at the highest levels of government.

To those who work with AIPAC in Washington, or have worked for the organization itself, the idea of information being passed from government officials to AIPAC staffers to Israelis seems almost commonplace.

After all, these people see each other on almost a daily basis, at think-tank lunches and policy meetings throughout the capital. Information is exchanged and each participant tries to show his importance by touting what he knows and whom he has access to.

"The easiest thing to learn in Washington is that no one likes to be surprised," said Jon Alterman, a former State Department official. "AIPAC doesn't like to be surprised and nobody wants to surprise AIPAC."

In that sense, AIPAC is like any other policy organization in Washington.

"Information is the currency in Washington," said Morris Amitay, AIPAC's executive director from 1974 to 1980. "AIPAC meets regularly with officials at the State Department and Defense Department, trying to find out what's going on."

It's unclear how much of the information AIPAC receives is forwarded to Israeli officials, but the coordination between the Jewish state and its advocates in Washington is considerable.

Most Israeli officials who travel to Washington meet with AIPAC and exchange information. But Israeli officials also have strong ties to the Bush administration, and receive much information directly from American governmental sources, without need of intermediaries.

One congressional staffer said it was understood in Washington that AIPAC had access to the highest sources in both the U.S. and Israeli governments, and could get most information it wanted.

"They are very astute at knowing who will know what they would like to find out," said the staffer, who spoke on condition of anonymity because the FBI investigation is ongoing. "It's simply understood, based on the success they've had."

But because of the issues AIPAC deals with, policy discussions can easily cross into areas of national security, increasing the chances that classified information will be passed.

"There's always a real possibility that in giving a briefing, certain information that is classified could come out by the government briefers," said Neal Sher, who served as AIPAC's executive director from 1994 to 1996 and formerly worked in the U.S. Justice Department. "The lines are real blurry."

But Sher said the briefer would be the one committing the illegal act, not the one who gets the information.

"Anyone with half a brain, if someone is giving you a classified document, would say, 'I don't want to look at it,'" Amitay said. "Because it could be a sting."

According to Newsweek, that's what occurred in the current case. Franklin reportedly tried to give documents to an AIPAC staffer, who wouldn't take them but asked for the information to be summarized orally.

When it comes to documents, federal officials with security clearances are given little leniency. Most desks have two computers; one for classified material and one for unclassified. The e-mail systems are separate and diskettes are not allowed to be inserted into the classified system.

But there's a lot more leeway when government officials brief outsiders.

"How far you go in telling people what's going on in a classified environment is a decision you have to make every day," Alterman said. "There is a perception that you can trust the people you're talking to."

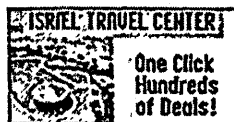
The congressional staffer added that much of what is classified already has been reported by the media.

The recent focus on AIPAC's business practices is counter to the way the organization likes to work. AIPAC likes to shift focus away from its own professionals and onto the lay leaders and lawmakers publicly expressing support for the Jewish state.

But that hasn't always been easy. Because Israel is such a heated topic in Washington and around the world, and because AIPAC has been successful in its mission, the group often is at the center of questions regarding U.S. support for Israel.

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Israel won't ask U.S. to clarify why official was being tailed

By Nathan Guttman

WASHINGTON - Larry Franklin, the Pentagon data analyst suspected of funneling classified documents to Israel through the Jewish lobby AIPAC, had been helping with the investigation for several weeks before the story broke in the media, the New York Times reported yesterday citing sources familiar with the case.

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(See IHT for further details)

So far, the details available point to Naor Gilon, political adviser at the Israeli embassy in Washington, as the FBI surveillance target that led investigators to Franklin.

Israeli sources could not say yesterday why Gilon had been under surveillance, but Israel does not intend to seek clarifications or protest in the matter. "It's neither the first nor the last time diplomats have been tailed in this town," an Israeli official said yesterday.

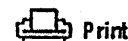
Another source said there is nothing unusual in the FBI monitoring meetings of diplomats, but said it's unlikely this was mundane surveillance, so it's possible there was suspicion of some kind about information reaching the Israeli embassy. Gilon knew Franklin and kept an ordinary working relationship with him as part of his job.

The Israeli embassy declined comment on the affair yesterday and banned Gilon from talking to the media. An embassy official yesterday repeated the line that these are "groundless and vicious allegations."

Embassy sources were worried reports on the affair could hamper Gilon's duties as the main official in charge of political ties to U.S. administration officials by making them wary of meeting him.

Gilon's meetings with Franklin and other administration representatives have been described by the embassy as the daily routine of diplomats in that post. "It's exactly what all diplomats in Washington do, it's their job," an Israeli source said.

A communique released by embassy officials said "as representatives of the state, we conduct an intensive dialogue on an array of topics with our colleagues in all branches of the administration. This dialogue takes



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Westward, ho

This week, the voice of architect Moshe Safdie was heard for the first time in the stormy debate over the West Jerusalem plan that he conceived and that bears his name.

By Esther Zandberg

An expiration date

In a few months, when American magazines list the great movie hits of 2004, not only "Spiderman 2" and "Shrek 2" will star at the top of the list. So will one documentary.

By Uri Klein

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place in a responsible, credible, professional, and completely transparent manner, as befits the nature of relations between Israel and the United States."

Still, the question remains as to why Gilon was being watched. One possibility mentioned is that the FBI obtained information that administration documents were being leaked to Israel and wanted to track route of the leak.

Another possibility is that elements opposed to Israeli policy tried to set up Gilon and Israel on false accusations. Gilon, who was on vacation for a family event in Israel, has returned to Washington and is back at work.

Israeli sources said the embassy staff, Gilon included, will continue meeting as usual with administration and congressional representatives and with Jewish community leaders.

The FBI has applied to neither Israel nor its U.S.-based representatives for any information on the affair and it has not come up in meetings with U.S. officials.

Meanwhile, the America Israel Public Affairs Committee is also presenting a business as usual face. The powerful Jewish lobby noted with pride that all its events scheduled for the current Republican National Convention in New York are attracting capacity crowds.

Shalom: Mole story has been exaggerated out of proportion

A Foreign Ministry investigation of the Larry Franklin affair indicates that Israel's embassy in Washington acted completely according to procedure.

"It never violated the rules of diplomacy and good dialogue that we maintain with the United States," Foreign Minister Silvan Shalom said yesterday.

Referring to Naor Gilon, the embassy's political attache, Shalom said: "He meets senior administration officials in the course of his work, and there's nothing unusual about that. The fact [the FBI] is following him shows this matter has been blown completely out of proportion." (Aluf Benn)


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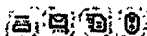
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Aug. 31, 2004 0:55

Diplomat tied to alleged mole returns to US

By HERB KEINON AND JANINE ZACHARIA



Naor Gilon, the diplomat at Israel's embassy in Washington who reportedly had contact with alleged Pentagon "mole" Larry Franklin, returned to the US on Sunday after spending a vacation in Israel.

Foreign Ministry officials said Gilon, the political affairs minister and number three at the embassy, returned to Washington because he "did nothing wrong," and "had nothing to hide."

Newsweek reported on Sunday that FBI agents monitoring a lunchtime conversation between an Israeli embassy official, believed to be Gilon, and a lobbyist for AIPAC (the American Israel Public Affairs Committee), discovered Franklin when he "walked in" to the lunch out of the blue. Franklin, according to Newsweek, soon became a subject of the FBI investigation as well.

Foreign Minister Silvan Shalom responded publicly on Monday to the allegations for the first time, calling them "media nonsense" that has been blown way out of proportion.

"Israel would not do anything that could harm our best friend, the US," Shalom said at a joint press conference with German Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer.

"The government of Israel categorically rejects the accusations that it spied or is spying on its best friend, the US," he said.

Shalom said that meetings between embassy and US Administration officials are routine, ordinary, and part of the regular diplomatic work in Washington. He said that similar meetings and exchanges of information take place in Israel among US Embassy and Israeli government officials.

Shalom said Gilon is a "dedicated worker who – as part of his job – met with administration officials, there is nothing unique or extraordinary about this. I think this has been blown out of proportion."

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Shalom said the Foreign Ministry has been dealing with this case since Friday afternoon, before the allegations were aired on CBS. Israel, Shalom said, has a firm policy that it has not strayed from of not conducting any espionage activities in the US.

Shalom said he believes there are reasons for the timing of the leak about the investigation of Franklin, but refused to say what he thinks those reasons are.

However, other Israeli officials over the last two days have said the allegations, coming on the eve of the Republican National Convention, are meant to embarrass US President George W. Bush, and are part of an ongoing policy battle in Washington being waged among officials in the State Department, CIA, and Pentagon who are at odds over US policy in Iraq.

Asked whether Israel was concerned that one of its senior diplomats was being trailed by FBI agents, Shalom replied "you don't know if he was being followed." Other minister officials in the Foreign Ministry said that the "tail" on Gilon should not come as any surprise, and that the operative assumption of most diplomats abroad is that they are under a certain degree of surveillance.

In New York on Monday, Sen. Gordon Smith (R-Oregon) told the Anti-Defamation League's New York regional board that the allegation of espionage made little sense.

"It doesn't add up to me because I know how closely we share with the State of Israel now," said Smith, "and there is no reason for there to be any espionage operations either way. I'm very skeptical and I've got a lot of questions to ask when we get to the appropriate hearings."

One House Democratic staffer said: "My impression is that the Justice Department is backing off."

While CBS news originally reported on Friday that the Justice Department was poised to "roll up" some agents as early as this week, the *New York Times* reported on Monday that no arrest appears imminent since authorities are unsure if Franklin even broke the law.

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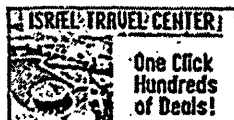
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Analysis / Damage done - true or not

By Amir Oren

Acting Foreign Ministry Director-General Ron Prushauer called two senior intelligence officials Friday night: Mossad chief Meir Dagan and Yehiel Horev, the defense establishment's chief of security. Both gave him the same answer: No, we are not involved in the Larry Franklin affair.

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Prushauer gave half a sigh of relief: If Dagan and Horev are to be believed, and there is currently no reason not to, then neither the Mossad nor Horev's Malmab unit - which, in its previous incarnation, was responsible for running Jonathan Pollard - is involved in the affair, which threatens to reawaken all the old demons.

But it was only half a sigh of relief, because the Foreign Ministry's own internal investigation has not yet ended. Thus documents could yet be uncovered for which Franklin served as a source, whether directly or indirectly. Moreover, as the investigation progresses, suspects' confessions or polygraph tests could implicate Israel. In that case, Israel would appear to be a liar, even if its denials now are genuinely based on the best currently available information. And should Israel eventually hand over evidence against Franklin, it would appear to be a double traitor - first against its benefactor, the U.S., and then against its agent.

Finally, even if official Israel proves innocent, the pro-Israel lobby in Washington, AIPAC, has already been hurt.

The importance of the Franklin affair goes far beyond the importance of the information that he allegedly gave to two AIPAC members, who in turn allegedly transmitted it to Israel. The documents, which included a draft decision by President George Bush, were all the type of staff work that is routinely discussed by Israel's diplomatic attaches and U.S. officials. Indeed, getting information from U.S. officials is one of the diplomatic attaches' main jobs.

Mossad representatives and military attaches also maintain ties with American officials. The Military Intelligence representative is responsible for ties with the Defense Intelligence Agency, which is the Defense Department's intelligence arm and Franklin's former employer.



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Chutzpah: Class 101

Sarah Augerbraun knew she wasn't in Florida anymore when standing in line at her local supermarket, a man tried to cut in front of her. "I realized I had two options," recalls the former Hebrew teacher. "I could have either yelled at him or just ignored it."

By Daphna Berman

An expiration date

In a few months, when American magazines list the great movie hits of 2004, not only "Spiderman 2" and "Shrek 2" will star at the top of the list. So will one documentary.

By Uri Klein

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Under certain circumstances, any of the above embassy officials could have had reason to speak with someone working, as Franklin most recently did, for Douglas Feith, the undersecretary of defense for policy.

Feith was one of the leading administration advocates of a tough line on Iran, the war in Iraq and strong support for Israel. Others include Undersecretary of State John Bolton, Vice President Richard Cheney, Cheney's chief of staff, Scooter Libby, and Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz. This group is opposed on all three issues by the CIA, Secretary of State Colin Powell and other State Department officials.

Thus Israel has been caught in the crossfire of a policy war within the U.S. administration - one unlikely to end even if Bush is reelected in November. Wolfowitz, whom Bush likes, would probably have trouble getting Senate confirmation for a promotion; Feith was considered a leading candidate for ouster even before the Franklin affair; Bolton's status has been undermined; and the entire group viewed Bush's nomination of Porter Goss for CIA director as a blow, as Goss has close ties with the agency and its outgoing head, George Tenet, the group's long-time rival.

Another agency whose battle for survival is liable to hurt Israel, albeit unintentionally, is the FBI, whose signal failure to prevent the September 11, 2001 attacks led both to the creation of the Department of Homeland Security and to calls for removing counterterrorism from the FBI's aegis and transferring it to a new agency, similar to Britain's MI5. The FBI is thus determined to prove to be outstanding at the top two items on its new agenda: preventing terrorism and preventing espionage.

The man who is heading the FBI's investigation against Franklin, Dave Szady, has repeatedly said that he views no person, agency or country as above suspicion. In his view, Israel, along with Taiwan, France, Japan, India and others, is on the list of friendly countries that "nevertheless try to steal our secrets." He once stated in an interview that only the prevention of mass-casualty terror attacks is more important than counterespionage. He added that today, it is not only America's enemies, but also its allies that try to steal its secrets - and while embassies and consulates remain the bases for such activity, he continued, foreign governments today also employ students, scientists and "front" companies.


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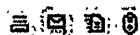
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Background: Not AIPAC's first controversy

By CALEV BEN-DAVID



"A lobby is like a night flower; it thrives in the dark and dies in the sun."

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So wrote Steven Rosen, AIPAC director of foreign policy issues, in an internal organizational memo several years ago.

Unfortunately for the influential pro-Israel lobbying group, this new affair is turning far too much of the media spotlight on an organization that prefers to work behind the scenes on Capitol Hill. But it is hardly the first time AIPAC has found itself at the center of public controversy, although never in such a serious matter as receiving classified security material.

In 1988, the investigative show 60 Minutes ran a critical piece on AIPAC using information supplied by its former communications director (and ex-Jerusalem Post reporter) Barbara Amouyal. Among the material supplied by Amouyal was an internal memo suggesting that the media be fed stories regarding Jesse Jackson's private life.

Also included in the 60 Minutes report was another internal memo which seemed to direct how political action committees should donate money to specific pro-Israel candidates, a possible violation of federal law forbidding lobby groups such as AIPAC from directly involving themselves in elections. A subsequent investigation by the Federal Elections Commission cleared AIPAC of any violations.

Nonetheless, AIPAC continues to face accusations that it unduly interferes in the electoral process, especially from politicians who credit their defeats at the polls to the organization's efforts. The most notable example in recent years was the 2002 congressional race, in which two Georgia Democrats, incumbents Cynthia McKinney and Earl Hilliard, were defeated in party primaries by contenders perceived as more pro-Israel. McKinney subsequently commented: "Despite the fact that I easily won the Democratic vote, 40,000 Republicans maliciously crossed over and overtook the Democratic Primary. And because AIPAC had telegraphed in newspaper articles that they were going to target both Earl

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Hilliard and me, the Democratic Party was paralyzed."

AIPAC has sometimes even found itself on the receiving end of criticism from the Israeli governments whose positions it is charged to support. This was especially so during the early years of the Oslo Accords, when an organization viewed by many on the Jewish left as traditionally more right-leaning, seemed slow to adjust itself to Israel's sudden political shift.

In 1992, newly elected prime minister Yitzhak Rabin, in a closed-door meeting with AIPAC leaders in Washington, reportedly told them in harsh terms they had gone too far in antagonizing the Bush administration in the battle to gain loan guarantees sought by the previous Shamir government. The next year AIPAC vice-president Harvey Friedman referred to deputy foreign minister Yossi Beilin in the presence of a reporter as a "little slimeball," after Beilin had complained that Friedman had spoken approvingly of transferring the Palestinians. Friedman subsequently left AIPAC as the organization sought to improve ties with the Rabin government.

AIPAC's efforts to keep a low media-profile have also led to accusations that it has put undue pressure on journalists, especially from the Jewish press, who cover it critically. Among them is Washington Jewish Week reporter Larry Cohler, who earlier this year told an Internet site: "Their mission statement doesn't say anything about them mucking around in Jewish newspapers.

AIPAC tried to get me fired, [and editor] Andy [Silow-Carroll] fired [from The Washington Jewish Week in 1992]." (AIPAC has denied those charges.) Given its task, it is inevitable that AIPAC will serve as a perennial whipping-boy for anti-Semitic Jewish conspiracy theorists, and as the phantom spoiler by disgruntled anti-Israeli politicians who fall short at the ballot box. But its reported involvement in the Pentagon-leak story will force it to handle mainstream-media damage control of the like the organization has not yet known.

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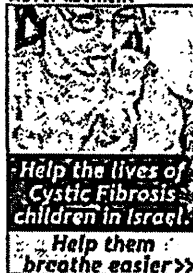
Headline Newsbox

Making a mountain into a molehill

By Akiva Eldar

It now looks by all accounts like Larry Franklin will, at worst, be tried for mishandling sensitive material. In other words, he'll be charged with leaking information to the pro-Israel lobby AIPAC. "Sensitive" data of this sort, or of an even more sensitive nature, is routinely conveyed during meetings between American officials and Israeli diplomats under the bright lights of upscale restaurants in the heart of Washington, D.C.

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The real problem threatening Israel-U.S. relations and the Jewish community does not reside in this small-fry from the Pentagon and the classification grade of the leaked document, but rather in the suspicion of something fishy at the top. The murky waters of this affair will provide ample fishing grounds for political rivals and conspiracy buffs. First they'll land Franklin's boss, Undersecretary of Defense for Policy Douglas Feith, and then they'll hook the entire group of neoconservatives of which he is one of the leaders. That is the group of Israel's friends, including many Jews, that pushed President Bush to go to war in Iraq.

The best form of defense being offense, spokespeople for the Israeli government insinuated that anti-Israel elements are behind the affair. Republican representatives point to "Democratic agents" among senior FBI officials who want to spoil things for Bush on the eve of his party's convention.

They may be right. But you don't need Franklin and the classified Iranian document to draw fire at the conspiracy to take over Iraq. As members of think tanks several years ago, Feith and his friends volunteered an open document in which they laid bare their Israeli-American plot to change the face of the entire Middle East. In 1996, a conservative Israeli-American research institute invited Feith and others, including Richard Perle who headed an advisory panel to the Pentagon known as the Defense Policy Board, to put together a strategic manual for the incoming prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Feith is responsible for the following paragraph from that document: "Israel can shape its strategic environment, in cooperation with Turkey and Jordan, by weakening, containing, and even rolling back Syria. This effort can focus on removing Saddam Hussein from power in Iraq - an important Israeli strategic objective in its own right - as a means of foiling Syria's regional ambitions."



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Top Articles

Chutzpah: Class 101

Sarah Augerbraun knew she wasn't in Florida anymore when standing in line at her local supermarket, a man tried to cut in front of her. "I realized I had two options," recalls the former Hebrew teacher. "I could have either yelled at him or just ignored it."

By Daphna Berman

An expiration date

In a few months, when American magazines list the great movie hits of 2004, not only "Spiderman 2" and "Shrek 2" will star at the top of the list. So will one documentary.

By Uri Klein

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The document goes on to state that "Jordan has challenged Syria's regional ambitions recently by suggesting the restoration of the Hashemites in Iraq ... Since Iraq's future could affect the strategic balance in the Middle East profoundly, it would be understandable that Israel has an interest in supporting the Hashemites in their efforts to redefine Iraq."

Six years later, members of that same group supported the half-baked idea to crown Jordan's Prince Hassan as Iraq's ruler.

If anyone was looking to use Franklin to sock Feith in the weak spot of dual loyalty, in order to hurt Bush, they could have located its sources in that very same open document. Its authors provided the head of a foreign government tips on manipulating U.S. members of Congress. They suggested that he take advantage of the period remaining before the November '96 presidential and congressional elections to obtain "a benign American reaction" for his/their policy. In exchange for the free advice, they asked for Netanyahu's help in recruiting members of Congress who "care very much about missile defense" to counter an agreement with Russia on reining in proliferation of long-range missiles.

Feith and his friends promised in that document that Israeli support for the missile plan would assist efforts to relocate the U.S. embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. That initiative, sponsored by the Republican presidential candidate Bob Dole, was the brainchild of the neoconservatives and their friends at AIPAC. It utterly contravened the view held by president Bill Clinton and prime minister Yitzhak Rabin that initiatives of that sort do not help build trust between Israel and the Palestinians. Perhaps that is the strongest proof of all that the neoconservatives and Jewish lobbyists do not serve two masters. They serve themselves, and that's the trouble.


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September 2004

Iran-Contra II?

Fresh scrutiny on a rogue Pentagon operation.

By Joshua Micah Marshall, Laura Rozen, and Paul Glastris

On Friday evening, CBS News reported that the FBI is investigating a suspected mole in the Department of Defense who allegedly passed to Israel, via a pro-Israeli lobbying organization, classified American intelligence about Iran. The focus of the investigation, according to U.S. government officials, is Larry Franklin, a veteran Defense Intelligence Agency Iran analyst now working in the office of the Pentagon's number three civilian official, Undersecretary of Defense for Policy Douglas Feith.

The investigation of Franklin is now shining a bright light on a shadowy struggle within the Bush administration over the direction of U.S. policy toward Iran. In particular, the FBI is looking with renewed interest at an unauthorized back-channel between Iranian dissidents and advisers in Feith's office, which more senior administration officials first tried in vain to shut down and then later attempted to cover up.

Franklin, along with another colleague from Feith's office, a polyglot Middle East expert named Harold Rhode, were the two officials involved in the back-channel, which involved on-going meetings and contacts with Iranian arms dealer Manucher Ghorbanifar and other Iranian exiles, dissidents and government officials. Ghorbanifar is a storied figure who played a key role in embroiling the Reagan administration in the Iran-Contra affair. The meetings were both a conduit for intelligence about Iran and Iraq and part of a bitter administration power-struggle pitting officials at DoD who have been pushing for a hard-line policy of "regime changes" in Iran, against other officials at the State Department and the CIA who have been counseling a more cautious approach.

Reports of two of these meetings first surfaced a year ago in *Newsday*, and have since been the subject of an ongoing investigation by the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence. Whether or how the meetings are connected to the alleged espionage remains unknown. But the FBI is now closely scrutinizing them.

While the FBI is looking at the meetings as part of its criminal investigation, to congressional investigators the Ghorbanifar back-channel typifies the out-of-control bureaucratic turf wars which have characterized and often hobbled Bush

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administration policy-making. And an investigation by *The Washington Monthly* — including a rare interview with Ghorbanifar — adds weight to those concerns. The meetings turn out to have been far more extensive and much less under White House control than originally reported. One of the meetings, which Pentagon officials have long characterized as merely a "chance encounter" seems in fact to have been planned long in advance by Rhode and Ghorbanifar. Another has never been reported in the American press. The administration's reluctance to disclose these details seems clear: the DoD-Ghorbanifar meetings suggest the possibility that a rogue faction at the Pentagon was trying to work outside normal US foreign policy channels to advance a "regime change" agenda not approved by the president's foreign policy principals or even the president himself.

The Italian Job


The first meeting occurred in Rome in December, 2001. It included Franklin, Rhode, and another American, the neoconservative writer and operative Michael Ledeen, who organized the meeting. (According to UPI, Ledeen was then working for Feith as a consultant.) Also in attendance was Ghorbanifar and a number of other Iranians. One of the Iranians, according to two sources familiar with the meeting, was a former senior member of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard who claimed to have information about dissident ranks within the Iranian security services. *The Washington Monthly* has also learned from U.S. government sources that Nicolo Pollari, the head of Italy's military intelligence agency, SISMI, attended the meetings, as did the Italian Minister of Defense Antonio Martino, who is well-known in neoconservative circles in Washington.

Alarm bells about the December 2001 meeting began going off in U.S. government channels only days after it occurred. On Dec. 12, 2001, at the U.S. embassy in Rome, America's newly-installed ambassador, Mel Sembler, sat down for a private dinner with Ledeen, an old friend of his from Republican Party politics, and Martino, the Italian defense minister. The conversation quickly turned to the meeting. The problem was that this was the first that Amb. Sembler had heard about it.

According to U.S. government sources, Sembler immediately set about trying to determine what he could about the meeting and how it had happened. Since U.S. government contact with foreign government intelligence agencies is supposed to be overseen by the CIA, Sembler first spoke to the CIA station chief in Rome to find out what if anything he knew about the meeting with the Iranians. But that only raised more questions because the station chief had been left in the dark as well. Soon both Sembler and the Rome station chief were sending anxious queries back to the State Department and CIA headquarters in Langley, Va., respectively, raising alarms on both sides of the Potomac.

The meeting was a source of concern for a series of overlapping reasons. Since the late 1980s, Ghorbanifar has been the subject of two CIA "burn notices." The agency believes Ghorbanifar is a serial "fabricator" and forbids its officers from having anything to do with him. Moreover, why were mid-level Pentagon officials organizing meetings with a foreign intelligence agency behind the back of the CIA — a clear breach of U.S. government protocol? There was also a matter of personal chagrin for Sembler: At State Department direction, he had just been cautioning the Italians to restrain their contacts with bad-acting states like Iran (with which Italy has extensive trade ties).

According to U.S. government sources, both the State Department and the CIA eventually brought the matter to the attention of the White House -- specifically, to Condoleezza Rice's chief deputy on the National Security Council, Stephen J. Hadley. Later, Italian spy chief Pollari raised the matter privately with Tenet, who himself went to Hadley in early February 2002. Goaded by Tenet, Hadley sent word to the officials in Feith's office and to Ledeén to cease all such activities. Hadley then contacted Sembler, assuring him it wouldn't happen again and to report back if it did.

 The orders, however, seem to have had little effect, for a second meeting was soon underway. According to a story published this summer in *Corriere della Sera*, a leading Italian daily, this second meeting took place in Rome in June 2002. Ghorbanifar tells *The Washington Monthly* that he arranged that meeting after a flurry of faxes between himself and DoD official Harold Rhode. Though he did not attend it himself, Ghorbanifar says the meeting consisted of an Egyptian, an Iraqi, and a high-level U.S. government official, whose name he declined to reveal. The first two briefed the American official about the general situation in Iraq and the Middle East, and what would happen in Iraq. "And it's happened word for word since," says Ghorbanifar. A spokesman for the NSC declined to comment on this and other meetings and referred *The Washington Monthly* to the Defense Department, which did not respond to repeated inquiries. Ledeén also refused to comment.

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No one at the U.S. embassy in Rome seems to have known about this second Rome meeting. But the back-channel's continuing existence became apparent the following month -- July 2002 -- when Ledeén again contacted Sembler and told him that he'd be back in Rome in September to continue "his work" with the Iranians (This time Ledeén made no mention of any involvement by Pentagon officials; later, he told Sembler it would be in August rather than September.) An exasperated Sembler again sent word back to Washington, and Hadley again went into motion telling Ledeén, in no uncertain terms, to back off.

Once again, however, Hadley's orders seem to have gone unheeded. Almost a year later in June 2003, there were still further meetings in Paris involving Rhode and Ghorbanifar. Ghorbanifar says the purpose of the meeting was for Rhode to get more information on the situation in Iraq and the Middle East. "In those meetings we met, we gave him the scenario, what would happen in the coming days in Iraq. And everything has happened word for word as we told him," Ghorbanifar repeats. "We met in several different places in Paris," he says. "Rhode met several other people -- he didn't only meet me."

Not a "chance encounter"

By the summer of 2003, the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence had begun to get wind of the Ghorbanifar-Ledeén-DoD back-channel and made inquiries at the CIA. A month later, *Newsday* broke the original story about the secret Ghorbanifar channel. Faced with the disclosure, Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld acknowledged the December 2001 meeting but dismissed it as routine and unimportant.

"The information has moved around the interagency process to all the departments and agencies," he told reporters in Crawford, Texas, after a meeting with Bush. "As I understand it, there wasn't anything there that was of substance or of value that needed to be pursued further." Later that day, another senior Defense official

acknowledged the second meeting in Paris in June 2003, but insisted that it was the result of a "chance encounter" between Ghorbanifar and a Pentagon official. The administration has kept to the "chance encounter" story to this day.

Ghorbanifar, however, laughs off that idea. "Run into each other? We had a prior arrangement," he told *The Washington Monthly*: "It involved a lot of discussion and a lot of people."

Over the last year, the Senate Intelligence Committee has conducted limited inquiry into the meetings, including interviews with Feith and Ledeen. But under terms of a compromise agreed to by both parties, a full investigation into the matter was put off until after the November election. Republicans on the committee, many of whom sympathize with the "regime change" agenda at DoD, have been resistant to such investigations, calling them an election-year fishing expedition. Democrats, by contrast, see such investigations as vital to understanding the central role Feith's office may have played in a range of a dubious intelligence enterprises, from pushing claims about a supposed Saddam-al Qaeda partnership and overblown estimates of alleged Iraqi stocks of WMD to what the committee's ranking minority member Sen. Jay Rockefeller (D-W.Va.) calls "the Chalabi factor" (Rhode and others in Feith's office have been major sponsors of the Iraqi exile leader, who is now under investigation for passing U.S. intelligence to Iran). With the FBI adding potential espionage charges to the mix the long-simmering questions about the activities of Feith's operation now seem certain to come under renewed scrutiny.

Research assistance provided by Claudio Lavanga.

Image in web link is a photo of Ghorbanifar from the mid-1980s, around the time of Iran-Contra.

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HEADLINE: THE WORLD;
Israel Has Long Spied on U.S., Say Officials

BYLINE: Bob Drogin and Greg Miller, Times Staff Writers

DATELINE: WASHINGTON

BODY:

Despite its fervent denials, Israel secretly maintains a large and active intelligence-gathering operation in the United States that has long attempted to recruit U.S. officials as spies and to procure classified documents, U.S. government officials said. (X)
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FBI and other counterespionage agents, in turn, have covertly followed, bugged and videotaped Israeli diplomats, intelligence officers and others in Washington, New York and elsewhere, the officials said. The FBI routinely watches many diplomats assigned to America.

Officials said FBI surveillance of a senior Israeli diplomat, who was the subject of an FBI inquiry in 1997-98, played a role in the latest probe into possible Israeli spying. The bureau now is investigating whether a Pentagon analyst or pro-Israel lobbyists provided Israel with a highly classified draft policy document. The document advocated support for Iranian dissidents, radio broadcasts into Iran and other efforts aimed at destabilizing the regime in Tehran, officials said this week.

The case is unresolved, but it has highlighted Israel's unique status as an extremely close U.S. ally that presents a dilemma for U.S. counterintelligence officials.

"There is a huge, aggressive, ongoing set of Israeli activities directed against the United States," said a former intelligence official who was familiar with the latest FBI probe and who recently left government. "Anybody who worked in counterintelligence in a professional capacity will tell you the Israelis are among the most aggressive and active countries targeting the United States." -39

The former official discounted repeated Israeli denials that the country exceeded acceptable limits to obtain information.

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"They undertake a wide range of technical operations and human operations," the former official said. "People here as liaison ... aggressively pursue classified intelligence from people. The denials are laughable."

Current and former officials involved with Israel at the White House, CIA, State Department and in Congress had similar appraisals, although not all were as harsh in their assessments. A Bush administration official confirmed that Israel ran intelligence operations against the United States. "I don't know of any foreign government that doesn't do collection in Washington," he said.

Another U.S. official familiar with Israeli intelligence said that Israeli espionage efforts were more subtle than aggressive, and typically involved the use of intermediaries.

But a former senior intelligence official, who focused on Middle East issues, said Israel tried to recruit him as a spy in 1991.

"I had an Israeli intelligence officer pitch me in Washington at the time of the first Gulf War," he said. "I said, 'No, go away,' and reported it to counterintelligence."

The U.S. officials all insisted on anonymity because classified material was involved and because of the political sensitivity of Israeli relations with Washington. Congress has shown little appetite for vigorous investigations of alleged Israeli spying.

In his first public comments on the case, Israel's ambassador, Daniel Ayalon, repeated his government's denials this week. "I can tell you here, very authoritatively, very categorically, Israel does not spy on the United States," Ayalon told CNN. "We do not gather information on our best friend and ally." Ayalon said his government had been "very assured that this thing will just fizzle out. There's nothing there."

In public, Israel contends it halted all spying operations against the United States after 1986, when Jonathan Jay Pollard, a former Navy analyst, was convicted in U.S. federal court and sentenced to life in prison for selling secret military documents to Israel.

U.S. officials say the case was never fully resolved because a damage-assessment team concluded that Israel had at least one more high-level spy at the time, apparently inside the Pentagon, who had provided serial numbers of classified documents for Pollard to retrieve.

The FBI has investigated several incidents of suspected intelligence breaches involving Israel since the Pollard case, including a 1997 case in which the National Security Agency bugged two Israeli intelligence officials in Washington discussing efforts to obtain a sensitive U.S. diplomatic document. Israel denied wrongdoing in that case and all others, and no one has been prosecuted.

But U.S. diplomats, military officers and other officials are routinely warned before going to Israel that local agents are known to slip into homes and hotel rooms of visiting delegations to go through briefcases and to copy computer files.

"Any official American in the intelligence community or in the foreign service gets all these briefings on all the things the Israelis are going to try to do to you," said one U.S. official.

At the same time, experts said relations between the CIA and Israel's chief intelligence agency, the Mossad, were so close that analysts sometimes shared highly classified "code-word" intelligence on sensitive subjects. Tel Aviv routinely informs Washington of the identities of the Mossad station chief and the military intelligence liaison at its embassy in America.

"They probably get 98% of everything they want handed to them on a weekly basis," said the former senior U.S. intelligence officer who has worked closely with Israeli intelligence. "They're very active allies. They're treated the way the British are."

Another former intelligence operative who has worked with Israeli intelligence agreed. "The relationship with Israeli intelligence is as intimate as it gets," he said.

Officials said Israel was acutely interested in U.S. policies and intelligence on the Middle East, especially toward Iran, Syria and Saudi Arabia.

"They are sophisticated enough to want to know where the levers are they can influence, which people in our government are taking which positions they can try to influence," said a former high-ranking CIA official.

But the official said the relationship between the U.S. and Israel, at least in intelligence circles, "is not one of complete trust at all."

The latest counterintelligence investigation began more than two years ago, and initially focused on whether officials from a powerful Washington lobbying group, the American Israel Political Action Committee, passed classified information to Israel, officials said.

Several months later, the FBI conducted surveillance of Naor Gilon, chief of political affairs at the Israeli Embassy, meeting with two AIPAC officials. The arrival of a veteran Iran analyst at the Pentagon, Larry Franklin, sparked a new line of FBI inquiry.

In 1997 and 1998, the FBI had monitored Gilon as part of an investigation into whether Scott Ritter, then a U.S. intelligence official working with U.N. weapons inspectors in Iraq, was improperly delivering U.S. spy-plane film and other secret material to Israeli intelligence. Gilon was posted in New York at the time and operated as liaison between Israel's Anan, or military, intelligence service, and the U.N. teams, several officials said.

"Naor was the focus of FBI surveillance into allegations that I was a mole," said Ritter, who was never charged in the case. "They suspected Naor was working me to gain access to U.S. intelligence, which was absurd."

In an e-mail message this week, Gilon said he was under orders not to talk to the media about the current case. He has denied any wrongdoing in interviews with Israeli newspapers.

Franklin has not responded to requests for comment, and officials said he was cooperating with authorities. The FBI interviewed several AIPAC officials last Friday and copied the contents of a computer hard drive. AIPAC has denied any wrongdoing and said it was cooperating fully with investigators.

In a statement released Thursday, AIPAC said the group's continued access to the White House, senior administration officials and ranking members of Congress during the two-year probe would have been "inconceivable ... if any shred of evidence of disloyalty or even negligence on AIPAC's part" had been discovered.

AIPAC, has especially close ties to the Bush administration. Addressing the group's policy conference on May 18, President Bush praised AIPAC for "serving the cause of America" and for highlighting the

nuclear threat from Iran.

Washington and Tel Aviv differ on their assessments of Iran's nuclear weapons development. Israel considers Iran's nuclear ambitions its No. 1 security threat, and the issue is the top priority for AIPAC. The Bush administration takes the Iran nuclear threat seriously, but its intelligence estimates classify the danger as less imminent than do the Israeli assessments.

What mystifies those who know AIPAC is how one of the savviest, best-connected lobbying organizations in Washington has found itself enmeshed in a spy investigation.

Although never previously implicated in a potential espionage case, AIPAC has frequently been a subject of controversy. Its close ties to Israel and its aggressive advocacy of Israeli government positions has drawn criticism that it should be registered as an agent of a foreign country. Others, noting its ability to organize significant backing for or against candidates running for national office, have demanded that it be classified as a political action committee.

So far the group has avoided both classifications, either of which would impose major restrictions on its activities.

Three years ago, Fortune magazine ranked AIPAC fourth on its list of Washington's 25 most powerful lobbying groups -- ahead of such organizations as the AFL-CIO and the American Medical Assn.

Times staff writers Mark Mazzetti and Tyler Marshall in Washington contributed to this report.

CORRECTION-DATE: September 05, 2004

CORRECTION:

Lobbying group -- An article in Friday's Section A about allegations of Israeli spying in the United States misidentified the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, a pro-Israel lobbying group, as the American Israel Political Action Committee.

GRAPHIC: PHOTO: DENIAL: Daniel Ayalon, Israeli ambassador to the U.S., says his nation doesn't spy here. **PHOTOGRAPHER:** Neal Hamberg Associated Press

LOAD-DATE: September 5, 2004

Pentagon Analyst Stops Cooperating In Israel Spy Case

Associated Press

02:26:45

By Richard B. Schmitt

October 6, 2004

WASHINGTON, DC -- A Pentagon analyst being investigated for allegedly passing secrets to Israel has stopped cooperating with authorities and retained a new lawyer to fight possible espionage charges, sources familiar with the case said Tuesday.

The analyst, Larry Franklin, has been a key witness in a continuing **FBI** investigation looking into whether classified intelligence was passed to Israel by the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, an influential Washington lobbying group. Franklin has been accused of passing the contents of a classified document about U.S. policy on Iran to two AIPAC officials, who in turn may have given the information to Israeli officials in Washington, sources have said. Federal prosecutors had proposed an agreement under which Franklin would plead guilty to some of the charges. Such agreements usually are done in exchange for leniency and are accompanied by a pledge of continued cooperation. But sources said that Franklin has rejected a proposed deal because he believes the terms are too onerous. He recently replaced his court-appointed lawyer. "It looks like there is going to be a battle," a source familiar with the case said.

FBI officials have not yet sought charges against Franklin or anyone else in the case, although the breakdown of plea negotiations would appear to raise the odds that he could be charged soon. The scope of the investigation is believed to encompass a top diplomat at the Israeli Embassy in Washington; two high-ranking analysts at AIPAC; and the Pentagon office in which Franklin works as an Iran analyst, which is headed up by Defense Undersecretary Douglas J. Feith. The case has attracted widespread attention because it spotlights U.S. relations with a longtime ally and raises questions about whether those relations have become too close in recent years. Israel has become acutely sensitive to the growing nuclear capabilities of Iran, which it considers to be its most worrisome and deadly foe.

Both the Israeli government and AIPAC have denied that they engaged in any wrongdoing or were given unauthorized access to secrets. A spokesman for Paul McNulty, the United States attorney for the eastern district of Virginia, whose office has been assigned the case, declined to comment on the matter. A prominent Washington defense lawyer, Plato Cacheris, confirmed this week that he recently had been retained by Franklin. "We consider him a loyal American who did not engage in any espionage activities," said Cacheris, the first person representing Franklin to speak out on his behalf since the investigation surfaced a month ago. "Any charge of espionage will be met with fierce resistance."

Cacheris has represented a number of accused turncoats, including CIA operative Aldrich Ames, who was sentenced to life imprisonment in 1994 after confessing to years of spying for the Soviet Union. Cacheris also represented former **FBI** counterintelligence agent Robert P. Hanssen, who also was convicted of passing secrets to the Soviets and who received a life sentence in 2002. Cacheris' other clients have included Monica Lewinsky and Nixon administration Attorney General John Mitchell. Some U.S. officials familiar with the investigation have said there is little hard evidence that Franklin intended to commit espionage and no hint that he was paid for any role he might have played. U.S. officials believe there is more evidence that Franklin -- described by colleagues and friends as diligent and thoughtful yet periodically unreliable and disorganized -- might have handed over information without understanding the gravity of his actions.

During two decades at the Pentagon spent tracking threats, he was considered a journeyman analyst who often could be found in his office buried behind huge stacks of documents. The classified information he is suspected of sharing included the contents of a draft version of a national security presidential directive, or NSPD, on Iran. The draft advocated measures the United States could take to help destabilize the regime in Tehran, a subject of intense interest to the Israelis.

But officials also have said that the draft, which originated at the Pentagon's Near East and South Asian Affairs office, where Franklin worked, contained little in the way of sensitive secrets that had not been reported by the media already. In addition, after more than two years of debate among top U.S. officials, an NSPD on Iran has yet to be agreed upon by top officials and signed by the president.

Daniel Ayalon, to correct myself. Mr. Ambassador, it's all over the press this week, the FBI is investigating an official of the Defense Department, Lawrence Franklin, for allegedly passing classified documents or materials or data from the White House that the White House plans -- regarding Iran -- the White House's plans on Iran and Israel.

Is Franklin spying for your country?

AMB. AYALON: No, not at all, John. I can tell you here -- and thank you for giving me this opportunity to say categorically and very authoritatively, Israel does not spy on the United States, nor do we gather any intelligence on the U.S. We do not do it because it's our best friend and ally. And secondly, we don't really need it because we are in such close, close relations -- strategic, political -- and we see eye to eye on most of the issues traveling the Middle East, whether it's terror or weapons of mass destruction, or Iran that we just talked about.

And also, John, you emphasized it's press reports. Let me also say here that I'm not going to contend with or argue with some anonymous leaks or some faceless allegations or sources. I can tell you here also that in all my contacts with the U.S. government, there was no way that formally or informally we were discussing any of these allegations.

So it's in the press. I don't know the motivations of it. I hope it will be revealed because there is nothing there whatsoever.

MR. MCLAUGHLIN: There's no grand jury that's been impaneled?

AMB. AYALON: I have no details on that, and nor am I concerned because we know exactly what the facts are. And whoever is leaking, whoever is feeding the press on that, I would say it could be two reasons. Either it's some incompetence of not understanding reality or misunderstanding or misinterpreting the activities that we engage in with the U.S. government, or maybe even a malicious intent. I don't know.

But I can tell you again, officially we have not heard anything, neither formally nor informally.

MR. MCLAUGHLIN: So we can regard this as an official denial on the part of the government of Israel, what you're saying?

AMB. AYALON: Yes. Yes. And I would say it's more than that; for us it's a non-issue.

MR. MCLAUGHLIN: It's a non-issue?

AMB. AYALON: Exactly.

MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Now, you are aware, with all due respect, Mr. Ambassador, that Israel denied that Jonathan Pollard was a spy for 13 years, and then it concurred after that that he was a spy.

AMB. AYALON: That wasn't quite the case. We took responsibility -- it was a sad case. It was a sad case. And it was an isolated, very unique case of the past over 20 years ago, and we all bore the consequences

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for it.

MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Well, I think the general assumption is that nations spy on each other whether they're friendly or not.

AMB. AYALON: Absolutely.

MR. MCLAUGHLIN: And there isn't very much doubt in my mind that we have our spies, if they are earning some of that \$40 billion that we put out for CIA, et cetera, there are spies in your government working for us. Absolutely?

AMB. AYALON: You're right that -- no, you're right that nations, even friendly ones, do spy on each other. This is a common, let's say, understanding. But after Pollard, I can tell you here again that Israel --

MR. MCLAUGHLIN: The Pollard case.

AMB. AYALON: After the Pollard case from 20 so years ago, we took -- Israel took a strategic defense -- strategic decision not to do any kind of intelligence gathering of that type on the United States, and we adhere to it and we don't want even anything which will be remotely close to such activity because of the unique relationship between Israel and the United States. The relationship is unique in terms of closeness.

MR. MCLAUGHLIN: And precious.

AMB. AYALON: Not just the pressure.

MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Precious.

AMB. AYALON: Not just -- very precious, you're right. Very precious. We cherish it. We will not do anything to impair it. And again, nor do we --

MR. MCLAUGHLIN: I think those denials are reassuring. I'm not sure it clears my hurdle of that people in your station are required by the circumstances of your diplomatic status to automatically deny everything, but I think you've gone a step beyond that.

But I have a question with regard to AIPAC. AIPAC is a flourishing and very successful lobby. It does excellent work on the part of Israel, but it is -- it appears that AIPAC is functioning as an intermediary, as this story has been developed and put forward. Now AIPAC denied any involvement, but I want to read you the language:

"Any allegation of criminal conduct by AIPAC or our employees is false and baseless. Neither AIPAC nor any of its employees has violated any laws or rules, nor has AIPAC or its employees ever received information they believed was secret or classified."

Does that sound like a categorical denial to you?

AMB. AYALON: I think so. I cannot speak, of course, for AIPAC. I think it's a very, very good American organization, and we very much

appreciate its activity on behalf of the U.S. -- American strategic alliance. It is very important.

MR. MCLAUGHLIN: But is it not curious that there is wiggle room in that statement, and the operative words are "they believed was secret or classified?" This puts the monkey on Mr. Franklin's back. AIPAC doesn't deny passing the information on to Israel; it denies that it did so knowing that the information was classified. They didn't know it was classified. So are you putting -- are you putting Franklin out to dry?

AMB. AYALON: I would -- you know, John, Washington is a place, like any other capital, of information sharing. Obviously, we do meet with AIPAC on a regular basis, like we do meet with other think tanks --

MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Well, he -- Franklin --

AMB. AYALON: -- and with administration people --

MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Yeah.

AMB. AYALON: -- Congresspeople, academic people, media people. They're all meeting and talking.

I don't think there was anything wrong with that, and we will continue to do that. And I think that the statement speaks for itself. I don't have anything to add. I'm not a spokesman for them.

MR. MCLAUGHLIN: But you understand how that "they believed" provides that wiggle room? Can you see that?

AMB. AYALON: I -- no, I'm not sure that I fully understand, you know, this legalistic language.

I can tell you that --

MR. MCLAUGHLIN: But AIPAC is presenting itself as possibly an unwitting recipient of classified information, which it may have passed on.

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Cloak and Swagger

The Larry Franklin spy probe reveals an escalating fight over control of Iran policy.

By Laura Rozen and Jason Vest

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To Washington's small and sometimes fractious community of Iran experts, it was becoming obvious: What to do about Iran and its fast-developing nuclear program was set to rival Iraq as the most pressing foreign-policy challenge for the person elected president in 2004. By the spring and early summer of this year, the city was awash in rival Iran task forces and conferences. Some recommended that Washington engage in negotiations with Tehran's mullahs on the nuclear issue; they drew scorn from the other side, which preached regime change or military strikes.

In late July, as this debate raged, a Pentagon analyst named Larry Franklin telephoned an acquaintance who worked at a pro-Israel lobbying group, the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC). The two men knew each other professionally from their long involvement in the Washington Iran and Iraq policy debates. A Brooklyn-born Catholic father of five who put himself through school, earning a doctorate, as an Air Force reservist, Franklin had served as a Soviet intelligence analyst at the Defense Intelligence Agency until about a decade ago, when he learned Farsi and became an Iran specialist. At their July meeting, Franklin told the AIPAC employee about his frustration that the U.S. government wasn't responding aggressively enough to intelligence about hostile Iranian activities in Iraq. As Franklin explained it, Iran had sent all of its Arabic-speaking Iranian agents to southern Iraq, was orchestrating attacks on Iraqi state oil facilities, and had sent other agents to northern Iraq to kill Israelis believed to be operating there. Iran had also transferred its top operative for Afghanistan to the Iranian Embassy in Baghdad. The move, Franklin implied, signified Tehran's intention to cause more trouble in Iraq.

A couple of weeks after this meeting, in mid-August, the AIPAC official was visited by two FBI agents, who asked him about Franklin. From the line of questioning, it wasn't clear to the AIPAC official whether Franklin was being investigated by the FBI for possible wrongdoing or if he was simply the subject of a routine background investigation for renewal of his security clearance.

But on August 27, when CBS broke the story that the FBI was close to arresting an alleged "Israeli mole" in the office of the Pentagon's No. 3 official, Douglas Feith, it became clear that Franklin was in trouble. News reports said that the FBI had evidence that Franklin had passed a classified draft national-security presidential directive (NSPD) on Iran to AIPAC. What's more, reports said, the FBI wasn't just interested in Franklin. For the past two years, it had been conducting a counterintelligence probe into whether AIPAC had served as a conduit for U.S. intelligence to Israel, an investigation about which National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice was briefed shortly after the Bush administration came into office.

In the flurry of news reports that followed, the scope of the FBI investigation seemed potentially enormous. Citing senior U.S. officials, *The Washington Post* reported that "the FBI is examining whether highly classified material from the National Security Agency ... was also forwarded to Israel," and that the investigation of Franklin was "coincidental" to that broader FBI probe. *Time* magazine reported that Franklin had been enlisted by the FBI to place a series of monitored telephone calls (scripted by the FBI) to get possible evidence on others, including allies of Ahmad Chalabi, a favorite of Pentagon neoconservatives. Chalabi was alleged to have told his Iranian

intelligence contacts that the United States had broken their communications codes -- a breach that prompted a break in U.S. support for Chalabi last spring -- and the FBI wanted to know who had shared that highly classified information with Chalabi. What's more, an independent expert on Israeli espionage said he had been interviewed by the FBI in June and in several follow-up calls, and that the scope of the senior FBI investigators' questioning was broad and extremely detailed.

In the wake of the first news reports, AIPAC strongly denied that any of its employees had ever knowingly received classified U.S. information. Israel also categorically denied that it had conducted intelligence operations against the United States since the case of Jonathan Pollard, a U.S. Navy intelligence analyst who was convicted of spying for Israel in 1987.

At the time the CBS report aired in late August -- incidentally, on the Friday evening before the opening of the Republican national convention -- custody of the Franklin investigation was being transferred from the head of the FBI counterintelligence unit, David Szady, to U.S. Attorney Paul McNulty, a Bush appointee, in Alexandria, Virginia, as the case moved to the grand-jury phase.

And then, in mid-September, news of the Franklin investigation went dark.

* * *

The classified document that Franklin allegedly passed to AIPAC concerned a controversial proposal by Pentagon hard-liners to destabilize Iran. The latest iteration of the national-security presidential directive was drafted by a Pentagon civilian and avid neocon, Michael Rubin, who hoped it would be adopted as official policy by the Bush administration. But in mid-June, Bush's national-security advisers canceled consideration of the draft, partly in response to resistance from some at the State Department and the National Security Council, according to a recent memo written by Rubin and obtained by *The American Prospect*. No doubt also contributing to the administration's decision was the swelling insurgency and chaos of postwar Iraq.

Rubin, in his early 30s, is a relative newcomer to the neoconservative circles in which he is playing an increasingly prominent role. Once the Iraq and Iran desk officer in the Pentagon's Office of Special Plans and later a Coalition Provisional Authority adviser in Iraq, these days the Yale-educated Ph.D. hangs his hat at the American Enterprise Institute (AEI) and serves as editor for controversial Middle East scholar Daniel Pipes' magazine, *The Middle East Quarterly*.

In an article published in the Republican-oriented quarterly *Ripon Forum* in June, Rubin suggests that the administration resolve its Iran waffling by turning against the current regime. "In 1953 and 1979," he wrote, "Washington supported an unpopular Iranian government against the will of the people. The United States should not make the same mistake three times." In other words, President Bush should step up his public condemnation of the Iranian regime and break off all contact with it in hopes of spurring a swelling of the Iranian pro-democracy movement. In short, Rubin, like his fellow Iran hawks, urges the administration to make regime change in Iran its official policy.

This invocation of "moral clarity" has a long intellectual pedigree among neoconservatives. It's the same argument they made to Ronald Reagan about the Soviet Union more than 20 years ago. "If we could bring down the Soviet empire by inspiring and supporting a small percentage of the people," Michael Ledeen, a chief neoconservative advocate of regime change in Iran and freedom scholar at AEI, recently wrote in the *National Review*, "surely the chances of successful

revolution in Iran are more likely.”

Was it to this end that Franklin was allegedly observed by the FBI passing the draft NSPD on Iran to AIPAC? Was he trying to inform AIPAC, or Israel, about the contents of the draft NSPD? Or rather, and perhaps more plausibly, was he trying to enlist the powerful Washington lobbying organization in advocating for a Iran-destabilization policy? In other words, is the Franklin case really about espionage, or is it a glimpse into the ugly sausage-making process by which Middle East policy gets decided in Washington and, in particular, in the Bush administration?

* * *

Arguably past the apogee of its power, AIPAC nonetheless remains one of Washington's most influential organizations. Successor to the Eisenhower-era American Zionist Council of Public Affairs, AIPAC came into its own during the Reagan years, thanks largely to the efforts of former Executive Director Thomas Dine. When Dine assumed his post in 1981, the organization had an annual budget of a little more than \$1 million, about two dozen employees, and 8,000 members; when he left in 1993, a budget of \$15 million was being administered by a staff of 158, and the committee had 50,000 members.

An assiduous networker and fund-raiser, Dine also quickly became indispensable to the Reagan White House as a promoter of various neoconservative foreign-policy initiatives. He also forged alliances between AIPAC and other interests, including the Christian right. (Another former AIPAC executive director, Morris Amitay, has long been active in neoconservative ventures, as both a business partner to Feith and Richard Perle and co-founder, with Michael Ledeen, of the Coalition for Democracy in Iran.) By the mid-'80s, AIPAC had been a prime mover in the defeat or crippling of initiatives and legislators not to its liking, and the passage of billions in grants to Israel. It had also taken on an increasingly pro-Republican (and pro-Likud) tilt.

While many regarded AIPAC's power as lessened during the Clinton administration, since 2001 AIPAC has been powerful enough that even the Bush administration couldn't get the committee and its congressional allies to tone down language in a 2002 resolution in support of Israeli military actions against the Palestinians. AIPAC's 2002 annual conference included 50 senators, 90 representatives, and more than a dozen senior administration officials; this year's conclave boasted President Bush himself, plus House Majority Leader Tom DeLay and an array of State and Defense department officials.

But while AIPAC is a powerhouse, it is not clear that it would have been the perfect vehicle for the kind of Iran-destabilization lobbying that some in Washington have been pushing. There are a wide variety of Israeli positions on how to deal with Iran. Many of Washington's Middle East hands who are pro-Israel believe destabilization will not likely succeed, and they fear it will not deal with what they consider the real threat from Iran: nuclear weapons.

“If you mean trying to promote the peaceful overthrow of the regime in Iran, I think the prospects for success are highly uncertain,” says Patrick Clawson, deputy director of the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, a pro-Israel think tank. Pro-Israel activists in Washington want to make sure that the United States considers Iran's nuclear program first and foremost an American problem, the response to which could include, if necessary, air strikes against Iran's nuclear facilities. Iran's nuclear program, one such activist recently told the *Prospect*, “has to be seen as Washington's problem.”

There are other competing positions within the Israel-policy community. One Israeli official in Washington this summer for diplomatic meetings discussed regime change in Iran with a reporter from *The American Prospect* on the condition that his identity not be disclosed. He believes that Iran is ripe for democratic revolution, that it has one of the most pro-Western populations in the region, and that Iranian opposition forces would be electrified by a vigorous show of U.S. presidential support. But he believes that any sort of military intervention in Iran would set back considerably these promising regime-change forces. Still another group of Israeli policy-makers seem more inclined toward a military option, as evidenced by Israel's well-publicized purchase of 500 "bunker-buster" bombs from the United States in September and its failed efforts to launch a spy satellite to monitor Iran's nuclear-program developments.

Yet another policy position became evident in Seymour Hersh's article in *The New Yorker* in June, in which Hersh reported that Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, sensing that the U.S.-created chaos in Iraq could leave an opening for anti-Israel efforts in Iran, was pursuing a "Plan B" that had Israeli operatives covertly training and equipping Kurds in Iraq, Iran, and Syria for possible future covert action to counter any such measures. As Hersh reported: "Israeli intelligence and military operatives are now quietly at work in Kurdistan, providing training for Kurdish commando units and, most important in Israel's view, running covert operations inside Kurdish areas of Iran and Syria. ... Some Israeli operatives have crossed the border into Iran, accompanied by Kurdish commandos, to install sensors and other sensitive devices that primarily target suspected Iranian nuclear facilities."

The Israeli government insisted the story wasn't credible, and that it was sourced by Turkey, which is panicked, as ever, about foreign designs on Kurdistan. But a source told the *Prospect* that Franklin expressed the conviction that the United States has intelligence that affirms Hersh's report to be largely accurate. A second former U.S. diplomatic official who recently visited the area told the *Prospect* that there are Israeli intelligence officials operating in Kurdish Iraq as political advisers, and others under the guise of businessmen.

All of which raises questions, like what exactly was in the draft NSPD that Rubin wrote and Franklin allegedly shared with AIPAC? And does the destabilization plan pushed by neoconservatives in the draft NSPD in fact advocate that the United States or its proxies arm the Iranian opposition, including the Kurds, as part of its efforts to pursue regime change?

The public statements by the neoconservatives emphasize that regime change in Iran would not require U.S. military force. Then again, the neoconservatives' inspiration for the Iran plan has its roots in Reagan-era NSPDs that, while providing nonmilitary support to Poland's Solidary Movement, also had the CIA aggressively arming and training the Afghan mujahideen, the Nicaraguan Contras, and other anti-communist rebels. There's also no denying that some of the chief advocates of the Iran regime plot come out of the Pentagon, America's military command center. And some of those same Iran hawks have discussed the Iran regime-change issue, for instance, with Parisian-based Iran Contra arms dealer Manucher Ghorbanifar -- not exactly the kind of go-to guy for a nonviolent regime change plan, one might think.

* * *

Whatever the nuances, the neocons are facing one of their biggest challenges in Washington today: persuading the administration to adopt their regime-change policy toward Iran even while their regime-change policy in Iraq appears to be crumbling. Since the Iraq invasion, Feith's office has come under the intense scrutiny of congressional investigators, investigative journalists, and

Democratic critics for its two controversial prewar intelligence units, the Office of Special Plans and the Policy Counter Terrorism Evaluation Group. It was those units that had helped convince the Bush White House of an operational connection between Saddam Hussein and al-Qaeda -- a claim since disproved by the independent September 11 commission, among others. Those secretive intelligence units had also been among the administration's strongest champions of Chalabi, who allegedly told Iranian intelligence agents that the United States had penetrated Iranian communications channels.

An FBI counterintelligence investigation of who had leaked this information to Chalabi was reportedly under way by spring 2004, and many of Chalabi's neocon allies were incredibly anxious: Misjudgment about Chalabi's virtues or postwar Iraq planning was one thing; passing secrets to another nation would be an accusation of an altogether graver magnitude.

All of these investigations put Franklin and other neoconservatives associated with Feith at the white-hot center of a raging controversy: What would any second-term Bush foreign policy look like? Would controversial neocon figures like Feith remain in power? Or would it mark the rise of pragmatists and realists? For the neoconservatives, the fight to clear Franklin and themselves has become a fight against their internal administration rivals. And they're fighting it in classic neocon fashion: dirty and disingenuously.

Among intelligence professionals, it's hardly a state secret that even nations whose relationships go beyond mere alliance and constitute friendship spy on one another. That's one reason nations have counterintelligence capabilities as well. As such, investigations of espionage and mishandling of classified documents are not uncommon in Washington; the Bush administration's Justice Department, for example, has opened investigations to probe allegations of Chinese, Taiwanese, and Saudi espionage, including ones that involve ranking officials at the FBI and State Department. With the investigations into AIPAC and Franklin, the Justice Department has renewed its interest in snooping by our ally, Israel.

Since the Pollard case, U.S. intelligence and law-enforcement sources have revealed to the *Prospect* that at least six sealed indictments have been issued against individuals for espionage on Israel's behalf. It's a testament to the unique relationship between the United States and Israel that those cases were never prosecuted; according to the same sources, both governments ultimately addressed them through diplomatic and intelligence channels rather than air the dirty laundry. A number of career Justice Department and intelligence officials who have worked on Israeli counterespionage told the *Prospect* of long-standing frustration among investigators and prosecutors who feel that cases that could have been made successfully against Israeli spies were never brought to trial, or that the investigations were shut down prematurely. This history had led to informed speculation that the FBI -- fearing the Franklin probe was heading toward the same silent end -- leaked the story to CBS to keep it in the public eye and give it a fighting chance.

But the pro-Israel lobby and some neoconservatives, fighting for their political lives, have turned the leak on its head. They claim that the AIPAC and Franklin investigations have nothing to do with the substance of the Iran-related leaks. Rather, they say, investigators are going after Jews. In the current probes of Franklin and AIPAC, Michael Rubin has led the strident charge. On September 4, during the media flap over the investigations, Rubin sent an e-mail memo -- obtained by the *Prospect* -- to a list of friendly parties targeting two of Washington's more respected mainstream journalists, calling them key players in an "increasing anti-Semitic witch hunt." The memo fingered Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage as one likely source of the leaks about the investigation, and also urged that, if the accusations had any merit, the White

House demand the evidence be made public. "I'm increasingly concerned about the leaks spinning off from the Franklin affair," Rubin wrote. "It was bad enough when the White House rewarded the June 15, 2003, leak by canceling consideration of the NSPD. It showed the State Department that leaks could supplant real debate. ... Bureaucratic rivalries are out of control." Rubin's memo showed up in a similar form almost a month later in the op-ed pages of *The Washington Times* under the byline of *National Review* staffer Joel Mowbray, and echoes of it can be seen in the pages of the neocon-friendly *Jerusalem Post*.

Meanwhile, Franklin was involved in some pushback of his own. In late August, the Franklin case was referred from Szady to U.S. Attorney Paul J. McNulty, a Bush-Ashcroft appointee who heads the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia. A grand jury was seated on the case in September and had subpoenaed at least some witnesses to testify about Franklin. Then, on October 1, *The New York Sun* reported that Franklin had fired his court-appointed attorney (whom he had presumably retained for financial reasons), halting grand-jury proceedings while he found new counsel. On October 6, the *Los Angeles Times* reported that Franklin had stopped cooperating with the FBI entirely. He had hired a high-profile lawyer, Plato Cacheris (of Aldrich Ames and Robert Hanssen fame), and had rejected a proposed plea agreement whose terms Franklin considers "too onerous," according to the *Los Angeles Times*.

Who pushed Franklin -- who for months seemed vulnerable -- to stop cooperating? And who is paying for his expensive new lawyer? At this writing, we do not know. Also unknown is the status of the larger FBI counterintelligence probe of alleged Israeli espionage into which Franklin stumbled. But we do know that his recent decisions would seem to immensely help any of the people against whom he could have testified. At least for now, that's a round won by a clique intent on pushing freelance crypto-diplomacy to its limits.

Laura Rozen reports on foreign-policy and national-security issues from Washington, D.C. Jason Vest is a Prospect senior correspondent.

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SECTION: OPINION; Editorial Pages Desk; Part M; Pg. 1**LENGTH:** 979 words**HEADLINE:** Iraqi Democrats Feeling Sidelined**BYLINE:** Michael Rubin, Michael Rubin is a resident fellow at the American Enterprise Institute and was a governance team advisor for the Coalition Provisional Authority in Iraq.**DATELINE:** WASHINGTON**BODY:**

Last summer, as Iraqis sweltered outside, the Coalition Provisional Authority met in the marbled corridors and air-conditioned offices of one of Saddam Hussein's former palaces to hash out how to fund political parties. The State Department was adamant, insisting that the CPA should maintain "an even playing field" and should not favor one party over another. Parties affiliated with the Iraqi Governing Council's militant Islamists and liberal secularists should receive the same treatment. There should be no special consideration given to groups seeking to unite Iraqis rather than dividing them by ethnicity or sectarian affiliations.

This may sound like the way to ensure fair elections. But while the CPA has maintained its neutrality, our adversaries have shown no such compunction.

Until recently, I worked for the CPA, living in a nondescript house outside Baghdad's Green Zone. I traveled the country with Iraqi friends, paying spot checks on borders, political parties, shrines and markets. Because I was not in a convoy or traveling with heavily armed guards, Iraqis could easily approach me. Professionals, politicians and religious figures telephoned at all hours for meetings, knowing they would not have to wait at the fortified gates of the palace complex. I quickly learned that most political business in Iraq happens not at Governing Council sessions, but in private homes between 9 p.m. and 3 a.m.

One February evening, a governor from a southern province asked to see me. We met after dark at a friend's house. After pleasantries and tea, he got down to business. "The Iranians are flooding the city and countryside with money," he said. "Last month, they sent a truckload of silk carpets across the border for the tribal sheikhs. Whomever they can't buy, they threaten." The following week, I headed south to investigate. A number of Iraqis said the Iranians had channeled money through the offices of the Dawa Party, an Islamist political party, led by Governing Council member Ibrahim Jafari. On separate occasions in Baghdad and the southern city of Nasiriya, I watched ordinary Iraqis line up for handouts of money and supplies at Dawa offices. The largess seems to be having an effect: Polls indicate that Jafari is Iraq's most popular politician, enjoying a favorable rating by more than 50% of the electorate.

The CPA's evenhandedness may be well-intentioned, but to a society weaned on conspiracy theories, the United States' failure to support liberals and democrats signals support for the Islamists. Equal

opportunity may exist in Washington, but not in Baghdad. Why, Iraqis ask, would the CPA ignore the influx of Iranian arms and money into southern Iraq if it had not struck some secret deal with Tehran or did not desire the resulting increase in militancy? Why would the Iranian border be largely unguarded a year after liberation?

Iraqi liberals are especially sensitive to signs of support for Shiite politician Abdelaziz Hakim, leader of the Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq, whose visit official Washington welcomed in January. Students affiliated with the Badr Corps, Hakim's militia, roam Basra University, forcing women to wear the veil. Signs proclaiming the supremacy of Hakim are affixed to doors across the university, and professors say they are afraid to remove them. In Nasiriya and Karbala, Iraqis lament they can no longer speak openly, lest they become the subject of retaliation by Iranian-funded gangs.

While Sens. John F. Kerry of Massachusetts and Carl Levin of Michigan demand yet another government audit of the Iraqi National Congress (previous audits have found no wrongdoing), radical clerics find their pockets full, their Iranian sponsors more interested in mission than political cannibalism. Last month, I visited a gathering of urban professionals in Najaf. They repeatedly asked why the CPA stood by while followers of firebrand Shiite cleric Muqtader Sadr invaded homes, smashed satellite dishes and meted out punishment in ad hoc Islamic courts. We may dismiss Sadr as a grass-roots populist, but his rise was not arbitrary. Rather, his network is based upon ample funding he receives through Iran-based cleric Ayatollah Kazem al Haeri, a close associate of Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

In signing the bill authorizing \$87.5 billion for reconstruction in Iraq and Afghanistan in November, President Bush called the massive campaign to rebuild both nations "the greatest commitment of its kind since the Marshall Plan." There is daily progress. Shops have opened. Roads are repaved. But, the CPA remains hampered by a strategic communications strategy geared more toward Washington than Iraq. American newspapers may report our \$5.6 billion investment in Iraq's electrical infrastructure, but what Iraqis see are signs such as a billboard of Hakim, the radical politician, affixed to a newly-refurbished Ministry of Electricity office in Baghdad.

On March 26, a team of United Nations election specialists arrived in Baghdad to prepare the country for elections following the scheduled June 30 transfer of sovereignty. Iraqis may welcome elections, but it would be an abdication of American leadership if we do not support our allies, especially as Iraq's neighbors fund proxy groups and radicals with goals inimical to democracy.

We should not be more willing to help our adversaries than our friends. Democracy is about not only elections, but also about tolerance, compromise and liberty. Twenty-five years ago, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, leader of the Islamic Revolution in Iran, declared "the first day of God's government." In a rushed referendum supervised by armed vigilantes, Iranians voted for theocracy. For a quarter century, they have struggled to undo their mistake. It would be a betrayal of Bush's vision as well as 24 million Iraqis if we replicate it in Iraq.

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April 9, 2004, Monday

LENGTH: 1435 words**HEADLINE:** IRAQ: NEO-CONS SEE IRAN BEHIND SHIITE UPRISING**BYLINE:** By Jim Lobe**DATELINE:** WASHINGTON, Apr. 9**BODY:**

Neo-conservatives close to the administration of President George W Bush are pushing for retribution against Iran for, they say, sponsoring this week's Shiite uprising in Iraq led by radical cleric Moqtada al-Sadr.

Despite the growing number of reports that depict the fighting as a spontaneous and indigenous revolt against the U.S.-led occupation, the influential neo-cons are calling on Bush to warn Tehran to cease its alleged backing for al-Sadr and other Shia militias or face retaliation, ranging from an attack on Iranian nuclear facilities to covert action designed to overthrow the government.

But independent experts say that while Iran has no doubt provided various forms of assistance to Shia factions in Iraq since the ouster of former President Saddam Hussein one year ago, its relations with Sadr have long been rocky, and that it has opposed radical actions that could destabilise the situation.

"Those elements closest to Iran among the Shiite clerics (in Iraq) have been the most moderate through all of this," according to Shaul Bakhash, an Iran expert at George Mason University here.

Many regional specialists agree that Iran has a strategic interest in avoiding any train of events that risks plunging Iraq into chaos or civil war and partition.

Neo-conservatives centred in Vice President Dick Cheney's office and among the civilian leadership in the Pentagon have strongly opposed any detente with Iran, and have frequently blamed it for problems the United States has encountered in both Afghanistan and Iraq.

Neo-conservatives outside the administration, such as former Defence Policy Board chairman Richard Perle and his colleagues at the American Enterprise Institute (AEI), Michael Ledeen and Reuel Marc Gerecht, called even before the Iraq war for Washington to support indigenous efforts to oust the "mullahcracy" in Tehran, which is seen as an arch-enemy of both the United States and Israel.

Some neo-conservatives have seized on Sadr's uprising as a new opportunity both to raise tensions against Iran and to divert attention from Washington's bungling of relations with the Shia community in Iraq.

Top U.S. officials both here and in Iraq have not yet named Iran as the hidden hand behind Sadr, although a senior reporter at the right-wing 'Washington Times', Rowan Scarborough, quoted unnamed "military sources" Wednesday as telling him that Sadr "is being aided directly by Iran's Revolutionary Guard... and by Hezbollah, an Iranian-created terrorist group based in Lebanon".

Unnamed "Pentagon officials" gave a similar account to the 'New York Times', although Times reporter James Risen stressed that CIA officials disagreed with that analysis, adding, some intelligence officials

believe that the Pentagon has been eager to link Hezbollah to the violence in Iraq to link the Iranian regime more closely to anti-American terrorism".

The Iran hand was first raised in connection with Sadr's revolt by Michael Rubin, who just returned as a "governance team advisor" for the U.S.-led Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) in Iraq to his previous position as a resident fellow at AEI.

In a column published in the 'Los Angeles Times' on Sunday, he complained that Washington and the CPA had failed to provide liberal and democratic Iraqi leaders with anything like the kind of support that Iran was supplying to radical Shia leaders and their "gangs".

Rubin said that on a visit to the Shia-dominated south he found that Iranians were pouring money and arms to key Islamist parties, including the Da'wa, the Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI), and Sadr himself, whose rise over the past year, according to Rubin, is explained by the "ample funding he receives through Iran-based cleric Ayatollah Kazem al Haeri, a close associate of Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei".

Another senior CPA adviser, Larry Diamond, a neo-conservative who specialises in democratisation at the California-based Hoover Institution, told IPS this week that Sadr's Mahdi Army, and other Shia militias, are being armed and financed by Iran with the aim of imposing "another Iranian-style theocracy".

"Iran is embarked on a concerned, clever, lavishly-resourced campaign to defeat any effort for any genuine pluralist democracy in Iraq," said Diamond. "The longer we wait to confront the thug, the more troops he'll have in his army, the more arms he'll have and financial support -- virtually all coming from Iran -- the more he will intimidate and kill sincere democratic actors in the country, and the more impossible our task at building democracy will become".

"I think we should tell the Iranian regime that if they don't cease and desist, we will play the same game, that we will destabilise them," he added.

On Tuesday, the 'Wall Street Journal's editorial page took up the same theme, arguing that Sadr has talked "openly of creating an Iranian-style Islamic Republic in Iraq (and) has visited Tehran since the fall of Saddam. ... his Mahdi militia is almost certainly financed and trained by Iranians," the editorial continued, adding, "Revolutionary Guards may be instigating some of the current unrest".

"As for Tehran, we would hope the Sadr uprising puts to rest the illusion that the mullahs (in Tehran) can be appeased. As Bernard Lewis teaches, Middle Eastern leaders interpret American restraint as weakness. Iran's mullahs fear a Muslim democracy in Iraq because it is a direct threat to their own rule."

"If warnings to Tehran from Washington don't impress them, perhaps some cruise missiles aimed at the Bushehr nuclear site will concentrate their minds," the Journal suggested.

On Wednesday, 'New York Times' columnist William Safire asserted the existence of an axis involving Sadr, Iran, Hezbollah and Syria. "We should break the Iranian-Hezbollah-Sadr connection in ways that our special forces know how to do", he wrote.

But this line of reasoning appears particularly curious to Bakhsh, who notes that the Sadr family, including Moqtada himself, is precisely the kind of Iraqi Shiite who would be deeply suspicious of Tehran.

"Sadr's father was a strong Iraqi nationalist, like Moqtada himself", he told IPS. "He often used to question why there were in Iraq ayatollahs who spoke Arabic with a Persian accent."

Like other experts, Bakhsh believes that Iran has indeed been heavily involved with the Iraqi Shia community, but sees the leadership providing far more support to SCIRI and its Badr brigades than to Sadr, who, from Tehran's point of view, is seen as untrustworthy.

Bakhsh also questions the neo-conservative assumption that Iran wants to destabilise Iraq now. "Obviously the Iranians are not unhappy to see the Americans discomfited in Iraq, but I don't think it's the policy of the Iranian government to destabilise Iraq right along its own border," he said.

Middle East historian Juan Cole of the University of Michigan also questions the notion of a link between

Iran and Sadr in the current uprising. While Sadr's views on theocratic government are consistent with those of Iranian hardliners, according to Cole, his outspoken Iraqi nationalism poses a major challenge to Khomeini's claim to authority over all Shiite religious communities, including those outside Iran.

Contrary to the Journal's assumptions, adds Cole, Sadr did not receive much encouragement from the Iranians leaders he met in Tehran. "The message he got ...was that he should stop being so divisive and should cooperate more with the other Shiite leaders".

Geoffrey Kemp, an Iran specialist at the Nixon Centre and Middle East adviser on former president Ronald Reagan's National Security Council staff, says he has little doubt the Iranians have influence with several different Shiite groups, and that there might even be "rogue elements" inside Iraq who back Sadr.

But he agrees that Tehran's strongest ties are with SCIRI and the Badr Brigades, who were trained by the Revolutionary Guard inside Iran during Hussein's rule. "The situation is far too complex to make simplistic statements about what Iran is or is not doing," Kemp told IPS. "But to suggest that this is an Iranian-inspired insurrection is a stretch".

"The neo-conservatives are all so heavily invested in the success of Iraq that instead of blaming the Pentagon for some extraordinary blunders, they want to blame everyone else -- the State Department, the Iranians, the Syrians for the mess that was partly of their own making."

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Voice of America News

April 19, 2004

SECTION: RADIO SCRIPTS - BACKGROUND REPORT 5-55191.**LENGTH: 625 words****HEADLINE: IRAN / IRAQ****BYLINE: GARY THOMAS****TEXT: WASHINGTON**

INTRO: An attempt by Iran to mediate an end to the fight in neighboring Iraq between the forces of a radical Muslim cleric and U-S troops was not successful. But, as correspondent Gary Thomas reports, the effort underscores Iran's bid to wield some clout in postwar Iraq.

To Iran, the United States is still, officially speaking, the Great Satan. And from the U-S perspective, Iran is one of the two remaining members of what President Bush famously termed an axis of evil. But Iran sent a delegation to Iraq to try mediate an end to the standoff between radical Shi'ite Muslim cleric Moqtada al-Sadr and the U-S occupation authority - and the United States made no move to stop the effort.

An Iranian diplomat was gunned down in Baghdad during the visit and the mediation subsequently broke down. Nevertheless, say analysts, the Iranian effort in Iraq was symptomatic of a broader political struggle in Iran for influence, power, and international legitimacy.

Just how much clout Iran has in Iraq - and just who in Iran wields it - is murky.

Juan Cole, a professor of Middle East and South Asian history at the University of Michigan, says the Iranian mission to Iraq is part of an effort by President Mohammad Ali Khatami and his fellow reformists to regain some influence they had lost to the hardliners. President Khatami has pointedly distanced himself from Mr. al-Sadr.

[COLE ACT]

That faction has been under enormous pressure inside Iran. Of course, it was sidelined in the recent elections by the hardliners. And so reaching out and playing this kind of positive role in the region may be one way for the reformists to break back out of their isolation.

[END ACT]

But Michael Rubin, who was until last month a political advisor to the Coalition Provisional Authority in Baghdad, says the Iranian role in Iraq was anything but positive. He says Iran is meddling and trying to set up its own cells in Iraq.

[RUBIN ACT]

I think having Iranian involvement in Iraq is like having the arsonist volunteering to put out the fire.

[END ACT]

Moqtada al-Sadr - the cleric turned insurgent - is believed to have strong backing from the hardline elements in Iran. His mentor, say analysts, is Ayatollah Kazem al-Husseini al-Hairi, a senior Shi'ite cleric in the Iranian holy city of Qom - although how much influence he actually exerts on Mr. al-Sadr is not clear. And while supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has welcomed the forced departure of Saddam Hussein - who led a bloody decade-long war against Iran - he has sharply condemned the U-S-led occupation of Iraq.

Mr. Rubin says Iran is actively helping Mr. al-Sadr's forces.

[2ND RUBIN ACT]

The Iranians have been funding some of the radicals with arms, with Revolutionary Guards. The Iranian charge d'affaires in Baghdad is actually not a diplomat. He is a member of the Qods force, which is the unit of the Revolutionary Guards dedicated to the export of the Islamic revolution. The last thing Iraqis want is for us to involve non-Iraqis in this matter.

[END ACT]

But Professor Cole says Iran's role in Iraq is not as pervasive as Mr. Rubin and like-minded analysts portray.

[2ND COLE ACT]

There are persistent reports that Iran has, and the hardliners in Iran have, provided material support to Moqtada and his faction. I personally think those reports are overblown. I think this is largely an indigenous Iraqi movement, but it may have gotten some money. Lots of Iraqi groups have gotten money from Iran, including some of the more secular politicians.

[END ACT]

Analysts say Iran is not likely to allow its once-powerful neighbor to be reconstituted without trying to have some influence over the matter. (SIGNED)

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The News & Observer. (Raleigh, North Carolina)

June 6, 2004 Sunday
Final Edition

SECTION: NEWS; Pg. A26

LENGTH: 576 words

HEADLINE: Listening post;
Ideas and issues under discussion in the Triangle

BODY:

Tired of losing? Stay the course

COMMENTARY

From Carolina Journal, a publication of the John Locke Foundation, a commentary by editor Richard Wagner.

"If you ever have a player who's afraid he's going to lose, take him out." A legendary baseball manager in my hometown uttered that advice to a protege about 40 years ago. The statement, seemingly simple, actually embodies a much deeper philosophy of commitment, success and leadership in everyday life.

That advice can be applied also to the nation's morale and the war on terrorism being waged, for now, in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The losers in our society say we can't win in the Mideast. They say President Bush duped Americans into thinking Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction. They say we have entered a "quagmire" in Iraq, like we did in Vietnam. They said the same thing before U.S. troops liberated Afghanistan.

The losers are the same people who refuse to recognize the simple fact that terrorism is nothing new. Islamic terrorists have been at war with the United States for about 30 years. Observers of recent history remember that the long string of terrorism began with the hijacking of airlines, the taking of hostages and the slaughter of innocent victims in the 1970s.

Then it progressed, among other events, into the bombing of U.S. military barracks, U.S. embassies, the USS Cole and the World Trade Center.

Then came Sept. 11. Until then, the terrorists were at war with us, but we weren't at war with them.

Americans woke up when al-Qaeda terrorists flew airliners into the World Trade Center towers and the Pentagon. Only a few years later, the losers lulled themselves into a false sense of security, closed their eyes and went back to sleep. They're still asleep today.

Now, according to some national surveys, the losers are infecting others with their disease. More Americans are beginning to doubt themselves and to lose their will to fight.

Some leaders, however, are slapping the nation with some cold facts. One of them, retired Lt. Gen. Thomas McInerney, a military analyst for Fox News Channel, spoke at a recent luncheon sponsored by the John Locke Foundation. Some of his revelations were:

- Syria got \$300 million from Saddam Hussein to hide Iraq's weapons of mass destruction;
- The recent outbreak of hostilities is the "last gasp by the radical Islamists to ensure that we do not get a successful turnover in Iraq and Iraq becoming a growing democracy";
- Iran is sponsoring and funding Muqtada al-Sadr in the recent fighting in Iraq;
- Terrorist organizations, such as Hezbollah and Hamas, are an arm of Iran and Syria;
- Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran, Syria, Libya, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and North Korea form a "web of terror" that supports terrorism. "If these web of terror nations did not support terrorism, terrorism withers," he said. Libya and Afghanistan are no longer on the list.
- Sadr, too, remembers Vietnam. One of his objectives is to sow discord in the United States so we will lose our resolve.

I believe McInerney and the president.

For some Americans, losing is a way of life. To them, America, likewise, is always a loser. They made Vietnam a self-fulfilling prophecy. Now they want to do the same in Iraq.

If the losers are allowed to endure, sure enough, we will allow freedom to be held hostage again. Our nation eventually not only could surrender, it could succumb. The enemy this time has entered our back yard and prepares to torch our home.

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United Press International

June 8, 2004 Tuesday

LENGTH: 908 words**HEADLINE:** Analysis: Despite Iraqi gains, Sadr remains**BYLINE:** By GADI DECHTER**DATELINE:** WASHINGTON, June 8 (UPI)**BODY:**

Despite a recent spate of positive political news Iraq-watchers of diverse stripes agree that renegade cleric Moqtada Sadr remains the critical thorn in the country's side, and not likely to be extirpated any time soon.

Incoming Iraqi Prime Minister Ayad Allawi formally outlawed on Monday the defiant Shiite cleric's **Mahdi Army**, a private militia of 2,000-3,000 fighters that has repeatedly clashed with U.S. forces in recent months, and barred Sadr and his lieutenants from holding public office for three years.

The order is an exception to a new Iraqi policy of including private militias and their leaders in a postwar political process in exchange for their disbanding and pledging to work with the new government, which is scheduled to take over sovereignty from coalition forces on June 30. Nine other Iraqi political parties and movements pledged on Monday to comply with the order.

Juan Cole, a University of Michigan history professor and frequent commentator on the Middle East said that banning Sadr from mainstream Iraqi politics would only endanger the fragile truce between the **Mahdi Army** and U.S. forces in the holy Shiite cities of Najaf and Kufa, a cease-fire that has held since Friday.

"I think there is every prospect of drawing (Sadr) into the political process," Cole told United Press International Tuesday. "(Sadr's) forces can be potentially drawn off into the regular army and it is better to do that than confront him."

Among the obstacles to Sadr's inclusion in mainstream Iraqi politics is an outstanding warrant for his arrest issued in April by an Iraqi judge, on charges that Sadr allegedly murdered a rival cleric last year.

A State Department spokesman said Monday it believes Iraqi authorities should prosecute Sadr.

"It is our view that Moqtada Sadr is a subject of Iraqi law and that law should be applied to him, as well as to any other Iraqi citizen who has been accused of violating the law," Adam Ereli told a briefing in Washington.

But the Iraqi government could take advantage of the transitional nature of Iraqi politics to amend Sadr's current fugitive status, said Cole.

"The charges against (Sadr) were arbitrary anyway, since no grand jury has met and had him charged. They could be allowed to lapse or given over to the clerics to handle internally," he said.

Turning the outlaw cleric into a legitimate political player would not necessarily neutralize him as a security threat, and may in fact increase his power, according to Amatzia Baram, a senior fellow at the

United States Institute of Peace, a federally funded think tank.

"Can (Sadr) be bought off? He can be bought off, yes. But only as a stepping-stone to total power. Namely, he'll do the same thing that Saddam Hussein has done, that Hitler has done. He'll cooperate up to a point and then he'll try to take over and replace the system," said Baram, who is also a professor of Middle Eastern history at the University of Haifa in Israel.

"Unless Sadr is captured or killed he will remain a thorn in the side of the new Iraqi government," agreed Nimrod Raphaelli, a senior analyst at the Middle Eastern Media Research Institute, an organization that monitors and analyzes Middle East media reports.

Whatever strategy the new Iraqi government ultimately pursues, experts agree that disbanding the Mahdi Army, whether by force or persuasion, is a practical challenge of almost overwhelming difficulty.

Unlike Kurdish militias and the Badr Corps -- the armed force of the Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq, or SCIRI, which is one of the groups that has reportedly agreed to disband -- Sadr's militia is undisciplined and may not respond even to their leader's commands to lay down weapons.

"The Mahdi Army is not a militia in the same way that the Badr Corps is, and cannot be disbanded. It's just a congeries of Shiite ghetto youth gangs, mainly from East Baghdad," said Cole. "They are like the Crips and the Bloods in Los Angeles. As long as there are ghettos and as long as the poverty-stricken young men in them are armed, they will be something of a problem."

Moqtada Sadr, 30, is the fourth son of Grand Ayatollah Muhammad Muhammad Baqir Sadr, a Shiite leader who was killed, along with two of his children, by agents of Saddam Hussein in 1999. The Sadr family traces its origins to the prophet Muhammad and is one of the most venerated in Shiite Iraq.

His fiery sermons are characterized by intense anti-American hostility and a fundamentalist interpretation of Islam similar to that promulgated by the Iranian government, from whom he is believed to receive funding.

"His vision for Iraq is probably a government similar to that of Iran," said Raphaelli.

After Sadr's weekly paper, Al-Hawza, was closed by the Coalition Provisional Authority on March 28, his forces took over holy Shiite shrines in the cities of Najaf and Karbala and declared open rebellion against the U.S.-led occupation. Fighters in the Mahdi Army occupied buildings and mosques in as many as six Iraqi cities in April, holding out longest in Najaf and Kufa.

Those cities have been relatively quiet for about a week, following a cease-fire between American and Sadr forces mediated by mainstream Shiite authorities. U.S. forces appear to have given up on their threats to "capture or kill" Sadr and have reportedly decided to let the new Iraqi prime minister decide how to handle the rebellious cleric.

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U.S. News & World Report

November 22, 2004

SECTION: SPECIAL REPORT; COVER PACKAGE; THE IRAN CONNECTION; Vol. 137 , No. 18; Pg. 34

LENGTH: 6480 words

HEADLINE: Special Report: The Iran Connection

BYLINE: By Edward T. Pound; Jennifer Jack

BODY:

In the summer of last year, Iranian intelligence agents in Tehran began planning something quite spectacular for September 11, the two-year anniversary of al Qaeda's attack on the United States, according to a classified American intelligence report. Iranian agents disbursed \$ 20,000 to a team of assassins, the report said, to kill Paul Bremer, then the top U.S. civilian administrator in Iraq. The information was specific: The team, said a well-placed source quoted in the intelligence document, would use a Toyota Corona taxi and a second car, driven by suicide bombers, to take out Bremer and destroy two hotels in downtown Baghdad. The source even named one of the planners, Himin Bani Shari, a high-ranking member of the Ansar al-Islam terrorist group and a known associate of Iranian intelligence agents.

The alleged plan was never carried out. But American officials regarded Iran's reported role, and its ability to make trouble in Iraq, as deadly serious. Iran, said a separate report, issued in November 2003 by American military analysts, "will use and support proxy groups" such as Ansar al-Islam "to conduct attacks in Iraq in an attempt to further destabilize the country." An assessment by the U.S. Army's V Corps, which then directed all Army activity in Iraq, agreed: "Iranian intelligence continues to prod and facilitate the infiltration of Iraq with their subversive elements while providing them support once they are in country."

With the Pentagon's stepped-up efforts to break the back of the insurgency before Iraq's scheduled elections in late January, Iran's efforts to destabilize Iraq have received little public attention. But a review of thousands of pages of intelligence reports by U.S. News reveals the critical role Iran has played in aiding some elements of the anti-American insurgency after Baghdad fell--and raises important questions about whether Iran will continue to try to destabilize Iraq after elections are held. The classified intelligence reports, covering the period July 2003 through early 2004, were prepared by the CIA; the Defense Intelligence Agency; the Iraq Survey Group, the 1,400-person outfit President Bush sent to Iraq to find weapons of mass destruction; the Coalition Provisional Authority; and various military commands and units in the field, including the V Corps and the Pentagon's Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force. The reports are based on information gathered from Iraqis, Iranian dissidents, and other sources inside Iraq. U.S. News also reviewed British intelligence assessments of the postwar phase in Iraq.

\$ 500 a soldier. Many of the reports are uncorroborated and are considered "raw" intelligence of the type seldom seen by those outside the national security community. But the picture that emerges from the sheer volume of the reports, and as a result of the multiplicity of sources from which they were generated, leaves little doubt about the depth of Iran's involvement in supporting elements of the insurgency and in positioning itself to move quickly in Iraq if it believes a change in circumstances there dictates such action. "Iran," wrote an analyst with the Air Force Office of Special Investigations on Dec. 5, 2003, "poses the greatest long-term threat to U.S. efforts in Iraq." An analyst at the V Corps summarized matters this way: "Iranian intelligence agents are conducting operations in every major city

with a significant Shia population. The counterintelligence threat from Iran is assessed to be high, as locally employed people, former military officers, politicians, and young men are recruited, hired, and trained by Iranian intelligence to collect [intelligence] on coalition forces."

Even as Bremer's Coalition Provisional Authority and the U.S.-led military were pressing last year to consolidate their grip on Iraq, the intelligence reports indicate, the seeds of the insurgency were growing, in some cases with funding and direction from Iranian government factions. "Iranian intelligence will not conduct attacks on CF [coalition forces] that can be directly linked to Iran," wrote a senior Army analyst, "but will provide lethal aid to subversive elements within Iraq . . . in the form of weapons, safe houses, or money." In an interview, David Kay, the former chief weapons inspector for the Iraq Survey Group, said he believes that factions within the Iranian government have been plotting with and funding some insurgency groups. "I think we are in an intelligence war with Iran," Kay said. "There are Iranian intelligence agents all over the country [Iraq]." Another former American official, Michael Rubin, who worked for the Pentagon and the Coalition Provisional Authority, agrees. "Iran feels it should be the predominant power in the region," Rubin said. "With the U.S. out of there, they [will] have no real competition."

The intelligence reports reviewed by U.S. News appear to support those assessments. Examples:

Iran set up a massive intelligence network in Iraq, flooding the country with agents in the months after the U.S.-led coalition toppled Saddam Hussein's regime. Sources told American intelligence analysts that Iranian agents were tasked with finding information on U.S. military plans and identifying Iraqis who would be willing to conduct attacks on U.S. forces that would not be linked to Iran.

Iranian intelligence agents were said to have planned attacks against the U.S.-led forces and supported terrorist groups with weapons. Iranian agents smuggled weapons and ammunition across the border into Iraq and distributed them "to individuals who wanted to attack coalition forces," according to one report, citing "a source with good access." Separately, an Iraq Survey Group report said that Iranian agents "placed a bounty" of \$ 500 for each American soldier killed by insurgents and more for destruction of tanks and heavy weaponry.

Iran trained terrorists and provided them with safe havens and passage across the border into Iraq, several of the reports say. The Iranian-supported Ansar al-Islam began carrying out bombings and other attacks against coalition forces and Iraqi citizens in the summer of 2003. One report, describing an interview with a source, said: "There were approximately 320 Ansar al-Islam terrorists being trained in Iran . . . for various attack scenarios including suicide bombings, assassinations, and general subversion against U.S. forces in Iraq." The reports linked Ansar al-Islam to al Qaeda and to Abu Musab Zarqawi, the most wanted terrorist in Iraq. "Among the more capable terrorist groups operating in Iraq," an analyst wrote in another report, "are al Qaeda, the al Zarqawi network, as well as Ansar al-Islam."

Iran has been a principal supporter of Moqtada al-Sadr, a radical Shiite cleric whose black-clad Mahdi Army fighters have clashed often with U.S.-led forces. Months before the worst of the insurgency in southern Iraq began last April, U.S. intelligence officials tracked reported movements of Iranian money and arms to forces loyal to Sadr. According to a V Corps report written in September 2003, "There has been an increase of Iranian intelligence officers entering" Baghdad, Najaf, Karbala, Basra, and Amarah. Sadr's fighters later engaged in fierce battles with coalition forces in each of those cities.

"Double game." Iran's permanent mission to the United Nations in New York did not respond to repeated requests for comment from U.S. News. In a sermon given last April, Ayatollah Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, a leading political figure in Iran, said that Americans were "a very effective target" but that Iran "does not wish to get involved in acts of adventurism." Separately, in New York last September, Iranian Foreign Minister Kamal Kharrazi denied that his country had funded or armed Sadr's Mahdi Army.

U.S. government officials, questioned about the intelligence reports reviewed by U.S. News, say the evidence of Iran's destabilization efforts in Iraq is persuasive. "We certainly do have a lot of evidence of Iranian mischief making," a senior Pentagon official said in an interview, "and attempts [at] building subversive influence. I would never underestimate the Iranian problem. . . . Iran is a menace in a basic sense."

Looking at the overall problem in Iraq, however, the official identifies Sunni Muslim extremists as the "hard core" of the insurgency. They include former supporters of Saddam and some foreign fighters--most prominently Zarqawi, whose network has claimed responsibility for some of Iraq's bloodiest

bombings and the beheading of American Nicholas Berg and other western captives. Some terrorists, the official noted pointedly, are also using Syria as an outpost and safe haven.

More than a year ago, the Defense Intelligence Agency reached similar conclusions in a secret analysis headlined "Iraq: Who Are We Fighting?" The analysis cited foreign jihadists as "potentially" the most "threatening." An analyst with the Iraq Survey Group concluded that "[a]s time passes and more and more terrorists and foreign fighters come into Iraq, the situation will become more dangerous because you will get a more experienced enemy, with more training, resources, and experience."

Iran has obvious interests in Iraq. In the 1980s, Iran and Iraq fought a brutal eight-year war that claimed more than a million casualties. Despite the hostilities, the Shiite communities of both countries have deep ties. Shiites compose the majority of the population in both Iran and Iraq, accounting for 60 percent of the latter's 25.4 million people. Iraq is home to some of Shiite Islam's most important holy sites, and thousands of Iranians have taken advantage of newly opened borders to visit them. During Saddam's three decades of repression, Iran provided support and refuge for many of Iraq's Shiite religious leaders. Patrick Clawson, a leading expert on Iraq and Iran at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, says it is not surprising that Iran is heavily involved in Iraq. "It only makes sense that the government of Iran would want to have a network of contacts with the insurgents, develop friends, develop intelligence sources, provide them information about American assets and capabilities," he said in an interview. "... It is in their national interest." At the same time, Clawson says, Iran is playing "a double game"--stirring up trouble in Iraq while publicly professing support for Iraqi elections.

Understanding Iran's precise motives in Iraq is no simple matter. Ahmed Hashim, a professor of strategic studies at the U.S. Naval War College, says that the Islamic regime in Tehran does not always speak with one voice. "I think Iran has its hand in a lot of what's going on [in Iraq], but we shouldn't assume the government is unified," he says. "When you look at the Iranian system of government, if you say Iran, it could actually be the Ministry of Intelligence and Security, the [charitable] foundations, or various agencies of the government. They act almost independently." Another Iran expert, Kenneth Pollack, who served in the Clinton White House as director of Persian Gulf affairs on the National Security Council staff, believes Iran does not want chaos in Iraq. "The Iranian leaders are terrified of chaos in Iraq," he says, "and the spillover" aspect. Iran, Pollack adds, wants a stable, "independent" government headed by Shiites.

Whatever its objectives in Iraq, Iran has a well-documented history of supporting terrorist groups. For years, the State Department has identified Iran as the world's pre-eminent state sponsor of terrorism. American officials say the regime has provided funding, safe havens, training, and weapons to several terrorist groups, including Lebanon-based Hezbollah. The commission investigating the 9/11 attacks said in its final report that al Qaeda has long-standing ties to Iran and Hezbollah. Iran favors spectacular attacks, officials say, citing its alleged role in the 1996 bombing of the Khobar Towers in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia, that claimed the lives of 19 U.S. servicemen. Six of the Hezbollah terrorists indicted in the attack "directly implicated" senior Iranian government officials "in the planning and execution of this attack," former FBI Director Louis Freeh wrote last year.

A wolf's claws. Freeh named two Iranian government agencies, the Ministry of Intelligence and Security, or MOIS, and the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, an elite fighting unit and enforcer for the clerical regime. As the insurgency developed in Iraq, both played central roles in planning and funding some of the attacks on coalition forces, according to the intelligence reports reviewed by U.S. News. Early on, MOIS and the revolutionary guard corps were tasked with the job of creating instability in Iraq, the reports say. In some cases, Iran's agents allegedly worked with former Saddam loyalists, an odd marriage but one that shared a common goal: to drive U.S. forces out of Iraq. The reports detail how Iranian agents sought to recruit former regime loyalists and how one former Iraqi Intelligence Service officer, who had close ties to Saddam's late son, Uday, reportedly set up a front company for Iranian intelligence operations in Baghdad.

Only weeks after Saddam was ousted, in April 2003, Iran publicly signaled support for violence against the coalition. In a sermon on May 2, Ayatollah Ahmad Jannati, secretary general of Iran's powerful Council of Guardians, called on Iraqis to stage suicide attacks to drive U.S.-led forces from Iraq. The Iraqi people, he said, "have no other choice but to rise up and stage martyrdom operations. . . . The Iraqi people were released from the claws of one wolf and have been caught by another wolf." Two months later, U.S. News has learned, coalition forces uncovered a document describing a fatwa, or religious edict, that had reportedly been issued in Iran for its Shiite supporters in Iraq. The fatwa urged "holy fighters" in Iraq to get close to the enemy--the U.S.-led troops. These fighters, the fatwa said,

should "maintain good relations with the coalition forces" but at the same time create "a secret group that would conduct attacks against American troops." U.S. analysts could not confirm that the ruling was issued by Iranian clerics, but they believe it was credible. Wrote one analyst: "It seems that they [the Iranians] want them [Iraqi Shiite supporters] to be close to the coalition forces and outwardly respect them so that they can gather intelligence that will assist them in their mission."

Before long, Iran's Ministry of Intelligence and Security stepped up its intelligence operations in Iraq, many of the intelligence reports suggest. Agents set up "significant" intelligence cells in key Iraqi cities, several reports said, including Baghdad, Najaf, Karbala, Kut, Basra, and Kirkuk. MOIS agents also set up a "listening post" in a city in southeastern Iraq to monitor the activities of U.S. forces. In southern Iraq, 10 Iranian agents reportedly began operating out of two rooms at a Shiite mosque. Iran, according to the reports, also sought to place spies within Bremer's Coalition Provisional Authority, then running Iraq's affairs, and they followed and photographed coalition forces. Four Iranians, believed to be MOIS agents, were detained in late July 2003 for photographing a hydropower plant near the central city of Samarra. Power plants became a frequent target of insurgents. In one case, U.S. intelligence officials learned that a MOIS agent, a man named Muhammad Farhaadi, videotaped coalition operations in Karbala, a city south of Baghdad, then took the tape back to Iran.

During the summer and fall of 2003, U.S. analysts' reports describe how MOIS and its operatives sought to develop information from Shites in the south and from Sunnis in the north on the activities of U.S.-led forces. In the fall of 2003, an analyst for the Air Force Office of Special Investigations wrote: "Iranian intelligence has infiltrated all areas of Iraq, posing both a tactical and strategic threat to U.S. interests."

Bribes and border crossings. MOIS also sought to cultivate former Iraqi intelligence officers who might help develop intelligence on the plans and activities of the Coalition Provisional Authority and U.S.-led forces, several reports said. "Former IIS [Iraqi Intelligence Service] officers are highly sought-after targets by U.S. intelligence," said an October 2003 report issued by the Air Force Office of Special Investigations, "not only for their current and former knowledge of Iraqi activities but also because many IIS officers will likely have a wealth of intelligence information on Iran. Iran knows this and will strive to recruit former IIS officers before the U.S. is able to do so. The environment is ripe for double-agent operations, and loyalties can never be certain."

The intelligence reports detail precisely what Iran was after. Its "collection priorities" included finding out what weapons U.S. troops were carrying and what kind of body armor they were wearing. Iranian agents also sought information on the location of U.S. Army and intelligence bases; on the routes traveled by U.S. convoys; on the operations of the Special Forces' elite Delta Force; and on the plans of the U.S. military and intelligence inside Iraq. A military report said a source had reported that the Iranians were pressing to find out whether the Israeli intelligence agency, Mossad, was active in Iraq. According to the report, MOIS directed its agents "to collect information on the Israeli intelligence presence in northern Iraq." Iran's "primary objective in Iraq," wrote another analyst, citing a good source, "is to create instability so coalition forces will focus on controlling the unstable situation rather than concentrating on reconstruction efforts."

MOIS agents carried cash, reports said, to bribe Iraqi border police in order to obtain safe passage into Iraq. In reality, however, all the Iranians had to do was walk across the border at any number of crossing points, where they could blend in amid Iranians coming to Iraq to visit relatives, do business, and worship at Shiite shrines, according to the intelligence reports and several senior Army officers interviewed by U.S. News. "The borders were wide open," says one senior officer. "It suggests that terrorists could come over pretty easily. My God, there were busloads of Iranians crossing the border without interference." Another U.S. Army officer was so concerned that Iranian spies and Islamic jihadists were crossing into Iraq that he visited a border site in a mountainous region northeast of Baghdad last January. "I saw over 1,200 people come over [to Iraq] in an hour, and there were no [coalition] troops there," the officer recalls. "I did not see them armed, but then a lot of them came across in carts and some in vehicles and donkeys, and you wouldn't know. If only 1 percent of them were combatants," he adds, "you can see the problem."

Iranian agents had plenty of help waiting inside Iraq. Numerous intelligence reports say that members of a Shiite militia group in Iraq known as the Badr Corps aided Iran in moving agents, weapons, and other materiel into southern Iraq--sometimes under the cover of humanitarian organizations. The Badr Corps has served as the armed wing of one of the most popular Shiite political parties in southern Iraq, the Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq, or SCIRI. The leaders of both SCIRI and the Badr Corps, which now calls itself the Badr Organization, have maintained close ties to Iran for about two decades.

Iraqis associated with SCIRI and Badr opposed Saddam's regime and fled to Iran in the early 1980s, where their organizations were established. They began returning to Iraq in droves after U.S.-led troops invaded Iraq in March 2003, prompting Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld to warn the Badr Corps not to interfere in Iraq. Badr leaders say they have no hostile intentions toward U.S. forces, but their loyalties remain much in doubt. Just last month, Iraq's national intelligence chief, Mohammed al Shahwani, accused the Badr Organization of killing 10 of his agents on orders from Iranian leaders. Badr, which denied the charges, was said to have disarmed this past summer, as part of an agreement with the new Iraqi government that would allow its members to serve in the new Iraqi Civil Defense Force.

Yet Badr's historical ties to Iran, as described in U.S. and British intelligence reports, offer little in the way of reassurance. While saying that SCIRI and Badr have "made some attempts to emphasize independence from Iran," a British Defence Intelligence Staff report on "Armed Groups in Iraq," dated Nov. 21, 2003, says that the Badr Organization retains "strong links" to Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps. The IRGC, the report says, "has funded, trained, and armed" the militia group, whose membership it estimated at between 18,000 and 20,000. The report says that some Badr members were unhappy with their leader, Abul Aziz al-Hakim, who commands both SCIRI and Badr, and had returned to Iran. At the time, the report says, Badr was "well equipped" with "small arms, mortars and RPG s [rocket-propelled grenades], T-55 series tanks and a "variety of artillery and antiair pieces." Other intelligence reports say that an Iranian government agency--probably the IRGC--had provided Badr with global positioning systems to better target U.S.-led forces.

Some of the most important information on Iran has been provided by an Iranian exile group, the Mujaheddin-e-Khalq. The MEK fled Iran after the 1979 revolution and later relocated with Saddam's support to Iraq, where it continued to advocate the overthrow of the Iranian clerical regime. U.S. forces now are guarding its 3,800 members at Camp Ashraf, the MEK's sprawling compound northeast of Baghdad. Designated a terrorist organization by the State Department, the MEK nevertheless has provided American officials with significant intelligence on Iran's nuclear weapons programs. The MEK, wrote one Army analyst, is "quite proficient at intelligence collection." Other analysts said that the MEK also had provided valuable on-the-ground intelligence to Army Special Forces after the invasion of Iraq. "The SF guys claim the [MEK] are a valuable intel asset," wrote an Army sergeant who had met frequently with the MEK, "and are generally reliable." At the same time, an Army team wrote that it was important to be mindful that, given that its stated goal is to topple the government in Tehran, the MEK's reports "were designed to inform as well as influence American policy toward . . . the Iranian regime."

A red truck. Relying on its own agents inside Iran and other sources, the MEK has given Army personnel detailed reports on what it says have been Iran's efforts to destabilize Iraq. In its reports, some of which were reviewed by U.S. News, the MEK reported on the intelligence-collection methods of Iran's MOIS, arms shipments from Iran to Iraq, and the involvement in these operations of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps's so-called Qods Force, or "Jerusalem Force."

In December last year, MEK intelligence officers provided the Army with a detailed report and maps on what it called "a widespread network for transferring and distributing arms from Iran to Iraq" through the Ilam region in western Iran. The MEK said its sworn enemy, the Badr Organization, was involved in the network. According to the MEK's operatives, both Badr and the Iranian command staff were based in Iran at the border town of Mehran. "In order to control and manage the intelligence and terrorist activities in Iraq," a MEK intelligence officer wrote, "the Qods Force has recently moved part of its command staff from Tehran to the border city of Mehran." His report also identified the areas in western, northwestern, and southern Iran where Qods Force commanders operated, along with the identities of more than a dozen commanders.

The MEK's reports contain detailed information on arms shipments. On Dec. 4, 2003, the MEK reported, Iranian agents moved 1,000 rocket-propelled grenades and seven boxes of TNT from western Iran to Iraqi resistance groups. A week later, Iran's Qods Force moved "a number of Mirage submachine guns" into Iraq in a "truck loaded with cement bags under which the arms were hidden," according to another report. Later that month, the MEK said, an Iraqi working for Iran drove a red fruit truck--a "cover for a consignment of arms," including RPG s, mortars, and Kalashnikov rifles--across the border into Iraq.

The dissident Iranian group also provided American intelligence officers with information on how Hezbollah was aiding Iran in gathering intelligence in Iraq. Hezbollah, a bitter enemy of Israel with close ties to Iran and Syria, collected information on American and British troops, photographed them, then sent the information to Qods Force commanders in Iran, according to MEK intelligence reports.

Intelligence officers for the MEK also said they had learned that Hezbollah had some 800 operatives in Iraq as of last January, including assassination teams. "The teams assassinate their opponents," a MEK intelligence officer reported, "and carry out sabotage operations." The MEK claimed that Hezbollah had assassinated an Iraqi man who had provided information to coalition forces.

Other sources provided similar information, including Mossad, the Israeli intelligence agency. Mossad warned U.S. intelligence officials in October 2003 that Hezbollah planned to set up a resistance movement that would cause mass casualties, according to a report prepared by the Defense Intelligence Agency's Joint Intelligence Task Force--Combating Terrorism. Iran, the report said, was calling the shots. "Should such mass casualty attacks be considered," the task force wrote, "they [Hezbollah] must first receive approval from Iran." The Iranians "do not want the U.S. and the coalition to focus attention on Iranian support for terrorist networks or other anti-coalition activities they're involved with," said a report by an analyst for a U.S. Central Command support team in Iraq. "Iran is also trying to ensure it has a great deal of influence in Iraq, and one way of doing that is to supply weapons to anti-coalition groups."

Iranian agencies put the intelligence they gathered to practical use, planning, funding, and training attackers, according to many of the intelligence reports reviewed by U.S. News. In November of last year, the Iraq Survey Group received information that Iran had formed small groups of fighters to conduct attacks in cities across Iraq. "Iran had reportedly placed a bounty on U.S. forces of U.S. \$ 2,000 for each helicopter shot down, \$ 1,000 for each tank destroyed, and \$ 500 for each U.S. military personnel killed," the Iraq Survey Group reported. Iranian agents were also suspected in the assassination of at least two prominent Iraqis. In the fall of 2003, there were two reported plots against Bremer, the Coalition Provisional Authority administrator. The Iraq Survey Group, citing a source who "has provided reliable information in the past," said a senior Iranian cleric in Tehran set up a special 100-member army, known as al Saqar, which means eagle in Arabic, to assassinate Bremer and carry out other terrorist attacks. The Eagle Army, the Iraq Survey Group was told, had trained for 30 days at an Iranian terrorist camp. This alleged plot and others reportedly planned against Bremer came to nothing. There were many reported plots against Bremer during his one-year tenure in Baghdad, and throughout his time there he was provided with blanket security. He declined to be interviewed for this story.

Mastermind. Jihadists saw Iraq as an opportunity. In a report quoting a source who was not otherwise characterized, a U.S. Special Operations task force wrote that "the Lebanese Hizballah leadership believes that the struggle in Iraq is the new battleground in the fight against the U.S." In fact, other analysts wrote, Hezbollah and Ansar al-Islam were among the most active groups in Iraq, although al-Qaeda operatives also were believed to be operating there soon after the invasion.

Ansar al-Islam is a small group of Arabs and Iraqi Kurds that is believed to have figured in some of the most violent attacks in Iraq. American and British intelligence, the reports show, concluded that Ansar al-Islam was working closely with Iran, and also al-Qaeda, in its terrorist attacks against coalition forces. Military intelligence reports suggested that the group was believed to be linked to two horrific bombings in Baghdad last year--the attack on the Jordanian Embassy on August 7, in which 17 people were killed, and the August 19 bombing that devastated the United Nations headquarters in Baghdad. That attack killed 22 people, including U.N. envoy Sergio Vieira de Mello. Intelligence reporting indicated that the mastermind of the U.N. attack was Zarqawi, the terrorist who has continued to bedevil coalition forces, and that al-Qaeda operatives also played a role. A "reliable source with good access" said that Zarqawi had coordinated his plans for attacks in Iraq with Ansar al-Islam's top leader, Abu Abdullah al-Shafii. The reports did not link Iran directly to either the U.N. attack or the Jordanian bombing. But one British defense report noted pointedly: "Some elements [of Ansar al-Islam] remain in Iran. Intelligence indicates that elements" of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps "are providing safe haven and basic training to Iran-based AI [Ansar al-Islam] cadres."

Funneling money. A separate report from the British Secret Intelligence Service, quoting a source who "has proved fairly reliable," said that Iranian government agencies were also secretly helping Ansar al-Islam members cross into Iraq from Iran, as part of a plan to mount sniper attacks against coalition forces. There were also multiple American intelligence reports identifying Iran as a chief supporter of Ansar al-Islam. U.S. intelligence received information that an Iranian was aiding Ansar al-Islam "on how to build and set up" improvised explosive devices, known as IEDs. An analyst for the U.S. Central Command offered this assessment: "AI [Ansar al-Islam] is actively attempting to improve IED effectiveness and sophistication."

As might be expected, given the volume of the intelligence reports reviewed by U.S. News, some of the

information was contradictory. In some cases, Hezbollah, for instance, was said to be planning direct attacks against coalition forces. In others, it was said to be working only behind the scenes in fomenting violence in Iraq.

Perhaps Iran's most significant involvement in Iraq has been its support for Moqtada al-Sadr, the radical, anti-U.S. cleric. His Mahdi Army militia engaged in a series of vicious battles with coalition forces in the holy southern Shiite cities of Najaf and Karbala, and in the teeming Baghdad slum known as Sadr City, between April and October this year. Like most of its operations in Iraq, the intelligence reports indicate that the Iranian regime has tried to mask its support of Sadr. He visited Tehran in June 2003 for a ceremony marking the death of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, the spiritual leader of the 1979 revolution, but it is not known whether he received any commitment from Iran at that time. U.S. intelligence reports say that Iran used Hezbollah to train and provide funds to Sadr's Mahdi Army and may also have used front companies to funnel money to him. For a time, the reports suggest, Sadr appeared to be getting funds from a senior Shiite religious leader living in Iran, the Grand Ayatollah Kazem al-Haeri, who advocates an Islamic state in Iraq. But by mid-October 2003, according to a special operations task force, Haeri withdrew his "financial support" from Sadr. The ayatollah later publicly cut his ties with Sadr.

There was no such break with Hezbollah. The first sign that the terrorist group planned to support Sadr is reflected in a July 29, 2003, U.S. intelligence report. Citing Israeli military intelligence, the report says Hezbollah "military activists" were attempting to establish contacts with Sadr and his Mahdi Army. The next month they did. By late August, according to a report prepared by a U.S. military analyst, Hezbollah had established "a team of 30 to 40 operatives" in Najaf "in support of Moqtada Sadr's Shia paramilitary group." The report, based on a source "with direct access to the reported information," said that Hezbollah was recruiting and training members of Sadr's militia. A later report, citing "multiple sources," said that Hezbollah was "buying rocket-propelled grenades . . . antitank missiles" and other weapons for Sadr's militia.

Intelligence analysts also tied Sadr to Hassan Nasrallah, the secretary general of Hezbollah. "Reporting also confirms the relationship between . . . Sadr and Hassan Nasrallah," an Army report said. The report cited unconfirmed information indicating that a top adviser to Nasrallah, who is based in Lebanon, had delivered funds to Sadr in Najaf.

Other reporting indicated that the Mahdi Army may have received support from former Saddam supporters and other anticoalition groups. Intelligence analysts were aware, as early as the fall of 2003, that Sadr could become a serious problem. At that time, there had been no confirmed attacks on coalition forces, only Sadr's tough rhetoric, in which he denounced the United States and called the Iraqi Governing Council illegal. But, as a British defense intelligence report said, "stockpiling of heavier weapons, along with public anti-CF [Coalition Force] rhetoric, could indicate a willingness to take more direct action against CF."

"The honeymoon is over." Direct action was precisely what Sadr took, after Bremer ordered his Baghdad newspaper shut down, in March this year, accusing it of "inciting violence" against U.S.-led forces. Days later, after American soldiers arrested a Sadr aide, fierce fighting erupted between U.S. troops and Sadr's forces. In August, Sadr's Mahdi Army surrendered the Imam Ali Shrine in Najaf, and last month he reached a cease-fire with the United States and Iraq's interim government. Sadr's fighters began turning in their weapons, as part of an agreement to disband, and Sadr signaled his intention to get involved in the political process. He remains influential with many Shiites, and American officials know that, if the Iraqi venture is to succeed, they must do everything they can to keep the majority Shiites happy. "Beware if we lose the goodwill of the Shi'ites. The honeymoon is over," an Army captain wrote in October 2003, months before the battles with Sadr's forces began. "Arresting Sadr, the son of a martyr, will only fuel Shiite extremists' animosity, and strengthen their recruiting efforts."

Managing the Sadr situation, some government and intelligence officials say, is a microcosm of the far more difficult challenges America faces in responding to Iran's activities in Iraq. Iran clearly has the potential to stir up far more trouble than it has, particularly in the largely Shiite southern half of Iraq. But so far, as it continues its elaborate dance with the West over its ambitious nuclear program, the Islamic regime has yet to turn the heat up full blast in Iraq, evidently secure in the knowledge that it can do so when and if it sees the need to. "I would not put it past them to carry out spectacular attacks," says David Kay, the former chief U.S. weapons inspector in Iraq, "to demonstrate the cost of a hostile policy. That is the policy issue--can we learn to live with Iranian nuclear capacity?"

The Ties to Tehran

Agents from Iran's Ministry of Intelligence and Security and the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps infiltrated several Iraqi cities (yellow) to collect information on U.S.-led forces and work with insurgent groups after the ouster of Saddam Hussein. Other Iranian agents crossed the long, porous, border with Iraq, intelligence reports said, to support the Mahdi Army and the Badr Organization.

[MAP LABELS]

IRAQ

IRAN

Tehran

Iraq-Iran border crossings

Hajj Umran

Baneh

Halabjah

As Sulaymaniyah

Khanaqin

Mehran and Baramadad

Chamsari

Hoveyzeh

Darsiyah

Shalamchah

Khorramshahr

Abadan

Active Iranian intelligence cells

Mosul

Kirkuk

Baghdad

Karbala

Kut

Najaf

Amarah

Basra

[LABELS-GLOBE INSET]

IRAQ

IRAN

Area of detail

Sources: U.S. intelligence and State Department reports; United Nations
Rob Cady--USN&WR

AN UNHOLY ALLIANCE

BADR ORGANIZATION. This group served as the armed wing of a Shiite political party in Iraq known as the Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution. Members of the Badr group opposed Saddam Hussein's rule, and fled to Iran in the early 1980s. A British intelligence report says that Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps "funded, trained, and armed the group, as well as assigning IRGC personnel in a support

capacity." Members returned to Iraq after the coalition invasion in March 2003.

HEZBOLLAH (THE PARTY OF GOD) was created in 1982 after Israel invaded Lebanon. Hezbollah is a Lebanon-based Shiite Muslim group inspired by the Iranian revolution and the teachings of the late Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini. The organization is funded by Iraq. Syria also supports this group.

ANSAR AL-ISLAM is a Sunni Muslim group of Iraqi Kurds and Arabs established in December 2001. It is closely allied with al Qaeda and the terrorist network of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi. Intelligence reports indicate that elements of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps have provided safe haven and training for Ansar al-Islam members. Reports also say that Ansar al-Islam and al Qaeda have crossed into Iraq from Iran and Syria. Additionally, they suggest an Ansar al-Islam tie with former members of Saddam Hussein's Fedayeen paramilitary force.

MAHDI ARMY. This is the armed militia group of the radical Shiite cleric, Moqtada al-Sadr. Intelligence reports say that Iran used Hezbollah to train and provide funds to Sadr's militia and may have also used front companies to fund Sadr's attacks against coalition forces.

Sources: U.S. Intelligence and State Department reports, United Nations

GRAPHIC: Picture, CARNAGE. After the bombing of the U.N. headquarters in Baghdad. Two groups with ties to Iran are suspected in the August 2003 attack. (GEERT VAN KESTEREN--AGENTUR FOCUS / CONTACT); Picture, HOLY MAN. Iran's Ayatollah Ahmad Jannati told Iraqis they have no other choice but to rise up against U.S. forces there and drive them out. (VAHID SALEMI--AP); Picture, BELIEVERS. Members of Iran's elite Revolutionary Guard Corps. In Iraq, reports say, the guard helped plan and finance attacks on U.S.-led forces. (DAMIR SAGOLJ--REUTERS / CORBIS); Pictures: ALL HANDS. At prayers in a Shiite shrine in Karbala (left). A customs office on the Iraq-Iran border displays terrorist "wanted" posters. (ABBAS--MAGNUM; HUSSEIN MALLA--AP); Pictures: TEHRAN TIES. Followers of Moqtada al-Sadr (left); Abdul Aziz al-Hakim (right, with glasses), the head of the Supreme Council of Islamic Revolution in Iraq (PAOLO WOODS--ANZENBERGER; MURAD SEZER--AP); Picture, TARGET? Intelligence reports linked two alleged plots to kill Paul Bremer, the top U.S. official in Baghdad, to Iranian-backed groups. (GEERT VAN KESTEREN--AGENTUR FOCUS / CONTACT); Picture, On the attack. A member of Moqtada al-Sadr's Mahdi Army preparing to fire a rocket-propelled grenade at an American tank in Baghdad (KAEL ALFORD--PANOS); Picture, Ansar al-Islam fighters in Iraq (CHANG W. LEE--THE NEW YORK TIMES); Map, The Ties to Tehran (U.S. intelligence and State Department reports, United Nations; Rob Cady--USN&WR)

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Agence France Presse -- English

July 7, 2003 Monday

SECTION: International News**LENGTH:** 742 words**HEADLINE:** Iran brings Israel within missile range, digs in on tougher UN nuclear probe**BYLINE:** SIAVOSH GHAZI**DATELINE:** TEHRAN, July 7**BODY:**

Iran has conducted a final test of its Shahab-3 ballistic missile, the Iranian foreign ministry confirmed Monday, in a move that brings arch-enemy Israel well within range of the Islamic republic's armed forces.

The announcement sparked immediate alarm in Israel, and also came as Iran's clerical leaders dug in on their refusal to allow tougher UN inspections of their civil nuclear programme, seen by the United States as a cover for nuclear weapons development.

"The test took place several weeks ago. The range of the missile is what we declared before," foreign ministry spokesman Hamid Reza Asefi told reporters, adding the test was the final one before the missile was handed over for operation by the country's army.

Officials here have previously said the missile -- based on North Korea's No-Dong and Pakistan's Ghauri-II -- has a range of 1,300 kilometers (810 miles). It can reportedly carry a warhead weighing up to 1,000 kilogrammes.

In Farsi, **Shahab** means "meteor" or "shooting star".

Asefi was reacting to a report in the Israeli Haaretz newspaper last week which said Iran had conducted the test just over a week ago and was now capable of hitting the Jewish state, American forces in the Gulf or the Indian subcontinent.

"This is nothing new," Asefi said. "Apparently the Israelis are a bit late with their information."

In Israel, government spokesman Avi Pazner told AFP that the Jewish state was "very concerned" at the development.

"We are very concerned, especially since we know that Iran is seeking to acquire the nuclear weapon," he said.

Iran has fiercely denied accusations it has a nuclear weapons programme, and asserts its missile development is purely for its own defence.

But confirmation of the test came as Iran was set to face more scrutiny over its nuclear programme, with International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) director Mohamed ElBaradei set to visit Wednesday to press demands for tougher inspections.

But Asefi again rebuffed mounting international demands to immediately and unconditionally allow

tougher UN inspections of its nuclear facilities, asserting instead that drawn-out negotiations may be necessary.

"There is no have-to involved. We hope that in negotiations with Mr. ElBaradei, the two sides can cover subjects that allow us to build mutual trust," he said, adding that "if not, negotiations must continue".

The IAEA has been urging Iran immediately sign, ratify and implement an additional protocol to the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) that would allow its teams to conduct surprise inspections of suspect sites.

So far the Vienna-based UN body is only allowed to pay pre-arranged visits to declared sites, but Iran has been urged to open up its nuclear programme amid widespread fears it is also seeking to acquire a nuclear arsenal.

ElBaradei has been backed up by G8 leaders and the European Union. Individual states, Japan, France, Britain, Australia, Russia and the United States, have also echoed the demand. Foreign diplomats here have asserted they are not prepared to see lengthy negotiations on the issue.

But Asefi said that for Iran, the additional protocol problem is "not a black and white issue".

"For every problem there is a solution, and for this problem we must negotiate and we are fully ready to listen," he told reporters.

In June, ElBaradei said the Islamic republic had not fully respected the NPT by failing to inform the IAEA of some of its nuclear activities, including the import of uranium in 1991.

Iranian officials have dismissed the criticisms as technicalities, and have consistently asserted they are ready to allow a tougher inspections regime, but only on the condition that other NPT signatories first assist its nuclear power programme -- one of their treaty obligations.

Asefi also dismissed threats from some EU quarters that negotiations over a trade and cooperation agreement -- which the EU hopes will yield progress on political, human rights and military concerns in Iran -- could be torpedoed by Iran's intransigence on inspections.

"The commercial cooperation accord would be profitable for both sides, so this cannot be used as leverage and the Islamic republic will not accept such pressure," he said.

"Sanctions against the Islamic republic have been ineffective. The Europeans should be careful about what they say and avoid using threats."

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Iran-missile-nuclear-IAEA

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Defense & Foreign Affairs Daily

July 25, 2003 Friday

SECTION: Vol. XXI, No. 111**LENGTH:** 2761 words**HEADLINE:** Iranian Clerical Leaders Continue to Defy Opposition, Causing Hardening of Position by its Allies**BODY:**

Analysis. By Jason Fuchs, GIS staff. Iran's clerical leadership has begun to harden its position against internal and perceived US-supported opposition following its successful suppression of the July 9, 2003, protests against the Administration. At the same time, the clerical leadership has embarked on a campaign -- which repeats a process successfully undertaken on several occasions in the past -- designed to show that it was cooperating with the US and other states in the "war on terror" when, in fact, it continues to harbor major anti-Western terrorists. <1>

Reports on July 22, 2003, to the effect that it had detained senior al-Qaida leaders were almost identical to remarks made over earlier months to the US, Saudi Arabia and Egypt. No evidence has been provided that the Iranian claims were true, and nor have any such senior al-Qaida terrorists been handed over to Saudi Arabia and Egypt, as promised, despite the fact that Saudi Arabia had -- as part of a supposed reciprocal deal -- handed over Iranian terrorists to the Iranian authorities. Suggestions that the Iranian clerics had detained, and would hand over, al-Qaida deputy leader Ayman al-Zawahiri, were ridiculed by informed Tehran sources, following the hints by Iranian clerical sources to Western media that such an prisoner was being held.

Sources in Iran indicated that the psychological operations initiative had worked in the past to suppress US support for the Iranian opposition, and they noted that senior Iranian Administration officials believed that it would work again:

Meanwhile, the successful Iranian suppression of the mounting waves of internal opposition, supported by the US, also gave encouragement to Iran's allies and other anti-Western states. <2>

In the wake of the st1:date Year="2003" Day="9" Month="7" July 9, 2003, demonstrations marking the fourth anniversary of the 1999 student demonstrations in Tehran, the Iranian leadership, satisfied with the outcome of its suppression of the protests, appeared resurgently defiant of US-Western demands for transparency regarding the indigenous Iranian nuclear program and, by late July 2003, Tehran's allies, both regional and otherwise, appeared to have taken note. The jamming of US-based satellite feeds into Iran that began on st1:date Year="2003" Day="5" Month="7" July 5, 2003, reportedly from sites in Cuba, emphasized this. Cuba's blocking of the transmissions, which continued through July 24, 2003, served as a reminder to the US Bush Administration that states like Cuba, Syria, and Libya -- referred to as the "junior varsity axis of evil" by a Bush Administration official in April 2003 -- continued to look to Tehran as a barometer for their own dealings with the US.

There was now also growing US concern over the status of the Iranian nuclear weapons program, following reports, reportedly confirmed by both US and Israeli intelligence services, that Pakistani nuclear weapons technology had now been acquired and had accelerated the pace of Iranian indigenous nuclear development.

Significantly, while the North Korean (DPRK) Administration of Mar. Kim Jong-il outstripped Iran in real military terms, it too had looked to Tehran in the aftermath of the US-led Coalition-Iraq War of March-

April 2003. Reports of a second DPRK nuclear facility in mid-July 2003 along with the North Korean declaration that it had produced enough fissile material to build an additional six nuclear weapons had, by late July 2003, refocused international attention on the DPRK nuclear program, with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) citing the the Kim Jong-il Administration as the greatest threat to world peace. The DPRK 's continuing diplomatic offensive against the US appeared to have been at least partially resultant of the continuing hard-line Iranian stance, insofar as long-standing and continuing diplomatic and military understanding between Pyongyang and Tehran . Indications by st1:date Year="2003" Day="24" Month="7" July 24, 2003 , were that Pyongyang would continue to heighten tensions on the Korean peninsula, parallel to the increasing US pressure on Tehran and Damascus .

An exchange of fire between North and South Korean troops along the demilitarized zone (DMZ) on July 17, 2003, appeared to reaffirm this intent.

GIS/ Defense & Foreign Affairs Daily had extensively reported on the North Korean military nuclear capability and related delivery systems. In a January 9, 2003 , report entitled Iraq, Iran, North Korea and WMD: Threat Activated , i style="mso-bidi-font-style: normal"Defense & Foreign Affairs Daily noted:

"Even by early 1994, it was known that the DPRK had 10 nuclear warheads of 50kt yield deployed on ballistic missiles, plus two additional 50kt devices suitable for vehicle or aircraft delivery. i style="mso-bidi-font-style: normal"Defense & Foreign Affairs sources believe that the number of warheads available to the DPRK would now be substantially higher, given the fact that it has had an additional eight years to work on the program."

As Defense & Foreign Affairs Daily reported in late June 2003, the Iranian leadership had evaluated the new realities of the post-Saddam Middle East and, increasingly threatened both by the neighboring US military presence in both Afghanistan and Iraq and demonstrations within Iran, decided to initiate an anti-Western offensive for the very survival of Iran as an Islamic Republic. A i style="mso-bidi-font-style: normal"Defense & Foreign Affairs Daily report on June 30, 2003, in particular noted the assemblage of a so-called "Anti-July 9 Crackdown Committee" to suppress the planned July 9, 2003, anti-Government demonstrations. The fruits of these efforts were made evident by the Government's largely successful containment of the st1:date Year="2003" Day="9" Month="7" July 9, 2003 , protests, which, though sizable in number [upwards of 10,000 according to reports] failed to act as any sort of catalyst to spur further widespread support and/or action within the Iranian populace or military. While the protests of st1:date Year="2003" Day="9" Month="7" July 9, 2003 , may have played a key role in the anti-Government movement, it was decidedly not the decisive turning point that some within the Iranian opposition had hoped for.

The result of this perceived success was that the ayatollahs appeared more willing than ever to oppose US and Western demands. For the Iranian leadership, the effective suppression of the protests had served as a much-needed victory against the US and the West. Whether the West actually saw events in these terms was immaterial; in the run-up to st1:date Year="2003" Day="9" Month="7" July 9, 2003 , particularly during the protests of June 2003, state-run Iranian media made clear in stark terms that the anti-Government demonstrators did not represent the Iranian people and were instead agents of the US or other Western "disruptors". On st1:date Year="2003" Day="18" Month="7" July 18, 2003 , the Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA) reported that i style="mso-bidi-font-style: normal" Ayatollah Ahmad Jannati had told worshippers attending Friday prayers at Tehran University that st1:date Year="2003" Day="9" Month="7" July 9, 2003 , was "a day of disgrace for the US and its agents, as their efforts did not succeed" and characterized the July 9 protests as "minor" and "insignificant".

This style of rhetoric served more than one purpose for the Iranian Government. While these comments served to minimize the support base of the protestors they also gave the ayatollahs an opportunity to finally win a battle against the West. Iran had proved incapable of denying Western victories in Afghanistan or Iraq and appeared, by late July 2003, to have grown increasingly frustrated with the Islamic world's inability to respond to the US-led Coalition invasion of Iraq with significant attacks on the Western home front. Thus, while efforts to rectify these situations were well underway by June-July 2003, the "defeat" of the st1:date Year="2003" Day="9" Month="7" July 9, 2003 , protests served as a welcome interim victory, and doubtless a morale booster amongst the Iranian leadership.

Iran 's aggressive strategic stance toward the US , Israel , and the West was emphasized on st1:date Year="2003" Day="20" Month="7" July 20, 2003 , when the Iranian Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Hoseini-Khamene'i, officially inaugurated the Shahab-3 ballistic missile. The Shahab-3 reportedly has a range of between 1,300 and 1,500 kilometers and is capable of carrying a 1,000-760 kilogram

warhead. The Iranian Government and Western media had reported since early July 2003 that the missile had been successfully tested in June 2003. The July 20, 2003 , ceremony marked the missile's entrance into operational service, according to i style="mso-bidi-font-style: normal" Ayatollah Khamene'i, who remarked: "Today our people and our armed forces are ready to defend their goals anywhere."

However, the authoritative Middle Eastern web-based information service, Debka.com, which clearly has strong sources within the Israeli intelligence community, stated in a st1:date Year="2003" Day="23" Month="7" July 23, 2003 , dispatch that the missile had, in fact, failed its most recent test. According to the Debka.com report, Iranian officials were, as of late July 2003, in North Korea attempting to expedite shipment plans for new engines in hopes of fixing the i style="mso-bidi-font-style: normal" Sh a i style="mso-bidi-font-style: normal" hab-3 's remaining defects. It remained unclear whether the st1:date Year="2003" Day="23" Month="7" July 23, 2003 , report of North Korean-Iranian missile shipments was linked to the arrival of a large Iranian cargo ship to a North Korean port at Haeju Harbor in the Yellow Sea during early July 2003. On st1:date Year="2003" Day="9" Month="7" July 9, 2003 , an unnamed South Korean official had speculated to the South Korean JoongAng Daily that the Iranian cargo ship had taken on small patrol boats. [The Iranian Navy maintains at least three Zafar -class (North Korean built Chasho -class) FAC(G) patrol boats purchased from North Korea in the early 1990s. Western intelligence agencies believed that an additional six patrol boats had been shipped to Iran in December 2002 in a package sale including two gunboats and five semi-submersibles capable of carrying two torpedoes each.]

Thus, with uncertainty as to the current strategic viability of the Sh a hab-3 missile, what appeared most evident by late July 2003 was the importance which the Iranian Government continued to place on propaganda and the projection of force. The message of the missile test -- failed or otherwise -- had been aimed directly at the US , Israel , and the West. And, though, the test gained only the passing attention of most US and European media, Israeli news outlets paid close watch, with the daily i style="mso-bidi-font-style: normal" Yedioth Ahronoth blaring across its front page during mid-July 2003: "The Iranian threat -- the missile that can hit every house in Israel ".

The importance of the missile test, insofar as achieving a strong Iranian front to the West, could not be overstated. Iran had long depended on the threat of widening any US-led war in the Middle East to include Israel as a major deterrent to US action against the Tehran-Damascus-Baghdad axis. US Pres. Bush had proved willing to risk that eventuality to achieve US strategic goals in removing the Iraqi Administration of former Pres. Saddam Hussein. With this US decision, the Iranians had hoped for Saddam to make good on this long-promised threat, not only to punish Israel , but also to deter further US action against Iran or its staunch ally Syria . The Iraqi inability to widen the war to Israel made the clerics recognize, more than ever, the necessity for a demonstration of the Iranian capability to strike Israel . The some 10,000 medium-to-short range rockets in Southern Lebanon , controlled jointly by Tehran , Damascus , and, to a degree, HizbAllah, were well within the Iranian sphere of influence, yet, Tehran 's willingness to rely on its neighbors to attack Israel if necessary appeared to have waned in the wake of the Iraqi failure. US efforts in June 2003 to sway the HizbAllah from the Iranian sphere of influence, though fruitless by late July 2003, may also have raised the attention of the Iranian leadership. Thus, Tehran sought to warn the US against taking action toward "regime change" in Iran by reminding Washington that it retained the ability to widen any conflict with the US to include Israel by means within its own borders. Although perhaps unnecessary, this should have registered in Damascus as a reminder that Syria remains strategically dependent on Iran , and not the other way around.

Notably, Cuba 's blocking of US-based satellite feeds into Iran , which continued as of July 24, 2003, signaled that Havana continued to pay close attention to Tehran 's policies vis-a-vis the US as an indicator for its own relations with Washington . Initially, following the September 11, 2001 , attacks, Havana had shown a more conciliatory attitude toward the US, most notably by remaining relatively acquiescent to the US use of Guantanamo Bay as a detention camp for al-Qaida detainees. The Russian closure of the Lourdes Signals Intelligence (SIGINT) facility following the September 11, 2001, attacks on the US, though begun in August 2001, also seemed to indicate a more amiable Cuban posture. Yet, Iran 's unflinching stance in the face of the US pressure to end support for terror groups, abandon its indigenous nuclear weapons program, and begin a process of political and economic liberalization appeared to have affected Havana 's strategic approach. By late July 2003, it seemed clear that Cuba would continue a policy of overt hostility towards the US . This was evidenced by the Cuban decision to help Iran block US satellite feeds into Iran , particularly at a time as sensitive as the st1:date Year="2003" Day="9" Month="7" July 9, 2003, protests, for which the US had voiced support. A denial issued by the Cuban Foreign Ministry on July 19, 2003, made no attempt to mask this hostile tone,

declaring: "This is a new campaign of anti-Cuban lies ... adding to a long list of hostile and aggressive actions that the imperial administration of George W. Bush has taken against our country."

So, as July 2003 came to a close, Iran's aggressive stance came, unintentionally, with intense political pressure on the US Bush Administration. The Democrats, the US opposition party, continued to pursue Pres. Bush on the question of the Iraq War's legitimacy, the continuing (although low) US death toll in US-occupied Iraq, and the US economy. Damascus, Pyongyang, Havana, and Tripoli, thus, seemed to have one eye on the emboldened Iranians and another on Pres. Bush's slipping poll numbers. Tehran and its allies appeared ever more confident that in spite of the US-declared "war on terror" their respective governments might yet outlive the US Bush Administration.

Footnote:

1. The US Central Intelligence Agency "confirmed" to US media company ABC that al-Qaida senior military figure Saif al-Adel was being held by Iranian authorities. However, GIS sources in Tehran indicated that the "detention" was, if it could be described as that, was almost certainly symbolic. Egyptian authorities have for some months been demanding the extradition of Saif al-Adel, an Egyptian national, for trial. However, reports surfaced on July 24, 2003, that because he was "of Libyan origin", Libya had requested his extradition to Tripoli for trial. Given the close Iranian-Libyan relationship -- particularly given the fact that Libya essentially has taken responsibility for the Iranian-managed bombing of Pan Am PA103 flight over Lockerbie, Scotland, in 1988 -- it seems almost certain that this move was a canard designed to demonstrate "Iranian compliance" in the "war on terror", while still ensuring that Saif al-Adel was able to be safeguarded.

2. International pressure on Iran's clerics is, however, far from over. The Canadian Ambassador to Tehran was recalled on July 23, 2003, over Canadian protests that Iranian-born Canadian photojournalist Zahra Kazemi was tortured, possibly raped, and then killed by Iranian officials.

See also:

Defense & Foreign Affairs Daily, July 10, 2003: Iranian Protests Take Place Despite Massive Suppression; Worldwide Expatriate Protests Against Clerics.

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Iran-Based Al Qaeda Threat Much Closer than Shehab-3

DEBKAFfile Special Analysis

July 22, 2003, 9:30 AM (GMT+02:00)

Israel has more cause for concern from the presence of senior al Qaeda operatives in Iran than from the prospect of Iran shooting a Shehab-3 medium-range missile any time soon, despite the handover ceremony Iran's bellicose spiritual leader Ali Khamenei staged with Iran's Revolutionary Guards on July 20. According to DEBKAFfile's military experts, the missile is not yet operational; neither is it precise enough or capable of delivering an unconventional warhead. The Shehab-3 will need another two years at least to be ready for service. Only then, will Israel's anti-missile Arrow missile system be required to live up to the Israeli defense minister Shaul Mofaz's encomium, that the Arrow is Israel's answer to the Iranian missile.



Mussab Zarqawi - Al Qaeda's ticking bomb in Iran

Meanwhile, the Shehab-3 is meanwhile grounded by two daunting obstacles:

A. The final version of the missile's engine is far from complete; tests are still running on various North Korean versions including the Nodong-1 upgraded with Russian technology and Iranian improvements. DEBKAFfile's intelligence sources report that Iranian missile engineers and operators went to North Korea at the end of June to speed delivery of the new engine parts ordered and paid for last year, after the first version engine proved faulty. Some of the missiles test-fired crashed shortly after launch.

While pressing for delivery of the engine parts, Tehran is cocking an anxious ear to the war of words flying between Washington and Pyongyang. Iran's leaders fear that sooner or later the disputants will come to an understanding over North Korea's nuclear weapons program rather than letting it slide into outright confrontation. For Iran's program, this spells curtains in more than one way.

1. The moment North Korea's nuclear program accepts a regime of controls and limitations, the full blast of international heat, especially from Washington, will veer round to compel the Iranians to fall in line and give up the development of a nuclear bomb.

2. North Korea will be bound under such an agreement by non-proliferation clauses banning the export of nuclear and missile technologies alike. Once the Pyongyang door is slammed, Iran can forget about North Korean assistance in bringing its ballistic missile engines up to scratch. Tehran is therefore racing to get what it can out of North Korea before Pyongyang resolves its dispute with the Washington.

B. The Iranian program faces another major hurdle. Their twin object is to produce enough enriched uranium for the manufacture of nuclear bombs and warheads by the latter half of 2005, also completing the development of dependable engines for their ballistic missiles in the same time frame. If all goes according to plan, Tehran will by that date have a nuclear weapon plus several missiles for delivering it. However, it is hard to imagine the United States and/or Israel allowing the Islamic Republic to reach that point unopposed.

These difficulties place the Shehab-3 menace in the middle distance and bring the Iran-based al Qaeda threat to the Middle East including Israel into much sharper focus.

The thinking in Jerusalem is that since the Islamic theocrats did not scruple to give al Qaeda logistical backing from their towns for the May 12 string of suicide attacks against Riyadh, they will be as willing to help the same terrorists mount strikes against Israel. Tuesday, July 22, Tehran again denied granting the network's leading lights sanctuary, contradicting President George W. Bush's accusation the day before that Syria and Iran harbored and assisted terrorists. He also warned them they would be held accountable.

No one knows for sure if Iran's al Qaeda "guests" are enjoying a comfortable form of detention or are preparing the next wave of terrorist attacks with local connivance. (See also earlier DEBKAFfile story on this page.) The theory going round some circles in Washington is that Iran's logistical aid in the Riyadh attacks was meant to hint to the US government at the extent of damage the Iranians are capable of causing US interests in Iraq and other parts of the Middle East if the heat is not reduced on the nuclear issue.

Israel is keeping a very close eye on the Jordanian-born terror master Mussab Zarqawi, who just before the Iraq War was assigned; according to Israeli security sources, with executing a 9/11-scale attack in Israel. Six months ago, Zarqawi was sighted several times in Damascus, Beirut and places in Western Europe. He always went back to Iran after what are believed to have been recruiting missions for the attack from among the al Qaeda group sheltering in southern Lebanon and operatives who infiltrated Israel and the West Bank.

Zarqawi could not have moved around south Lebanon without the knowledge and assent of Syrian army intelligence and the Iran-backed Hizballah.

There is nothing to say that Zarqawi back in Iran ever gave up preparing for his Israel assignment. If such an operation is indeed afoot, then the Iran-based al Qaeda would be a greater and more tangible threat to Israel than any semi-functioning Iranian missile.

US-Israel Postscript

DEBKAFfile's Washington sources disclose that President Bush's accusations against Syria and Iran on Monday were also meant for the ears of Israeli prime minister Ariel Sharon, who has been invited for talks in the White House on July 29. On Friday, July 25, the Palestinian prime minister Mahmoud Abbas will be received by the US president in Washington for the first time. He is coming with a shopping list, at the top of which is a demand that Israel free a large number of terrorists from its prisons, including terrorists "with blood on their hands" and Hamas and Jihad Islami members.

Sharon, limited by government decisions from setting the latter categories loose, sought to create a diversion by developing an independent peace channel to Damascus. By attacking Syria as a sponsor of terrorists, Bush effectively blocked Sharon's ploy. The implication is that if the Israeli leader is not too squeamish to do business with hard-line regimes like that of Bashar Assad which harbor al Qaeda and Hamas and Jihad Islami command centers, it can certainly bring itself to make concessions to the non-terrorist Abbas and his interior minister Dahlan.

There are indications that the Bush administration is cross with Sharon for his Syrian initiative and, to make things worse, using a UN official, Middle East envoy Terje Roed-Larsen as his go-between. Bush has no great love for UN officials and even less for surprises, especially when they come from Sharon who until now worked in perfect harmony with the White House.

From the US capital, the Israeli prime minister is seen to be shutting out of his counsels his defense and foreign ministers, Shaul Mofaz and Silvan Shalom - both of whom he has found indiscreetly forthcoming to the media on government policy, and barricading himself behind a hard shell in readiness for his White House talks. Quite aside from the real concerns posed by al Qaeda in Iran, Syria and Lebanon, Bush advisers are intent on cracking the Israeli leader's shell so as to bring him round to advancing the concessions on the list brought by Palestinian leaders.

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Middle East Quarterly

March 22, 2004

SECTION: No. 2, Vol. 11; Pg. 45; ISSN: 1073-9467**IAC-ACC-NO:** 118416733**LENGTH:** 5232 words**HEADLINE:** How to tame Tehran.**BYLINE:** Berman, Ilan**BODY:**

Over the past year, Iran has become a major cause of concern in Washington. The Islamic Republic has been discovered to possess a robust nuclear program, of a scope well beyond previous estimates. It has also made substantial breakthroughs in its ballistic missile capabilities. Less noticed, but equally significant, has been Tehran's growing activism in the Persian Gulf, the Caucasus, and Iraq.

There is a vision and a method to Iran's policies. In the words of Mohsen Reza'i, secretary of Iran's Expediency Council, Iran believes it is destined to become the "center of international power politics" in the post-Saddam Hussein Middle East. (1) Iran's new, more confrontational strategic doctrine even has a name: "deterrent defense." According to foreign minister Kamal Kharrazi, this national security concept is designed to confront "a broad spectrum of threats to Iran's national security, among them foreign aggression, war, border incidents, espionage, sabotage, regional crises derived from the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), state terrorism, and discrimination in manufacturing and storing WMD." (2)

Under the rubric of "deterrent defense," Iran is exploiting U.S. preoccupation with Iraq to build capabilities that will establish its hegemony in its immediate neighborhood and enhance its role across the Middle East. Iran's moves, if unchecked, will create a grave and growing challenge to U.S. aims in the region. At stake are nothing less than the geopolitical balance in the Middle East and the long-term achievement of U.S. goals, from stability in Iraq to regional peace.

How has Iran's policy changed? And what can the United States do to thwart Iran's new drive?

STRATEGIC AMBITIONS

For years, policymakers in Washington had suspected Tehran's rulers of pursuing an offensive nuclear capability. They had viewed with alarm the growing strategic ties between Iran and Russia and had publicly expressed concerns that the centerpiece of that cooperation, the \$ 800 million light-water reactor project at Bushehr, could lead to significant Iranian nuclear advances.

Then, in the summer of 2002, an Iranian opposition group disclosed the existence of an extensive uranium enrichment complex at Natanz in central Iran. This revelation and a series of subsequent discoveries by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)--ranging from advanced clandestine nuclear development to the presence of trace weapons-grade uranium--revealed the true extent of Iran's nuclear endeavor.

This effort turns out to have been far broader and more mature than originally believed. Iran is now

thought to have some fourteen other facilities, including heavy- and light-water reactors in Isfahan and Arak, and suspect sites in Fasa, Karaj, and Nekka. Together, these constitute all the makings of an ambitious national effort to develop nuclear weapons. (3) Iranian officials, meanwhile, have hinted at the existence of still other, as yet undisclosed, facilities essential to the country's nuclear program. (4)

Iran appears to have agreed to suspend its uranium enrichment activities under an October 2003 deal with France, Germany, and Great Britain. Similarly, international pressure succeeded in prompting Iran to sign the Additional Protocol to the 1968 Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT), permitting snap inspections and invasive monitoring of segments of Iran's nuclear sector by the International Atomic Energy Agency. However, two of Iran's main atomic suppliers, Russia and China, wield veto power on the United Nations Security Council, making it improbable that Iranian nuclear violations would result in meaningful censure. And in fact, ongoing IAEA deliberations have so far failed to yield decisive international action, despite mounting evidence of Iran's atomic breaches.

There is also a lingering uncertainty over Tehran's nuclear time line. While informed American observers contend that Iran is still some two years (and possibly longer) away from an offensive nuclear capability, (5) others believe that an Iranian bomb could materialize much sooner. In November 2003 testimony before the Israeli parliament's Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee, Mossad chief Meir Dagan warned that Iran could reach a "point of no return" in its nuclear development by mid-2004, following which time an Iranian offensive capability would become a virtual certainty. (6) President Bush has himself warned that the United States "will not tolerate" a nuclear-armed Iran. (7) But if estimates are off, even by a few months, Iran could present the world with a nuclear fait accompli.

At the same time, major breakthroughs in Iran's strategic arsenal have made it an emerging missile power. In June 2003, the Islamic Republic conducted what it termed the final test of its 1,300-kilometer range Shahab-3 ballistic missile. The launch was a success, confirming Iran's ability to target U.S. allies Israel and Turkey, as well as U.S. troops in the Persian Gulf. Since then, with great fanfare, the Islamic Republic has inducted the advanced rocket into its Revolutionary Guards (the Pasdaran). (8)

This potential for proliferation is hardly the only worry. If recent signals are any indication, the Shahab-3 has already evolved well beyond its officially declared capabilities. In September 2003, at a military parade commemorating the anniversary of the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq war, the Shahab-3 was officially described as possessing a range of 1,700 kilometers. (9) Additionally, opposition groups have charged that Tehran's overt missile development actually masks a much broader clandestine endeavor--one that includes development of the 4,000-kilometer range Shahab-5 and even a follow-on Shahab-6 intercontinental ballistic missile. (10)

Such efforts have only been strengthened by Iranian perceptions of U.S. policy. The Bush administration's rapid dispatch of Saddam Hussein's regime, and its contrasting hesitancy in dealing with a newly nuclear North Korea, has had a profound impact on Iran's calculus. North Korea's nuclear maneuvers, and its ability to successfully stymie U.S. strategy, have led Iranian officials to express their admiration for Pyongyang's resistance to U.S. "pressure, hegemony and superiority." (11) There has indeed been some internal debate in Iran about the risks of stepping over the nuclear threshold. Yet even leading Iranian reformers appear to have gravitated to the notion that nuclear weapons are necessary to shift the regional "equilibrium." (12)

CHARM OFFENSIVE

These strategic advances, however, are only part of the picture. In tandem with Iran's nuclear and ballistic missile breakthroughs, a significant transformation has also begun in Iranian foreign policy.

For Tehran, the overthrow of Hussein's regime has only fueled mounting fears of a dangerous strategic encirclement. The U.S. destruction of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan had already ensconced the pro-Western--albeit fragile--government of Hamid Karzai in Kabul. For Iran, the extremist Sunni Taliban posed an ideological threat, but a U.S. foothold on Iran's eastern border is regarded as even more threatening. Regime change in Baghdad, therefore, confronted officials in Tehran with the two-fold danger that Iran could be pinioned between two U.S. client-states, and that Iraq's fall might be a prelude to a similar U.S. drive to transform their country.

In response, Iran formulated its new strategic doctrine of "deterrent defense." In practice, this has entailed a major expansion of Iran's military capabilities. Heavy defense expenditures, and ongoing strategic partnerships with both Russia and China, have made possible a far-reaching national military

rearmament. Defense acquisitions made over the past several years have steadily broadened Iran's strategic reach over vital Persian Gulf shipping lanes, to the point that Tehran now possesses the ability to virtually control oil supplies from the region. (13) Iran has also increased its diplomatic activism in the region, redoubling its long-running efforts to erect an independent security framework as a counterweight to the expanding U.S. military footprint. (14)

As part of this effort, in February 2004, Iran codified an unprecedented military and defense accord with Syria--one formally enshrining an Iranian commitment to Syria's defense in the event of a U.S. or Israeli offensive. Iranian officials have subsequently made clear that these mutual defense guarantees also extend to Lebanon and to the Islamic Republic's most potent regional proxy: Hizbullah. (15)

Iran has also raised its military and diplomatic profile in the Caucasus. In April 2003, foreign minister Kharrazi embarked on a diplomatic tour of the region intended to marshal support for a common regional security framework for Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Russia, Iran, and Turkey as an alternative to cooperation with "external forces." (16) But lukewarm regional responses have prompted the Islamic Republic to nudge these countries into alignment through less subtle means. In mid-October 2003, Iran commenced large-scale military maneuvers in its northwest region, near Azerbaijan. The exercises, reportedly the largest conducted by Iran in recent memory, massed troops on the Iranian-Azeri border in a clear show of force aimed at dissuading the former Soviet republic from expanding cooperation with the United States. (17) A corresponding Iranian naval buildup is now visible in the Caspian Sea in response to Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan's growing military relationships with Washington.

U.S. advances in the region are regarded by Iran as potential threats, but paradoxically they have also presented Iran with opportunities that it has been quick to exploit.

* The coalition campaign against Saddam Hussein's regime succeeded in eliminating the threat posed by Tehran's most immediate adversary, thereby cementing Iran's dominant regional standing, Iran has exploited the postwar political vacuum in Iraq to foment instability through a variety of measures, ranging from political support of radical Shi'ite elements to an increase in drug trafficking. (18) This broad offensive has reportedly included the infiltration of hundreds of Pasdaran operatives into Iraq where they have engaged in active recruitment, influence operations, and assassinations--at a cost to Iran of some \$ 70 million per month. (19)

* Hussein's overthrow has also effectively defanged a lingering threat to Tehran: the Mujahideen-e Khalq Organization (MKO), a wing of the National Council of Resistance of Iran. Since the spring of 2003, coalition forces under a U.S.-imposed cease-fire have curtailed the anti-regime group's operations in Iraq. And a subsequent December decision by Iraq's new governing council has labeled the MKO--previously tolerated and even supported by the Baathists--as a terrorist organization. (20)

* To Iran's east, meanwhile, the fall of the Taliban has removed an ideological competitor for Muslim hearts and minds while lingering factionalism and tribal rivalries have allowed Iran to perpetuate Afghanistan's instability.

Iran is clearly determined to remake its strategic environment in its favor. Iran has mobilized its technological resources to give it greater reach and has used political, economic, and military clout to encourage a tilt in its direction in its immediate neighborhood. Paradoxically, the United States, by breaking up the old order in states neighboring Iran, has given Tehran hitherto unimagined opportunities to influence the region.

FALSE STARTS

Can international diplomacy deflect Iran's newest drive for regional hegemony? It hardly seems likely. From 1991 to 1997, the European Union (EU) engaged in a "critical dialogue" with the Islamic Republic, attempting to moderate Iran's radical policies through trade. But by 1997, critical dialogue had actually achieved exactly the opposite result, infusing Iran with much needed currency while failing to alter Tehran's support for terrorism, its pursuit of WMD, and its violations of human rights. Diplomacy has had a limited effect because the EU countries have allowed their economic interests to undercut their diplomatic efforts. For example, in late 2002, in the midst of revelations regarding Iran's advanced nuclear development, the EU signaled its intention to commence new negotiations with the Islamic Republic on a sweeping trade and cooperation pact. (21)

The United States has also wavered in its application of diplomatic pressure. The May 1997 election of

soft-line cleric Mohammad Khatami to the Iranian presidency--and his subsequent, much-publicized "dialogue of civilizations" interview on CNN--convinced many in Washington that Iran was moving toward pragmatic accommodation. Since then, U.S. policymakers, despite reiterating their continued commitment to containment of Iran, have time and again qualified Iran's membership in the "axis of evil." Most notably, Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage, in a February 2003 interview with the Los Angeles Times, distinguished between Iran on the one hand and North Korea and Iraq on the other--on account of Iran's "democracy." (22)

This, too, is an illusion. The Islamic Republic in recent years has engaged in a widening governmental campaign of domestic repression--one that includes stepped-up crackdowns on the press and the brutal persecution of regime opponents. The repression reflects a governmental effort to grapple with the groundswell of political opposition that has emerged among Iran's disaffected young population in response to the country's rising unemployment and economic stagnation.

At the same time, Iran's theocrats remain deeply antagonistic to all U.S. overtures. This was demonstrated most recently by the quiet contacts between Washington and Tehran in the aftermath of the devastating December 2003 earthquake in Bam, Iran. Despite deep support for dialogue among reformist parliamentarians, clerical hard-liners opposed to such a rapprochement ultimately cut short the contacts. (23)

If the United States wants to alter Iran's behavior, it cannot expect results from the tried-and-failed approaches of "critical dialogue," "dialogue of civilizations," and other false starts.

U.S. OPTIONS

Yet a policy that reassures allies, deters Iranian aggression, and curbs Iran's expansionism is more than feasible. It requires the United States to do four things: broaden containment to include counter-proliferation; revive Gulf defense alliances; mobilize Turkey; and woo the Iranian people.

Expanded containment. Far and away the most urgent task now facing Washington is arresting Iran's nuclear progress. Over the past year, U.S. policymakers have expressed increasingly vocal concerns over the corrosive global potential of an Iranian nuclear breakout, ranging from a nuclear arms race in the Middle East to Tehran's growing capacity for nuclear blackmail. Yet the United States could assume a more proactive role in preventing nuclear technology transfers to Iran.

This is the concept behind the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI), the counter-proliferation partnership launched by President Bush in May 2003. (24) Since its inception, the PSI--designed to prevent the acquisition of weapons of mass destruction by rogue nations through more aggressive intelligence-sharing and interdiction efforts--has already charted some notable successes vis-a-vis North Korea, including a clampdown on illicit North Korean smuggling operations by both Australia and Japan. And recent maneuvers by PSI-member nations in the Coral Sea and the Mediterranean suggest a growing role for the alliance in the Middle East, both as a mechanism to intercept illicit WMD trafficking in the Persian Gulf and as a means to target proliferation networks (such as the recently unearthed nuclear ring led by Pakistani scientist Abdul Qadeer Khan) now active in the region.

But the PSI is not the only tool in Washington's arsenal. In the Caucasus and Central Asia, the United States is quietly moving ahead with Caspian Guard, an initiative designed to bolster regional security through expanded maritime patrols, aerial and naval surveillance, and border protections. As part of this effort, the United States has stepped up military exercises with Azerbaijan and has committed some \$ 10 million to strengthening the former Soviet republic's naval capability and border security. This includes beefing up Azerbaijan's communications infrastructure and helping to carry out counter-proliferation operations. (25)

Similarly, under a five-year defense accord signed with Kazakhstan in 2003, Washington has bankrolled the construction of a Kazakh military base in the Caspian coast city of Atyrau and has allocated millions to equipment and training for the Kazakh army, maritime and border-patrol forces. (26) Central to this effort is the prevention of WMD proliferation through the region, not least the transfer of technology from Russia to Iran.

The early successes of the PSI and Caspian Guard suggest that both initiatives can and should be expanded to address more comprehensively the threat from the Islamic Republic.

Reviving Gulf defense. Over the past several years, fears of a rising Tehran have begun to drive many Arab Gulf countries toward accommodation with Iran. For example, such concerns led Oman to establish a modus vivendi with the Islamic Republic through the codification of a sweeping agreement on military cooperation in 2000 (albeit one that has since been denied by Oman). (27) Kuwait subsequently followed suit, striking a similar bargain in October 2002. (28) Even Saudi Arabia, previously a strategic competitor of Iran, capitulated on a long-discussed framework accord with Tehran in late 2001, in the wake of two multi-billion-dollar Russo-Iranian defense accords. (29)

But for many of these countries, such bilateral partnerships are a product of necessity--a function of the inadequacy of national defenses and regional alliances in addressing Iran's rising expansionism. The distrust of Iran still runs very deep. As a recent editorial in London's influential Arab-language Ash-Sharq al-Awsat newspaper emphasized, Iran now poses a threat to "Saudi Arabia, Oman, Iraq, Afghanistan, Turkmenistan, and Azerbaijan, which share with Iran a land border of 5,400 kilometers and a sea border of 2,400 kilometers ... The Iranian nuclear danger threatens us, first and foremost, more than it threatens the Israelis and the Americans." (30)

Such worries have prompted the six-member Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), comprised of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Bahrain, and the United Arab Emirates, to initiate a feasibility study for an alliance-wide antimissile system. At the same time, individual countries in the Arab Gulf (most notably Saudi Arabia and Kuwait) have initiated efforts to upgrade their individual missile defense capabilities. (31) Recently uncovered nuclear contacts between Saudi Arabia and Pakistan suggest that at least one of Iran's neighbors has begun to actively contemplate the need for a strategic deterrent against the Islamic Republic. (32)

All this suggests that a U.S. strategic initiative toward the Arab Gulf may find ready customers. On the one hand, a deepening of Washington's bilateral military dialogue and defense contacts with individual Gulf nations might lessen regional dependence not only on Iran but on an increasingly volatile and unpredictable Saudi Arabia as well. (33) On the other hand, the creation of a formalized American security architecture over the region could reinvigorate Washington's regional partnerships while excluding and isolating Iran. (34) Common to all of these efforts is the need to provide Tehran's neighbors with the tools to counter its growing potential for nuclear and ballistic missile blackmail.

Talking Turkey. Ties between the United States and Turkey have been tepid since Ankara's unexpected refusal to grant basing rights to U.S. troops on the eve of the spring 2003 Iraq campaign--a move that torpedoed U.S. plans for a northern front against Hussein's regime. Since then, however, policymakers in both countries have begun to mend fences. As part of that process, the United States should insist that Turkey do more to hedge Iranian ambitions in the Caucasus and Central Asia.

Unfortunately, Turkey's historic role as a strategic competitor of Iran has been substantially eroded. Indeed, over the past two years, Ankara has steadily drifted toward a new relationship with Tehran. Much of this movement has been underpinned by energy. Turkey's growing dependence on Iran--which could provide roughly 20 percent of total Turkish natural gas consumption by the end of the decade (35)--has diminished Ankara's economic leverage vis-a-vis Tehran.

But politics play an important role as well. Since its assumption of power in November 2002, Turkey's Islamist Justice and Development Party (AKP) has gravitated toward closer ties with its Muslim neighbors under the guise of an "independent" foreign policy, Iran has been one of the chief beneficiaries of these overtures, and bilateral contacts and economic trade between Ankara and Tehran have ballooned over the past year. This political proximity has only been reinforced by common worries over Iraqi instability in the aftermath of Hussein's ouster.

Nevertheless, Ankara's deep ethnic and historical ties to the countries of the Caucasus and Central Asia make it a natural counterweight to Iranian-sponsored religious radicalism in those regions. Given Turkey's deep interest in expanding trade and development in the Caspian, Turkey also remains suspicious of Iran's maneuvers there. Meanwhile, Tehran's ongoing sponsorship of terrorism, including the Kurdish variety, has put Iran and Turkey on very different sides of the war on terrorism.

These commonalities have led observers to suggest that Turkey's most constructive role might be as a force multiplier for U.S. interests in its "northern neighborhood." (36) In fact, Ankara and Tehran's divergent strategic priorities--on everything from Central Asian Islam to Caspian energy to the future political composition of postwar Iraq--suggest that Turkey and Iran could become competitors again. The United States should encourage such competition by creating incentives for Turkey to play its historic

role.

Wooing the Iranians. One of the Bush administration's most enduring challenges in prosecuting the war on terrorism has been effectively communicating its goals and objectives to a skeptical Muslim world. Over the past two and a half years, that need has spawned an expanded public diplomacy effort. This has included media outreach on the part of top administration officials like National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice, Secretary of State Colin Powell, and Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld.

Iran, however, has been included only belatedly in these plans. More than nine months after September 11, with U.S. officials saturating the airwaves of Arabic networks like Qatar's al-Jazeera, not one high-ranking U.S. official had granted an interview to a Persian-language television outlet. (37) (This is despite the existence of dissident channels, such as the Los Angeles-based National Iranian Television [NITV], capable of effectively carrying the U.S. message.) Even when the United States did finally overhaul its public diplomacy toward Iran with the launch of the Persian-language Radio Farda in December 2002, the station's entertainment-heavy format led critics to complain that the United States had diluted its democratic message. (38) Since then, broadcasting to Iran has continued to be funded at minimal levels, despite Congressional efforts to expand outreach. Such a lackluster effort reflects continuing confusion within the U.S. government about exactly whom to engage within Iran.

In fact, the success of public diplomacy hinges upon a clear American vision of Iran's desired direction and the sustained political will to assist Iran in reaching that goal. In that light, there should be only one answer to the question of whom to engage: the nascent democratic opposition. The United States should demonstrate its support for that opposition by expanding expatriate and government-sponsored broadcasting, using it to highlight and criticize Tehran's bankrupt clerical rule.

(1) Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA), Mar. 5, 2003.

(2) Iranian foreign minister Kamal Kharrazi, cited in Saisat-e Rouz, Feb. 18, 2003.

(3) Defense News, Jan. 12, 2004; Michael Rubin, "Iran's Burgeoning WMD Programs," Middle East Intelligence Bulletin, Mar.-Apr. 2002, at http://www.meib.org/articles/0203_irm1.htm.

(4) Ahmad Shirzad, Iranian member of parliament, Nov. 24, 2003, remarks before legislative session, RFE/RL (Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty) Iran Report, Dec. 8, 2003.

(5) "Iran: Breaking out without Quite Breaking the Rules?" Nonproliferation Policy Education Center, May 13, 2003, at <http://www.npec-web.org/pages/iranswu.htm>.

(6) Ha'aretz (Tel Aviv), Nov. 18, 2003. Israeli officials have further threatened to take preemptive military action, if necessary, to prevent this from happening; Agence France-Presse, Dec. 21, 2003.

(7) The New York Times, June 18, 2003.

(8) Vision of the Islamic Republic of Iran Network 1, July 20, 2003.

(9) Agence France-Presse, Sept. 22, 2003.

(10) Middle East Newsline, Oct. 25, 2002.

(11) IRNA, Dec. 14, 2003.

(12) The Washington Post, Mar. 11, 2003.

(13) Vice Admiral Lowell E. Jacoby, Defense Intelligence Agency director, "Current and Projected National Security Threats to the United States," statement for the record, Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, Feb. 11, 2003, at http://www.fas.org/irp/congress/2003_hr/021103jacob.html.

(14) M. Javad Zarif, Iran's ambassador to the United Nations, commentary in The New York Times, May 10, 2003.

(15) IRNA. Feb. 27 and Feb. 29, 2004; Ma'ariv (Tel Aviv), Feb. 29, 2004.

- (16) Itar-TASS (Moscow), Apr. 29, 2003.
- (17) Uch Nogta (Azerbaijan), Oct. 22, 2003.
- (18) See, for example, Al-Hayat (London), Nov. 28, 2003, and Jan. 5, 2004.
- (19) Ash-Sharq al-Awsat (London), Apr. 3, 2004.
- (20) The New York Times, Dec. 19, 2003.
- (21) Xinhua News Agency (Beijing), Dec. 12, 2002.
- (22) Los Angeles Times, Feb. 16, 2003.
- (23) Mohsen Armin, deputy chairman of the National Security and Foreign Relations Committee, Iranian Islamic Consultative Assembly (majles), Iranian Labour News Agency (ILNA), Jan. 4, 2004.
- (24) Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Poland, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Singapore, Spain, the United Kingdom, and the United States currently make up the core membership of the PSI, while over sixty other nation--including Turkey--have voiced their backing for the initiative.
- (25) Associated Press, Jan. 3, 2004.
- (26) Radio Free Europe, Oct. 8, 2003.
- (27) Vision of the Islamic Republic of Iran Network I, Apr. 10, 2000.
- (28) Xinhua News Agency, Oct. 2, 2002; Reuters, Oct. 3, 2002.
- (29) Middle East Newsline, Apr. 18, 2001.
- (30) Ash-Shārq Al-Awsat (London), Oct. 8, 2003.
- (31) Defense News, May 23 and Dec. 1, 2003.
- (32) the Washington Time, Oct. 22, 2003.
- (33) For more on existing defense ties between the United States and the Gulf states, as well as the potential for their expansion, see Simon Henderson, The New Pillar: Conservative Arab Gulf States and U.S. Strategy (Washington, D.C.: Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 2003).
- (34) See, for example, Kenneth Pollack, "Securing the Gulf," Foreign Affairs, July-Aug. 2003, pp. 2-15.
- (35) "Turkish Energy Policy," Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, at <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/grupa/an/policy.htm>.
- (36) Soner Cagaptay, "United States and Turkey in 2004: Time to Look North," Turkish Policy Quarterly, Winter 2004, at <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/media/cagaptay/cagaptay020204.pdf>.
- (37) Interview with Iranian dissident, Washington, D.C., July 2002.
- (38) See, for example, Jesse Helms, "What's 'Pop' in Persian?" The Wall Street Journal, Dec. 16, 2002; Jackson Diehl, "Casey Kasem or Freedom?" The Washington Post, Dec. 16, 2002.

REGIME CHANGE

The United States has been guilty of sending mixed signals to Iran over the past few years. Most significantly, it has apologized for the Central Intelligence Agency's role in the coup of 1953--an early case of regime change--and it has declared its goal in Iran to be behavior modification rather than regime change. The mixing of signals simply reflects a confusion of policy--a confusion that has become positively dangerous, both to U.S. interests and the security of Iran's neighbors.

In fact, the U.S. objective in Iran is closer to the regime change it imposed on Iraq than to the behavioral change it brought about in Libya. The Iranian regime is not one mercurial man, whose behavior can be reversed by determined action. Iran has a ruling elite with many members, a shared sense of history, and a consistency of purpose that has been tested in revolution and war. This regime will not change, which is why the ultimate objective of U.S. policy must be to change it. That should not be forgotten, even if regime change in Iran cannot be pursued by the military means used in Iraq.

Short of military intervention, the United States needs a comprehensive strategy to block Iran's nuclear progress, check Iran's adventurism in the Persian Gulf and the Caucasus, and give encouragement to the Islamic Republic's nascent domestic opposition. Through a strategy that bolsters Iran's vulnerable regional neighbors, rolls back its military advances, and assists internal political alternatives, Washington can blunt the threat now posed by Tehran--and set the stage for the later pursuit of its ultimate objective.

Hijab Couture

TEHRAN -- Since Iran's Islamic revolution in 1979, hijab, the obligatory dress code, has required women to wear clothes which disguise the shape of the body and cover the hair. Fashion shows are normally held secretly in private homes. But last month the Iranian authorities allowed designer Mahla Zamani to hold one in public. It was an all-female affair and photographers were banned.

The show was denounced by Tehran's conservatives as a plot to undermine Islamic values. "It is a hypocritical attempt to realize the evil aims of foreigners by snatching the Islamic covering from Muslim Iranian women," thundered the conservative Jomhuri-ye Eslami daily.

Zamani introduced a collection of traditional Persian designs that may augur a sartorial sea-change in what is Islamically permissible. "It is a cultural endeavor to revive traditional costumes. Why should we get fashion from the West?" she said.

But another patron thought the designs did not match up to those of Western designers. "The patterns are not elaborate and complex enough to be compared with Western designs, especially couture," said Leela, a 25-year-old aerobics instructor.

Reuters, Nov. 20, 2003

Ilan Berman is vice president for policy at the American Foreign Policy Council in Washington, D.C., where he directs research and analysis on the Middle East and Central Asia.

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Exclusive: How the FBI set up AIPAC

By JANINE ZACHARIA

AIPAC, the powerhouse pro-Israel lobby currently embroiled in allegations of spying for Israel, was set up by the FBI, *The Jerusalem Post* has learned.

FBI agents used a courier, Pentagon analyst Larry Franklin, to draw two senior AIPAC officials who already knew him into accepting what he described to them as "classified" information, reliable government and other sources intimately familiar with the investigation have told the *Post*.

One of the AIPAC pair then told diplomats at the Israeli Embassy in Washington about the "classified" information, which claimed Iranians were monitoring and planning to kidnap and kill Israelis operating in the Kurdish areas in northern Iraq, the *Post* has been told.

It is unclear whether the "classified" information was real or bogus.

AIPAC (the American Israel Public Affairs Committee) denies any wrongdoing.

Knowingly transferring classified information to a foreign power can be a breach of US espionage statutes. Legal experts have told the *Post* that passing on bogus classified information may be used to demonstrate intent to violate the law but does not itself constitute a crime.

Franklin, an Iran expert, was already under investigation by the FBI for allegedly passing classified information to AIPAC when, the *Post's* sources say, FBI counterintelligence agents approached him to play a central role in the setup operation this past summer.

The FBI had been monitoring AIPAC's activities for some two years when, last year, its agents observed two AIPAC officials, Steve Rosen, director of foreign policy issues, and Keith Weissman, a senior Middle East analyst with the lobby, at a lunch meeting with Franklin in Washington.

At this lunch, it has been widely reported, Franklin allegedly briefed the AIPAC pair on the content of a draft national security presidential directive on Iran.

Details of the draft, which included proposed measures the US could employ to destabilize the Iranian regime, were already circulating at the time. According to some reports, an Israeli diplomat at the embassy in Washington, Naor Gilon, was also present at the lunch.

Earlier this year, the FBI informed Franklin that, as a consequence of the lunch meeting, he was under investigation. The Pentagon analyst, hoping for leniency, agreed to cooperate with FBI agents in what would become the setting up of AIPAC, a process designed to bust the lobby for passing secrets to Israel.

The FBI agents told Franklin to request a meeting with Rosen and Weissman. He initiated contact with the AIPAC pair, and told them that he needed to discuss a ticking-bomb situation.

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Franklin was then dispatched to meet the two AIPAC officials and outline the alleged threat to Israelis in northern Iraq, the *Post* has been told.

Saying his access to the White House was limited, Franklin also expressed concern that the Bush administration was underestimating the extent to which Iranian agents were operating in Iraq and asked the AIPAC officials to stress this point in their meetings with US officials.

The agents' hope, plainly, was that the AIPAC pair would be so troubled by the apparent life-and-death content of the information from Franklin as to risk a breach of US espionage statutes and transfer what they believed to be classified material to a foreign power, Israel.

And that, the *Post* has been told, is precisely what happened.

Franklin, according to news reports, cooperated with the FBI until about two months ago. In early October, he abruptly stopped working with authorities, dropped his court-appointed attorney and sought the legal counsel of Plato Cacheris, a prominent Washington defense lawyer who has represented numerous accused spies.

Continued

"Obviously his was a bad deal," says one source familiar with Franklin's decision to stop cooperating with the bureau.

News of the initial Franklin-AIPAC lunch broke last summer: CBS led its August 27 Nightly News broadcast with a report of a "full-fledged espionage investigation under way," saying the FBI was about to "roll up" a suspected Israeli "mole" in the office of the secretary of defense in the Pentagon.

CBS reported that, using wiretaps, undercover surveillance and photography, the FBI had documented the passing of a classified presidential directive on Iran from the suspected mole to two people who work at AIPAC. Sources familiar with the matter, however, said no documents exchanged hands.

CBS's sensational allegation immediately conjured up memories of the Pollard affair, the 1985 arrest and subsequent conviction in 1987 and life imprisonment for espionage of US naval intelligence analyst Jonathan Pollard for passing classified information to Israel.

The investigation into Franklin and the AIPAC officials continued quietly, with little subsequent media coverage, in recent months. No indictments were issued and most reports scaled back the accusations against Franklin from alleged espionage to mishandling of classified evidence.

But the investigation burst back into prominence last Wednesday, when FBI agents made their first visit to AIPAC's Capitol Hill offices since August. Armed with a warrant, the agents seized computer files related to Rosen and Weissman and issued subpoenas to four senior officials at the lobby, requesting that they appear before a grand jury later this month in the Eastern District of Virginia.

Agents had copied Rosen's computer hard drive during their previous visit.

The four subpoenaed officials, who are considered witnesses, not targets, of the investigation, are AIPAC Executive Director Howard Kohr, Managing Director Richard Fishman, Communications Director Renee Rothstein and Research Director Rafi Danziger.

A Washington criminal justice expert said Friday that the issuing of the subpoenas suggested the FBI was "getting ready to indict."

AIPAC has repeatedly denied any wrongdoing.

"AIPAC has done nothing wrong. Neither AIPAC nor any member of our staff has broken any law, nor has AIPAC or its employees ever received information they believed was secret or classified. We continue to cooperate fully with the governmental authorities and believe any court of law or grand jury will conclude that AIPAC employees have always acted legally, properly and appropriately," AIPAC said in a statement.

"Despite the false and baseless allegations that have been reported, AIPAC will not be distracted from our central mission of supporting America's interests in the Middle East and advocating for a strong relationship with Israel," the statement said.

BEHIND THE HEADLINES FBI waited more than a year to make move against AIPAC

By Edwin Black



WASHINGTON, Dec. 21 (JTA) — The FBI's investigation of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee did not go into high gear until more than a year after the Pentagon's top Iran analyst allegedly passed foreign policy strategy information to two AIPAC officials.

The investigation only intensified in July 2004, when the FBI allegedly directed the same Pentagon analyst, Larry Franklin, to conduct a sting operation against AIPAC officials, providing them with purportedly classified information to pass on to Israel, according to sources close to the investigation.

A month later, the FBI raided AIPAC offices, confiscating files from two senior staffers.

On Dec. 1, the FBI returned to the headquarters of the pro-Israel lobby, searching staffers' offices. The FBI also issued subpoenas to four AIPAC staffers to appear before a grand jury at the end of this month.

Most accounts of the AIPAC investigation have focused on the Franklin lunch with Steve Rosen, AIPAC's director of foreign policy issues, and Keith Weissman, an Iran specialist, a meeting, it has been learned, that occurred on June 26, 2003, at the Tivoli restaurant in Arlington, Va.

The chronology is important, say several sources with direct access to the prosecution's case, because it suggests that that meeting produced insufficient grounds for the FBI to pursue a case against AIPAC.

"We always wondered why there had been no contact by the FBI from June 2003 to August 2004," when AIPAC's headquarters were raided, said a source familiar with the government's investigation. "That's more than a year."

"It never made sense, if this violation" that is alleged to have taken place at the Tivoli lunch "was so serious," the source said.

Instead, the probe of AIPAC appears to have intensified only after the FBI monitored a call between Franklin and reporters at CBS News in May 2004, in which he allegedly disclosed information about aggressive Iranian policy in Iraq.

One of those reporters was Adam Ciralsky, a former attorney at the Central Intelligence Agency who sued the CIA after he quit in 1999 on the grounds that he was harassed for his Jewish roots and connection to Israel.

After the call in May, the FBI's counterintelligence division, headed by

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David Szady, who also supervised the alleged campaign against Ciralsky, confronted Franklin, according to sources familiar with the case.

Threatened with charges of espionage and decades of imprisonment, Franklin was deployed to set up a sting against AIPAC, the sources say.

According to sources, he was also involved in initiating contact with some neoconservative defense experts, several of them Jewish, who supported Ahmad Chalabi. Chalabi, the president of the Iraqi National Congress, had deep ties to Bush administration officials.

Chalabi's political adviser, a non-Jewish American, was also targeted, according to sources.

Chalabi is at the vortex of a Pentagon-intelligence community squabble over pre- and post-war policy in Iraq.

AIPAC had been under intense scrutiny by the FBI throughout early 2003, but the law enforcement officials had seen nothing to justify prosecutorial action, sources said.

At the Tivoli restaurant lunch with AIPAC, Franklin allegedly verbally mentioned information from a classified Pentagon policy paper purportedly written by defense expert Michael Rubin while Rubin was still at the Pentagon. But Franklin did not actually pass along the document, according to multiple sources familiar with the document and the prosecution's case.

Rubin is now at the American Enterprise Institute, a conservative think tank.

The Pentagon policy paper reportedly proposed an American strategy to destabilize Iran in the face of its growing nuclear potential, according to the sources.

The Tivoli lunch didn't trigger an immediate prosecution: No document was passed, sources say, and while the verbal information allegedly was drawn from a Pentagon document that did enjoy a low-security classification — as do many such planning debate documents in Washington — much of its content already had been aired in the media.

AIPAC steadfastly has denied that it violated any laws, and insists it is the victim of a witch-hunt.

Franklin refused to speak about the matter.

Franklin had been under increased scrutiny since disclosure of a secret meeting in December 2001 with former Iranian spy and arms merchant Manucher Ghorbanifar that some in the Washington establishment claimed was unauthorized. Ghorbanifar was on a CIA "burn list" of individuals who could not be contacted, according to informed

intelligence community sources.

Franklin didn't know it, but the FBI's counterintelligence division was monitoring his May 2004 phone conversation with the CBS reporters, including Ciralsky.

In the conversation with CBS, Franklin's remarks reportedly revealed sensitive intelligence intercepts, potentially compromising sources and methods of intelligence gathering, according to some sources aware of the call. Others aware of the call say the FBI would be hard-pressed to prove Franklin's comments actually breached national security.

Friends and colleagues describe Franklin as a dedicated public servant deeply concerned about growing Iranian influence in Iraq.

"He ran off at the mouth, and hated the intelligence community for what he saw as recklessness," one colleague said. "He was willing to take matters into his own hands for what he saw as the good of the nation."

Another who knows him added, "Franklin spoke to CBS reporters in an effort to ring an alarm" about White House indifference to a looming threat, "but it was clearly wrong if it involved classified information."

Shortly after the CBS call, agents from Szady's FBI counterintelligence division confronted Franklin, sources say.

During this time, Franklin was not represented by an attorney, and the government placed him on unpaid leave.

Franklin, who is the sole breadwinner for five children and a wheelchair-bound wife, was terrified by the threats, according to multiple sources familiar with his situation.

Szady's FBI counterintelligence division then devised a strategy to use Franklin as a plant to set up AIPAC, according to sources.

FBI officials refused to discuss the matter.

The FBI sting, first reported by Janine Zacharia in The Jerusalem Post, allegedly directed Franklin to offer AIPAC officials supposedly urgent classified information about Iranian plans to kidnap and murder Israelis operating in northern Iraq. Whether the information was manufactured or accurate is not clear.

The exact date and location of the sting, which came in the form of a meeting, have not previously been disclosed, but according to sources with access to prosecution information, it took place on July 21, 2004, at a suburban Virginia mall.

Believing they had a life or death situation on their hands, AIPAC officials reportedly contacted the Israeli Embassy, thereby prompting action by the FBI counterintelligence division.

AIPAC officials declined all comment on the July meeting.

However, one source familiar with access to the prosecution's case against AIPAC asked, "If the June 2003 incident was strong enough to prosecute, why did the government need Franklin to perpetrate a sting more than a year later? Answer: The first encounter did not amount to anything. The FBI needed more."

Among those Franklin was directed to call as part of an alleged series of sting operations was Francis Brooke, Chalabi's political adviser in Washington. Brooke said he turned aside Franklin's request for information on the code-breaking information Chalabi is accused of providing to Iran, telling him "it is all horse dung."

During June, July and August, Franklin, still apparently being directed by the FBI, made a series of calls to prominent personalities — conversations that have been labeled by the recipients as "weird," "curious" and "totally out of keeping for Larry." At least some of these calls were at the behest of Szady's counterintelligence unit, according to several sources, but it is not known which.

Around late June 2004, Franklin called Richard Perle, an American Enterprise Institute defense policy strategist and a key planner of the 2003 war in Iraq, according to several sources familiar with the call.

Perle is former chairman of the Pentagon's Defense Policy Board and a close associate of Paul Wolfowitz, the undersecretary of defense.

Perle was just dashing out the door and readying for summer travel, and did not enter the call into his telephone logs, the sources said. But he felt the call was "weird" and took no action, according to one source.

Perle declined to comment on the call.

In August 2004, Franklin also called Ciralsky, who by this time had moved to NBC News, where he was covering security developments in Iran, sources said. Franklin apparently tried to set up a meeting with Ciralsky, but no such meeting ever occurred, according to sources familiar with the call.

Ciralsky declined all comment.

By the end of August, Franklin had been assigned a court-appointed attorney whose name was sealed under court order, according to sources familiar with Justice Department filings in the case. That attorney advised Franklin to sign what sources familiar with the case termed "a really terrible plea agreement" that would have subjected him to a very long prison term under the most severe espionage laws.

In September, a friend referred Franklin to renowned Washington defense attorney Plato Cacheris. In the past, Cacheris has represented accused spies and even Monica Lewinsky. Franklin fired his court-

appointed attorney and Cacheris began representing him pro bono.

Meanwhile, on Aug. 27, 2004, the FBI counterintelligence division raided AIPAC. The raid and the information about a Pentagon "mole" working with AIPAC were immediately leaked to CBS.

Leslie Stahl led with the story on the network's evening news. On its Web site, CBS headlined, "The FBI believes it has 'solid' evidence that the suspected mole supplied Israel with classified materials that include secret White House policy deliberations on Iran." A picture of the FBI's Szady was prominently displayed next to the headline.

FBI investigators again searched AIPAC's headquarters on Dec. 1. The agents subpoenaed four top officials to appear before a grand jury in Virginia. The four are Howard Kohr, the group's executive director; Richard Fishman, the managing director; Renee Rothstein, the communications director; and Raphael Danziger, the research director.

FBI officials refused to discuss the search and subpoenas. Szady, who has been decorated twice by the CIA for distinguished service, answered one critic by writing, "I am not at liberty to comment on pending investigations."

An FBI source with knowledge of Szady's investigation bristled at the intense media coverage of the counterintelligence division's tactic. Said the source: "We are just following the evidence and seeing where it leads."

Meanwhile, four congressional Democrats have asked the Bush administration to brief Congress on the FBI probe.

In a letter last week to President Bush, U.S. Reps. Robert Wexler (D-Fla.), Robert Menendez (D-N.J.), Eliot Engel (D-N.Y.), and Gary Ackerman (D-N.Y.) said that with the case intensifying, Bush should clear up concerns about the probe's integrity.

Citing reports about the alleged AIPAC sting and leaks to the media, the letter said, "Mr. President, an honorable organization is on the line, as are the reputations of dignified individuals, and Congress has yet to hear from you or your administration on this issue despite previous requests."

Franklin, meanwhile, is working menial outdoor labor jobs to support his family, and remains uncertain where the case against him is going. Said one source who knows him: "He is literally shaking. He has been destroyed."

(Award-winning New York Times best-selling investigative author and reporter Edwin Black has covered allegations of Israeli spying in the United States since the Pollard case. Black's current best seller is "Banking on Baghdad" (Wiley), which chronicles 7,000 years of Iraqi history)

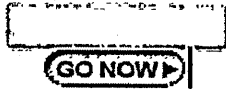


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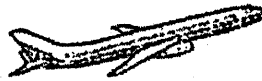
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FBI Stings Seen as Part of Policy 'War'

by Edwin Black, Jewish Telegraphic Agency

Last June, leading neoconservative Richard Perle received an unexpected phone call at his home. It was Larry Franklin calling. Franklin is the veteran Iran specialist in the Pentagon's Near East South Asia office and the key Iraq War planner who had been pressured by the FBI into launching a series of counterintelligence stings. Perle, a former chairman of the Pentagon's Defense Policy Board, was an architect of the 2003 Iraq War.

Franklin, who never had phoned before, asked Perle to "convey a message to Chalabi" in Iraq, according to sources aware of the call. Ahmad Chalabi is the embattled president of the Iraqi National Congress. He is currently at the vortex of a Pentagon-intelligence community conflict over pre- and post-war policy, but is still endorsed by neoconservatives, such as Perle.

Something about Franklin's unexpected call struck Perle as "weird," according to the sources. Why was Franklin calling?

In the recent past, Perle had only encountered Franklin a few times in passing, the sources said. Perle became "impatient" to end his brief conversation with Franklin, and finally just declined to pass a message to Chalabi or to cooperate in any way, according to the sources.

Perle refused to comment.

While the purpose of the mysterious call to Perle is still unclear, a source with knowledge of Franklin's calls suggested that Franklin might have been trying to warn Perle and Chalabi that conflict between the counterintelligence community and the neoconservatives and the Chalabi camp was spinning out of control.

Unbeknownst to Franklin, the FBI was listening.



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By the time Franklin phoned Perle, Franklin had been under surveillance for at least a year by the FBI's counterintelligence division, which is led by controversial counterintelligence chief David Szady. Franklin had been monitored since a meeting June 26, 2003, at the Tivoli Restaurant in Virginia, where he discussed a classified Iran policy document with officials of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC).

He also was monitored late last May while responding to a routine media inquiry by CBS reporters about Iran's intelligence activities in Iraq, according to multiple sources. The CBS call was pivotal.

Among the reporters who spoke to Franklin in late May, according to multiple sources with direct knowledge of the call, was former CIA attorney Adam Ciralsky, who had joined CBS as a reporter. During that call, Franklin purportedly revealed classified information, according to the sources.

In late June, Szady's FBI counterintelligence division finally confronted a shocked Franklin with evidence of his monitored calls. The bureau arranged for Franklin to be placed on administrative leave without pay, and then threatened him with years of imprisonment unless Franklin engaged in a series of stings against a list of prominent Washington targets, according to multiple sources with direct knowledge of the FBI's actions in the case.

Terrified, needing to provide for a wheelchair-bound wife and five children and without the benefit of legal representation, Franklin agreed to ensnare the individuals on the FBI sting list, the sources said. The list might include as many as six names, according to sources.

In a special Jewish Telegraphic Agency investigation, this reporter first revealed Franklin's stings and the circumstances surrounding them.

AIPAC was stung July 21. That day, Franklin met an AIPAC official in a Virginia mall and urged that information be passed to Israel that Israelis operating in northern Kurdistan were in danger of being kidnapped and killed by Iranian intelligence, according to multiple sources. That information — the validity of which has been questioned — was reportedly passed to the Israeli Embassy, thereby providing the FBI with a basis for search warrants and threats of an espionage prosecution against AIPAC Policy Director Steve Rosen and AIPAC Iran specialist Keith Weissman, according to the sources.

AIPAC officials contacted declined to comment.

Attorneys familiar with FBI security prosecutions identified Section 794 and 798 of the Espionage Act as ideally suited to the FBI's sting strategy. Section 798, titled, "Disclosure of Classified Information," applies to "whoever knowingly and willfully communicates, furnishes [or] transmits — for the benefit of any foreign government to the detriment of the United States any classified information — concerning the communication of intelligence activities of the United States or any foreign government." The sweeping statute would cover classified information not only about America but also about Iran and Iraq.

Reporter Janine Zacharia first revealed initial news of the July AIPAC sting in The Jerusalem Post.

After the AIPAC sting on or about Aug. 20, Franklin — still without legal representation — was directed by his FBI handlers to launch a sting against Chalabi's Washington-based political adviser, Francis Brooke, according to multiple sources with direct knowledge of Franklin's stings.

At the time, Washington intelligence circles were accusing Chalabi of passing sensitive American intelligence code-breaking information to Iranian intelligence. The charges against Chalabi have since fallen from view.

Brooke, a southerner who lives in a Washington-area home owned by Chalabi, took the August call from Franklin on the kitchen phone.

"Franklin called," Brooke related, "and said, 'You have a real problem on your hands with Iran and Chalabi.' I told him, 'It is all horse—.' Larry got very angry at me. He said it was 'deadly serious.' I said, 'What the hell, if you say it is serious, OK. But we have no information about American code-breaking of Iranian intelligence.'"

"So Larry says, 'I am talking to a bunch of media people, and I can spin this — but you need to level with me to get this straight,'" Brooke recalled. "This was not very much like Larry, and I just said, 'There is nothing to spin.'"

Brooke dismissed the entire effort as part of a "vendetta against Chalabi organized by [then-CIA Director George] Tenet and others at the CIA."

Franklin refused to comment.

In August, Franklin, still without legal counsel, was also directed by the FBI to call Ciralsky, who by this time had moved from CBS to NBC, where he was working on security developments in Iran, according to multiple sources with direct knowledge of Franklin's calls. Franklin tried to set up a meeting with Ciralsky, but no such meeting ever occurred, according to sources familiar with the call, because shortly thereafter, on Aug. 27, the FBI's AIPAC raids were leaked to CBS. Franklin's actions were now public.

Before joining CBS, reporter Ciralsky was working as an attorney for the CIA but was allegedly forced out in 1999 during the course of an inquiry into his family background and his Jewish affiliations. Ciralsky later filed a harassment lawsuit against the CIA that is still pending.

The man who supervised much of the CIA investigation of Ciralsky and then the FBI's investigation of Franklin following the May conversation with Ciralsky was Szady. In a JTA investigation, this reporter revealed exclusively his involvement with Ciralsky.

Critics of the current investigation point to Szady's involvement in the probe of Ciralsky a decade ago to raise questions about a possibly larger agenda. One question involves the media.

Because Ciralsky is a reporter with NBC, some critics raised the specter of Szady's FBI counterintelligence division consciously trying to entrap a member of the media engaged in routinely contacting sources. One source with direct knowledge of Franklin's stings said it amounted to an "enemies list."

Ciralsky refused to comment.

FBI officials repeatedly refused to discuss the Franklin stings. The bureau also refused to respond to questions about whether members of the media — including those at CBS, NBC and even this reporter — are under surveillance as part of their investigation. But at one point, a senior FBI official with knowledge of the case finally stated, "I cannot confirm or deny that information [due to] the pending investigation."

Some Washington insiders believe that the FBI's multiple stings are far from routine counterintelligence but represent a "war" between the counterintelligence community and policymakers, especially neocons.

One key insider explained the war this way: "It is two diametrically opposed ways of thinking. The neocons have an interventionist mindset willing to ally with anyone to defeat world terrorism, and they see the intelligence community as too passive. The intelligence community sees the neocons as wild men willing to champion any foreign source — no matter how specious — if it suits their ideology."

Leading neoconservative figure Michael Rubin of the American Enterprise Institute added his own thought.

"This is a war of the intelligence community vs. the neoconservatives," Rubin observed. "It involves both the right and the left of the intelligence community. It is a war about policy, the point being, the CIA must not be involved in policy. The CIA's role is to provide intelligence and let the policymakers decide what to do with it, and it appears they are not sticking to that role — and that is a dangerous situation."

"This is the politicizing of intelligence," he continued. "But the CIA, by its establishing principles, is not to be involved in politics."

Rubin added that the sting effort "against AIPAC is the culmination of a 20-year witch-hunt from a small corps within the counterintelligence community" that Rubin labeled "conspiracy theorists." He added, "What is the common denominator between the Ciralsky case and the AIPAC case? David Szady."

Szady, who has been decorated twice by the CIA for distinguished service, answered one critic, writing, "I am not at liberty to comment on pending investigations." Szady had issued a statement to this reporter earlier that he "has no anti-Semitic views, has never handled a case or investigation based upon an individual's ethnicity or religious views and would never do so."

One neoconservative at the center of the counterintelligence war said: "This is just the beginning. Nobody knows where this war is going."

Edwin Black is the author of "IBM and the Holocaust" (Crown, 2001). Black's current best seller is "Banking on Baghdad" (Wiley), which chronicles 7,000 years of Iraqi history. This article first appeared in the Forward.

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WASHINGTON REPORT ON MIDDLE EAST AFFAIRS

Washington Report, December 2004, pages 22-23, 25

Israel and Judaism

AIPAC Comes Under Scrutiny as FBI Continues Israel Espionage Probe

By Allan C. Brownfeld

It has been widely reported that the FBI is investigating the possibility that Lawrence Franklin, a Pentagon analyst, passed classified material to the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), which then handed the information over to the Israeli Embassy in Washington (see November 2004 *Washington Report*, p. 26).

Reported the Sept. 4 *Economist*: "The unfolding saga surrounding Lawrence Franklin is...that he gave classified documents on Iran to Israel. But there is growing speculation that the FBI investigation of Mr. Franklin is the tip of an iceberg. The reported anger of federal agents at the leaking of the story indicates a bigger probe that may have been under way for at least a year...Mr. Franklin allegedly passed draft documents on American policy toward Iran to AIPAC, a hugely influential lobbying group in Washington, which in turn allegedly passed them to Israeli officials. Both AIPAC and Israel have denied any wrongdoing. The Israelis maintain that they have been ultra-careful since the huge embarrassment in 1985 when Jonathan Pollard, an American intelligence analyst, was caught spying for Israel...The scandal is difficult for Israel, which wields considerable influence on American foreign policy...It is hard to put a positive spin on a spy in the Pentagon, even if he is talking to your friends.”

Janes Intelligence Digest noted on Sept. 10 that, "Shortly before he retired in June as CIA director, George Tenet alleged on more than one occasion that an Israeli agent was operating in Washington. Tenet was challenged to identify the agent, but for reasons that were never explained he did not do so. Nonetheless, the episode underlined growing unease in some quarters in Washington about the influence Israel's right wing has in the Bush administration through the pro-Likud neoconservatives—largely in the Pentagon—and the powerful American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) and its associated organizations such as the Washington Institute for Near East Policy.”

The document alleged to have been passed to AIPAC and the Israelis relates to U.S. policy toward Iran. According to *Jane's*, "U.S. officials are concerned because that document was being debated by policymakers at the time, possibly putting the Israeli government lobbyists in a position to influence the final directive. U.S. policy toward Iran is crucial to the Israelis, who have drawn up plans to launch pre-emptive strikes against Iran's nuclear installations to prevent the Islamic Republic acquiring nuclear weapons that could be used against Israel.”

Four of the leading neoconservatives have been accused in the past of illegally providing classified information to Israel.

Philip Giraldi, a former CIA officer, wrote in the Oct. 11 issue of *The American Conservative* that,
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"The Franklin case stems from investigations of Israeli diplomats that developed from the prosecution of spy Jonathan Pollard. Pollard's conviction in 1987 provided little in the way of a resolution: the Israeli government never cooperated in the inquiry and did not provide an inventory of the documents that Pollard had stolen. The FBI also knew that a second spy, believed to be in the Pentagon, passed Pollard classified file numbers that were desired by the Israelis. Hoping to catch the second spy, the FBI continued its probe. Two years ago, the investigators began to suspect that highly sensitive National Security Agency documents were winding up in Israeli hands, possibly with the connivance of AIPAC. In the judgment of counterintelligence specialists, the Israelis did not wish a repeat of the Pollard case, so they decided against recruiting another U.S. official and turning him into a salaried spy. Instead, they opted to establish relationships with friends in the government who would voluntarily provide information...AIPAC would have served as a useful intermediary or 'cut out' in such an arrangement, limiting the contact between the American government official and the Israeli Embassy."

Four of the leading neoconservatives have been accused in the past of illegally providing classified information to Israel, though none was ever prosecuted. In 1970, the FBI recorded Richard Perle discussing classified information with an Israeli Embassy official. Stephen Bryen, then a Senate Foreign Relations Committee staff member and later Perle's deputy at the Department of Defense, narrowly avoided indictment in 1979 after he was overheard offering classified documents to an Israeli Embassy official. Douglas Feith, who in a position paper prepared for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu called for a "clean break from the peace process," was fired in 1982 from the National Security Council on suspicion of passing confidential documents to the Israeli Embassy. He was immediately re-hired by Richard Perle at the Pentagon. Paul Wolfowitz was investigated in 1978 over charges that he had provided a classified document to the Israeli Embassy by way of AIPAC.

While AIPAC has long been viewed as one of Washington's most effective lobbying groups, it has become increasingly controversial, both within the Jewish community and in the larger society. Many have objected to its close ties to the Likud Party. In one widely publicized exchange, Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin asked AIPAC to concentrate on lobbying Congress and leave policymaking and the White House alone.

The current affair, wrote Ori Nir in the Sept. 3 *Forward*, "has cast light on the fine line that AIPAC walks between advocating a strong American-Israeli alliance and as acting as the representative of a foreign government. Both activities are legal, but serving a foreign government requires registration with the Department of Justice and entails severe legal restrictions, not applied to pro-Israel groups, including AIPAC. AIPAC enjoys the support, admiration and even awe of Jewish organizational officials, many of whom raced to AIPAC's defense. Still, some pro-Israel activists in Washington are privately suggesting that the current scandal provides AIPAC with a chance, in the words of one communal official, for 'some soul-searching and reappraisal' regarding its general modes of operation."

According to Nir, "Critics also have accused AIPAC of adopting an agenda that too clearly mirrors the hawkish agenda of neoconservatives in the Bush administration, thereby fueling conspiratorial notions that President Bush was duped into invading Iraq in order to advance Israeli interests. Now, critics say, with its increasing focus on Iran, AIPAC risks fueling the claims of those who would accuse the Jewish community of working with Washington neoconservatives to convince the White House to pursue regime change in Tehran."

Several Jewish communal leaders complain that AIPAC officials have not done enough to maintain a clear wall between the lobbying group and Israel. AIPAC officials have left the organization to serve in the Israeli government. Lenny Ben-David, formerly known as Leonard Davis, for example, worked at AIPAC for 25 years—first in Washington, then in Jerusalem—before he was tapped by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in 1998 to be the deputy chief of mission in Israel's Washington Embassy.

AIPAC and some of its supporters have suggested that the FBI and the CIA are pursuing a vendetta against Israel, the Pentagon, neoconservatives, and possibly Jews in general. The neoconservatives have lashed out in a memo drafted by Michael Rubin of the American Enterprise Institute, alleging that the probe is motivated by anti-Semitism. The memo criticizes the White House for not refuting press reports on the FBI investigation. "If there is any truth to any of the

accusations, why doesn't the White House demand that they bring on the evidence? On the record," the memo stated. "There's an increasing anti-Semitic witch hunt."

Continued Rubin, a former member of the Pentagon's policy planning staff who dealt with Iran policy: "I feel like I'm in Paris, not Washington. I'm disappointed at the lack of leadership that let things get where they are, and which is allowing these bureaucrats to spin out of control."

The role played by AIPAC has produced some soul-searching within the organized Jewish community. "Several Jewish activists, speaking on condition of anonymity, cautioned against what they described as a defiant reaction on the part of some communal leaders who raised the specter of anti-Semitic conspiracy," the Sept. 10 *Forward* reported. "If every single time we get into trouble we cry anti-Semitism, no one is going to believe us when we confront the real problem of anti-Semitism," a senior official of a Jewish organization said. Another organizational official said: "It's ridiculous to react like that before you know what happened there. In the absence of accurate knowledge, any comment is just silly."

The fallout for AIPAC, wrote Doug Bloomfield in the Sept. 9 *Washington Jewish Week*, could be serious: "There have been persistent charges...that AIPAC directs the network of pro-Israel political action committees (PACs), campaign finance bundlers and individual contributors. AIPAC has successfully fought such accusations all the way to the Supreme Court to avoid being designated a PAC because of the impact that would have on the way it operates and raises money. The current probe could renew calls from the organization's critics for new investigations by the Federal Elections Commission (FEC) and demands to know what has been uncovered by the FBI...There will be questions about AIPAC's operations and internal accountability. A penchant for hubris and institutional mindset of secrecy—reflected in its hostile and contentious relationship with the media—add to the suspicion that there is something to hide..."

Shortsighted Strategies

The problems facing AIPAC come not only from its enemies, argued the Sept. 3 *Forward*, but also are "partly a result of shortsighted strategic decisions by Israel's advocates. Faced with a shifting landscape, they have gambled on a risky strategy that may be blowing up in their faces. For years, Israel's friends in this country have operated on the principle that Israel could not be held responsible for its troubles. They have maintained that whatever Israel's mistakes, Palestinian hostility could not be blamed on Israel's policies. More recently, they've broadened the principle to insist that Arab and Muslim hostility to the U.S. cannot be blamed on its support for Israel. Both positions are becoming hard to maintain. Growing numbers of Israelis, up to and including the military chief of staff, are openly acknowledging that Israeli actions can raise and lower the level of Palestinian rage and violence. As for the global terror war, the idea that it is related in part to America's relationship to Israel is now thoroughly mainstream. You can read it in the report of the 9/11 Commission...As the urgency of discussion grows, resentment seems to mount against those who declare the discussion illegitimate. It's a dangerous position to be in."

AIPAC's role has been controversial for many years. In 1995, Jonathan Mitchell, regional vice president for Southern California AIPAC, chastised a senior Israeli official for arguing that Congress and American Jews should not concern themselves with Palestinian behavior. Mitchell called Deputy Israeli Foreign Minister Yossi Beilin "absurd and arrogant" for comments he made in Jerusalem at a meeting with the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations. Beilin countered by accusing Mitchell of "trying to be more Israeli than the Israelis." Beilin was critical of those who urged an end to aid to the PLO, and said, "It is not the business of Jewish organizations, not AIPAC's, not the American Jewish Congress' and not of any other country in the world except the State of Israel. The kind of people who are trying to be more Israeli than the Israelis themselves are causing damage to the pure national interests of the State of Israel."

In March 2003, about 5,000 AIPAC activists met in Washington and embarked upon a lobbying blitz against the Bush administration's "road map" for Middle East peace. AIPAC was not happy with speeches at its meeting by National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice and Secretary of State Colin Powell declaring that Israel must freeze settlement activity in the territories once the Palestinian Authority takes serious steps to curb terrorism. "Settlement activity is simply inconsistent with President Bush's two-state vision," Powell said, drawing jeers from some AIPAC members.

A number of Jewish leaders spoke in support of the Middle East peace plan and in criticism of AIPAC and other groups who were opposing it. In a letter to Congress, these leaders said they wanted to "express our concern over recent efforts to sidetrack implementation of the 'road map.' While the plan is neither perfect nor a panacea, as passionate supporters of Israel, we also know that the Jewish state needs this kind of energetic American diplomacy."

Among those signing this statement were Edgar M. Bronfman, president of the World Jewish Congress, and current past presidents of the national United Jewish Appeal and its successor the United Jewish Communities, including Stanley Chesley, Lester Crown, Irwin Field, Alex Grass, Marvin Lender, Peggy Tishman and Larry Zucklin.

Henry Siegman, once a leader in the American Jewish Congress and now a senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations, charges that many American Jewish organizations, such as AIPAC, have substituted blind support for Israel for the traditional Jewish search for truth and justice.

"We have lost much in American Jewish organizational life," Siegman says. "I was a student and admirer of Rabbi Abraham Heschel. I read his books. We were friends. We marched together in the South during the civil rights movement. He helped me understand the prophetic passion for truth and justice as the keystone of Judaism. This is not, however, an understanding that now animates the American Jewish community...American Jewish organizations confuse support for the State of Israel and its people with uncritical endorsement of the actions of Israeli governments, even when these governments do things that in an American context these Jewish organizations would never tolerate. It was inconceivable that a Jewish leader in America 20 or 30 years ago would be silent if a political party in the Israeli government called for the transfer of Palestinians—in other words, ethnic cleansing. Today, there are at least three such parties, but there has never been a word of criticism from American Jewish organizations."

The fact that many Jewish groups and leaders are rushing to AIPAC's defense before all of the facts are known is hardly unexpected. These same groups have campaigned for many years on behalf of convicted spy Jonathan Pollard, whose guilt is well known—and was admitted.

While AIPAC's guilt or innocence in this particular case remains to be seen, the probe is moving forward. A federal grand jury is expected to begin interviewing people in connection to the investigation. What we do know is that AIPAC has used its considerable influence to shape U.S. foreign policy in a manner that appears to have been harmful to long-term U.S. interests in the Middle East and harmful, as well, to prospects for peace between Israel and the Palestinians.

Whether AIPAC is guilty of espionage or not, it must bear responsibility for advancing a narrow agenda which may be pleasing to Israel's right wing, but which misrepresents the views of both the majority of Israelis and the majority of American Jews. American Jewish groups would be wise to wait until all the facts are in before rising to AIPAC's defense—something they seem reluctant to do. The evidence that AIPAC is not worthy of such support is widespread—and growing.

Allan C. Brownfeld is a syndicated columnist and associate editor of the Lincoln Review, a journal published by the Lincoln Institute for Research and Education, and editor of Issues, the quarterly journal of the American Council for Judaism.

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Last update - 16:06 25/03/2005

Pentagon analyst Franklin returns to work

By Nathan Guttman, Haaretz Correspondent

WASHINGTON - Pentagon analyst Larry Franklin was reinstated a few weeks ago, after sitting at home for half a year and being barred from returning to his job on the Iranian desk in the Department of Defense's policy division. Franklin was at the center of a lengthy FBI investigation after suspicions arose that he transferred classified information about U.S. policy on Iran to members of the pro-Israel lobby AIPAC (American Israel Public Affairs Committee).

In the seven months since the affair made headlines on the CBS evening news, the investigation has been kept under tight wraps, but its ramifications are already being felt.

While Franklin is back at work, and, say well-placed sources, is expected to reach a plea bargain, the spotlight has moved to the AIPAC officials - two senior members were suspended for the duration of the case and four other senior officials were forced to testify at length before the special investigative jury in Virginia, whose proceedings are classified.

Even if the investigation is nowhere near completion, it has definitely reached a crossroads, at which investigators must decide on the suspects in the case - Larry Franklin alone; Franklin and two AIPAC officials, Steve Rosen and Keith Weissman; or whether, on top of those three, the entire AIPAC organization has acted unlawfully.

Sources close to the investigation suggested recently that it would end in a plea bargain. Franklin would plead to a lesser crime of unauthorized transfer of information, Rosen and Weissman would be charged with receiving classified information unlawfully, and AIPAC would remain unstained. Franklin's lawyer, Plato Cacheris, Thursday denied the reports, stating: "We have not entered any plea of defense with the Justice Department."

AIPAC refused to say anything about the possibility of a plea bargain.

As for Franklin's reinstatement, a Pentagon spokesman, Maj. Paul

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Swiergrosz, confirmed that "Dr. Franklin is still a U.S. government employee," but declined to identify his position. Haaretz has learned that Franklin has been moved to a post different from the one he held previously and kept from handling classified information.

From AIPAC's standpoint, the issue at hand is containment: can the affair be limited to Rosen and Weissman, or is the investigation directed at the lobby as a whole? It is clear that the FBI has as its objective an extensive investigation against AIPAC. Investigators have been looking into AIPAC's entire manner of operating, not just in the Franklin instance. An official questioned twice by the FBI, as a witness, was astounded by investigators' intimate familiarity with AIPAC. "They know everything there. They asked very precise questions regarding the organization's operations," he said.

The intended breadth of the investigation is also evident from the FBI's dramatic moves - raiding AIPAC offices in December and issuing subpoenas to its four top executives. Executive Director Howard Kohr, Managing Director Richard Fishman, Research Director Rafael Danziger and Communications Director Renee Rothstein appeared before the investigative jury and were questioned at length.

Investigators also reportedly tried to use Franklin, after the affair erupted, to incriminate as many senior AIPAC officials as possible. The Jerusalem Post reported four months ago that investigators informed Franklin of the suspicions against him and asked for his cooperation. In a sting operation, he received information from the FBI agents that Iran was planning to attack Israelis operating in the Kurdish region in Iraq. Franklin, at the FBI's instructions, telephoned AIPAC's Rosen and Weissman and gave them the information, and they rushed to pass it on to Israeli diplomats, thereby falling into the FBI trap.

AIPAC refuses to comment on the case, saying, "We do not comment on personnel matters." A spokesman for AIPAC, Patrick Dorton, said Thursday that "it would not be appropriate for AIPAC to comment on issues that have to do with an ongoing federal investigation."

The suspension of the two AIPAC officials, though never officially explained, is certainly a key turning point in the case. According to one assessment, AIPAC understands that regardless of whether a plea bargain is reached, it will be tough to get those two off the hook, so AIPAC is keeping its distance for now. Their lawyer, Nathan Lewin, refused requests from Haaretz for a comment.

A source close to the case said that since the investigation began, AIPAC's ability to maintain good ties with U.S. administration officials has suffered. While Congress was quick to express support for AIPAC, its activists began having trouble getting appointments. "Obviously, after a case like this blows up, no one's in a hurry to return your calls," said the source.

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FORWARD

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News

U.S. Aide Arrested Amid Signs That Lobby Probe Widens

By ORI NIR

May 6, 2005

WASHINGTON — A recent FBI interrogation of an Israeli defense expert may indicate that the Justice Department's investigation into the contacts between America's pro-Israel lobby and a Pentagon analyst is broader in scope than previously believed.

The expert, Uzi Arad, head of the Institute for Policy and Strategy at Israel's Interdisciplinary Center Herzliya, said that two months ago FBI agents interviewed him about his contacts with the Pentagon Iran specialist, Larry Franklin. During the hour-long interview, he said, the FBI agents brought up the name of an American Jewish Committee official, Eran Lerman, who is a former senior official in Israeli military intelligence.

Franklin was arrested and charged Wednesday with "disclosing classified information related to potential attacks upon U.S. forces in Iraq to individuals not entitled to receive the information." The Justice Department did not name the individuals who allegedly received the classified information from Franklin, but media reports claim they are Steven Rosen and Keith Weissman, two former officials at the American Israel Public Affairs Committee who were recently dismissed by the pro-Israel lobbying organization.

Arad's comments, an unusual disclosure of a small wrinkle in the otherwise ultrasecretive FBI investigation, may suggest that the FBI is investigating more than the alleged unlawful contacts between Franklin and Aipac officials. Franklin is the first person to be indicted in the FBI investigation. Rosen and Weissman have not been charged.

Initially, press reports said that Rosen and Weissman's alleged transfer of secret information by Israeli diplomats was the focus of the investigation. The questioning of Arad may confirm speculation by some in the Jewish community that the investigation is related to a larger inquiry into Israeli or pro-Israeli attempts to influence America's security establishment and its policy in the Middle East.

Arad said the FBI agents asked him, among other things, why he had sent to Franklin, less than a year ago, a research paper by Lerman on ways to re-energize America's relationship with Israel. "They asked me who was Eran Lerman, although they clearly knew who he was," Arad told the Forward in a telephone interview.

Arad was a policy adviser to former Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu and once headed the research department of Israel's Mossad intelligence service.

Lerman joined the staff of the AJCommittee in 2001. Kenneth Bandler, a spokesman for the AJCommittee, said he had no comment on the FBI's questioning regarding Lerman.

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Arad said that his strategic policy institute had commissioned Lerman to write the paper. He said that he did not remember sending the article to Franklin but that the FBI investigators showed him a letter that accompanied the article, carrying his signature. Arad said he explained to the investigators that this was a mechanized signature on an information package sent en masse to a mailing list of several hundred former participants in the Interdisciplinary Center's annual strategic-affairs conference, commonly known as the Herzliya Conference.

Franklin attended the December 2003 Herzliya Conference, though he did not deliver an address.

In his paper, Lerman wrote that the once-dynamic U.S.-Israel strategic relationship had fallen into a "maintenance mode" in recent years and ought to be re-energized for the benefit of both countries. At the December 2004 Herzliya Conference, Lerman delivered an address based on his research paper.

Arad said the FBI agents asked him about his conversations with Franklin at the conference and several months later at a meeting between the two in the Pentagon cafeteria. He also said that both conversations were brief and that he could hardly remember their content. The FBI interview was also brief, as well, he noted.

It was arranged in haste, as Arad was rushing to catch a plane from New York to Israel, and took place in a car while he on his way to the airport.

This week, Franklin handed himself in, and was scheduled to make an initial appearance at a Northern Virginia court by press time.

In a statement, the Department of Justice said that Franklin, 58, surrendered to authorities at the FBI's Washington Field Office following the filing of a criminal complaint Tuesday and the unsealing Wednesday of the indictment against him. The statement notes that the violation Franklin is charged with carries a maximum penalty of 10 years in prison.

Recently Franklin was transferred from the Office of the Secretary of

Defense, where he served as an Iran desk officer, to a less sensitive position in the Pentagon.

The criminal complaint filed in the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia, alleges that on June 26, 2003, Franklin had lunch at a restaurant in Arlington, Va., with two individuals, identified as "U.S. Person 1" and "U.S. Person 2."

At the lunch, according to the Justice Department, Franklin disclosed classified information that has been designated "Top Secret" and related to potential attacks upon American forces in Iraq. The government claims that neither of Franklin's lunch companions has the security clearance to receive the information.

Allegedly Franklin told the two individuals that the information was "highly classified" and asked them not to "use" it, according to the Justice Department statement.

This portion of the Justice Department statement implies that Franklin's lunch companions — alleged in press reports to have been Rosen and Weissman — knew that they were handling information from a highly sensitive document. According to press reports, the FBI is investigating claims that after the lunch the two former Aipac officials transferred the

secret information to an Israel diplomat in Washington.

The Justice Department statement says that a search of Franklin's Pentagon office in June 2004 found the June 2003 classified document containing the information that Franklin allegedly disclosed to the two individuals.

The criminal complaint against Franklin also alleges that on other occasions he disclosed, without authorization, classified American government information to a foreign official and to members of the news media. In addition, according to the Justice Department statement, about 83 separate classified American government documents were found during a search of Franklin's West Virginia home in June 2004, most of them classified as top secret or secret.

The dates of these documents spanned three decades.

The investigation into this matter is continuing, the Justice Department stated.

The charges against Franklin disclose several other new details:

- According to an FBI affidavit that accompanies the charges, Franklin admitted during an FBI interrogation in June 2004 that he provided the information contained in the secret document to the two individuals.
- The information that Franklin is charged with disclosing is related not to Iran — contrary to previous reports — but to "potential attacks upon U.S. forces in Iraq." The government's main concern, according to the FBI affidavit, is that such information could be used to harm the United States by "a country's discovery of our intelligence sources and methods."
- Contrary to previous media reports, charges against Franklin do not allege the transfer of a secret document. Instead it is charged that he "verbally disclosed" information that "was contained" in a top-secret document. The distinction is important, legal experts say, because verbally transferring such information is a less serious offense.
- The document in question, according to the affidavit, was marked "on the first and last pages with a caption in all capital letters," which identified it as "TOP SECRET with a denomination of its SCI [Sensitive Compartment Information] status" — the highest security classification.

WASHINGTON

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Matthew E. Berger
Lawrence Franklin, left, a Pentagon analyst charged by the FBI with leaking classified information to AIPAC officials, leaves a courthouse on May 4 with his attorney, John Richards.

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BEHIND THE HEADLINES

Criminal charges in AIPAC case leveled against Pentagon analyst

By Ron Kampeas and Matthew E. Berger

ALEXANDRIA, Va., May 4 (JTA) — Criminal charges against a Pentagon analyst, for allegedly leaking classified Iraq war information to two top officials at the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, raise new questions about whom the FBI is targeting and whether the pro-Israel powerhouse will be harmed as the case unfolds.

Lawrence Franklin, who turned himself in for arrest Wednesday, was accused in an FBI criminal complaint of disclosing classified information "related to potential attacks on United States forces in Iraq" to two U.S. civilians over lunch in an Arlington, Va., restaurant on June 26, 2003.

Franklin's two interlocutors, identified in the document only as "U.S. Person 1 and U.S. Person 2," are Steve Rosen, AIPAC's policy director, and Keith Weissman, its senior Iran analyst, JTA has established. AIPAC fired the two last month in an apparent bid to distance itself from the case.

Read as a whole, the criminal complaint contained some good news for AIPAC. It suggests that beyond the allegations against Rosen and Weissman, AIPAC as an organization had no involvement in leaking any information.

"AIPAC has been advised by the government that it is not a target of the investigation," a source close to the organization told JTA.

On the other hand, the headlines could hinder AIPAC's efforts to project a "back-to-business" face to grass-roots supporters and Washington powerbrokers weeks before its annual policy conference, and at a time when it is trying to build support for Israel ahead of Israel's planned withdrawal this summer from the Gaza Strip.

The policy conference is AIPAC's annual show of strength, culminating in a


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dinner expected to be attended by some 5,000 people at which AIPAC leaders shout out the names of dozens of congressmen and Cabinet officials present — nearly 200 last year. If a significantly lower number show up this year, it could be embarrassing.

Franklin, an Iran analyst who lives in Kearneysville, W. Va., was released on a \$100,000 bond after appearing at U.S. District Court in Alexandria, Va. A preliminary hearing was set for May 27.

"He intends to plead not guilty" and expects to be vindicated at trial, said his attorney, John Thorpe Richards.

The criminal charge sheet was the first official accounting of a case that first made headlines last August, when FBI agents raided AIPAC's Washington headquarters and confiscated files belonging to Rosen and Weissman.

"The information Franklin disclosed relating to potential attacks upon U.S. forces in Iraq could be used to the injury of the United States or to the advantage of a foreign country," special agent Catherine Hanna said in drafting the complaint. The damage, she said, could arise from "jeopardizing the viability of the sources and methods."

The information was from a document classified as "top secret," Hanna said.

While the June 2003 lunch appears to be the linchpin of the criminal charges, there are other allegations, including that Franklin leaked classified information to journalists and to an unidentified "foreign official," and that he kept three decades' worth of classified information on his computer hard disk at home.

Reports have suggested that Franklin also met with an Israeli Embassy official. The reference to a "foreign official" might point in that direction.

However, the FBI has not gotten in touch with the Israeli Embassy, representatives say, and Israeli officials continue to maintain that they would never participate in illicit information gathering in the United States.

"Israel does not carry out any operation in the United States that would be liable, God forbid, to harm its closest ally," Israeli Foreign Minister Silvan Shalom told Israel Television. "Therefore all the brouhaha around this matter has nothing to do with the State of Israel."

The United States, he added, "is a nation with which we conduct very intimate ties, with exchanges of the most classified kinds of information. So anyone who thinks we were involved — this is completely bogus."

The complaint suggests answers to two major questions that have surrounded the investigation: Who is the target? And to what degree is AIPAC in danger?

The question of a target arose after last year's raids, when it emerged that agents had watched Rosen, Weissman and Franklin chatting over a meal at Tivoli in June 2003. Was the FBI agent in the restaurant following Franklin, or Rosen and Weissman?

The arrest Wednesday lends support to the theory that Franklin had been the target of an investigation that reportedly was at least a year old at that lunch meeting.

Franklin's enthusiasm for a tough line against Iran had drawn the attention of colleagues in the Pentagon.

JTA previously has reported that Franklin had been under scrutiny since he allegedly met in December 2001 with former Iranian spy and arms merchant Manucher Ghorbanifar, who was on a CIA "burn list" of people who could not be contacted, according to intelligence community sources.

AIPAC could take heart from the fact that the criminal complaint did not mention the organization, or even suggest any organizational affiliation for the two "U.S. Persons" Franklin met with.

Still, the complaint raised at least as many questions as it answered:

- What now for Rosen and Weissman? Leaking classified information has much clearer legal ramifications than receiving it, since reporters in Washington routinely receive and relay classified information to their readers..

The complaint makes clear that the exchange in the restaurant was "verbal." It's unclear what, if any, charges could be brought against Rosen and Weissman for simply listening to Franklin unload.

On the other hand, the FBI had a clear interest in Rosen and Weissman, evidenced by the August raid at AIPAC headquarters and another one in December, and by the appearance earlier this year of top AIPAC staffers before a federal grand jury.

It was information arising out of the grand jury encounters that led AIPAC to fire the two men, AIPAC has said.

Rosen's lawyer said in a statement that no documents were exchanged, which dovetails with the FBI's claim that the exchange was verbal.

"Steve Rosen never solicited, received or passed on any classified documents from Larry Franklin, and Mr. Franklin will never be able to say otherwise," Rosen's lawyer, Abbe Lowell, said in a statement.

- U.S. Attorney Paul McNulty convened a grand jury in the case; why didn't he bring an indictment instead of a criminal complaint, which carries less weight?

One answer could be that the FBI and Justice Department have been burned by reporting that depicts the case as a politically motivated jeremiad against Jewish lobbyists and/or neoconservatives such as Franklin. Indictments often are sealed, but a criminal complaint allows the FBI to explain at length why it feels charges are justified.

- Finally, what did Rosen and Weissman learn at the Tivoli lunch? Until now, sources close to the two have suggested that the information related to White House policy on Iran — which, after all, was the specialty of both Franklin and Weissman — and that it had a relatively low secrecy classification. Hanna, the FBI special agent, alleges that the information was top secret, and related to dangers posed to U.S. troops in Iraq.

A former FBI official said the complaint suggests a larger investigation, but gives few clues about where the probe starts and ends.

"My best estimate is this was part of an already existing investigation, and from their perspective, they got lucky," the former official said. "They were either following Franklin or they were following these two guys," he said, referring to Rosen and Weissman.

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Pentagon Analyst In Israel Spy Case Is Called a 'Patriot'

BY ELI LAKE - Staff Reporter of the Sun

May 27, 2005

URL: <http://www.nysun.com/article/14523>

WASHINGTON - A Pentagon analyst charged with mishandling classified information at first cooperated with an FBI probe of two lobbyists for the American Israel Public Affairs Committee when he allowed the bureau to surveil a meeting with Aipac lobbyist Keith Weissman in July 2004.

Plato Cacheris, the lawyer for the Pentagon Iran analyst Lawrence Franklin, told The New York Sun yesterday that the FBI persuaded his client to set up a meeting with Mr. Weissman on July 9, 2004, before being threatened with jail time. "They appealed to his sense of patriotism, and he cooperated," Mr. Cacheris said in an interview.

The charges against the two lobbyists, Mr. Weissman and Steven Rosen, will hang on their July 9, 2004, meeting with Mr. Franklin when he allegedly shared information verbally with Mr. Weissman - while under FBI surveillance - that American soldiers and Israeli agents in northern Iraq were under threat from Iranian Revolutionary Guard units. Mr. Rosen, after receiving the information from his colleague, Mr. Weissman, then allegedly shared it with the Israeli Embassy and the Washington Post. Sources familiar with the FBI's case said that the Justice Department is prepared to charge that Mr. Rosen passed the classified information on to the embassy and the newspaper.

Until August 2004, Mr. Franklin was unaware that the FBI was prepared to charge him with a crime, Mr. Cacheris said. It was after he voluntarily told the bureau that he had kept 83 classified documents at his home in West Virginia and had agreed to convey the intelligence to Mr. Weissman that the FBI said that it would press charges and arranged for a court-appointed attorney for Mr. Franklin. Originally, the bureau, according to Mr. Cacheris, asked Mr. Franklin to plead guilty to espionage, specifically under section 794 of the U.S. Code for crimes of "gathering or delivering defense information to aid a foreign government." Notorious Soviet spy Aldridge Ames was charged under this section of the U.S. Code, which carries a maximum penalty of execution or life in prison.

Mr. Franklin sought Mr. Cacheris out, the lawyer said, after he was asked to admit that he was a spy. Mr. Cacheris, who represented Mr. Ames as well as Monica Lewinsky, agreed to take the case free of charge. "I feel the government is overreaching in this case. I think he's a patriot and a loyal American who intends no harm to this country," Mr. Cacheris said.

Following Mr. Cacheris's agreement to defend Mr. Franklin, the bureau offered a deal whereby Mr. Franklin would plead guilty to the lesser charge of mishandling classified material, or section 793 of the U.S. Code. The lesser charge carries a maximum penalty

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of 10 years in prison. Mr. Cacheris said he refused the deal and that he intends to take the case to trial. Despite turning down the offer and ceasing to cooperate with the FBI, Mr. Franklin was charged with only mishandling, not espionage, on Tuesday.

Mr. Cacheris likened Mr. Franklin's conduct to that of a former national security adviser, Samuel Berger, who was recently charged with a misdemeanor for stealing documents from the National Archives in his socks, and a former CIA director, John Deutsch, who had taken classified material to his home. In both these cases, Messrs. Berger and Deutsch were charged with misdemeanors. "We don't think Mr. Franklin's conduct was any more egregious," Mr. Cacheris said.

Mr. Cacheris told the Sun yesterday that he believed the FBI did not originally intend to investigate Mr. Franklin. "We believe there was a pre-existing investigation that Larry Franklin is not involved in," he said yesterday. While Mr. Cacheris refused to discuss the details of the meetings, other sources familiar with the case told the Sun that Mr. Franklin first approached Messrs. Rosen and Weissman in February or March 2003 for a meeting at the Ritz Carlton Hotel in Pentagon City, Va., with the intention of passing on threat information regarding Iran's plans for American soldiers in Iraq.

According to one source familiar with the case, Mr. Franklin was told by an aide to an undersecretary of defense, Douglas Feith, that the two Aipac lobbyists could get the threat information to the National Security Council. Mr. Rosen, in particular, has a reputation for high-level contacts with policy-makers in the executive branch. According to sources familiar with the case, the three men at this 2003 meeting discussed passing the threat information to National Security Council official Elliott Abrams.

By March 2003, the Bush administration had decided to work with Iranian-sponsored opposition groups to build an interim government in Baghdad. Indeed, the recently elected prime minister, Ibrahim Jafari, was initially a leader of an Iranian-supported party, Dawa, and was included in the first Iraqi Governing Council. At the same time, American envoys were holding intensive negotiations about Iraq with the Iranians under the auspices of a U.N. multicountry group designed to coordinate Afghanistan policy.

These developments, according to Mr. Franklin's former colleagues and other government officials, worried the Pentagon analyst, who, in turn, attempted to reverse what he saw as a disastrous policy decision. Mr. Franklin had, in his work on Iran at the Pentagon in late 2001, identified what one source described as "Iranian hunter-killer teams" in Afghanistan that were threatening American Special Forces. By the spring of 2003, he believed American forces in Iraq would be under a similar threat from units of Iran's Revolutionary Guard and that this information had to get to the White House.

On June 26, 2003, Mr. Franklin held a second lunch with Messrs. Weissman and Rosen and discussed, among other things, developments in the formation of an Iran policy paper and new threats he had learned about in Iraq. In that meeting, Mr. Cacheris said he provided the two lobbyists with a list of events and names of Iranian officials that he had compiled personally elaborating the threat to American soldiers. "No classified

documents were passed," Mr. Cacheris said. "A list of events and names on Iran and Iraq was passed in the June 2003 meeting." Mr. Cacheris emphasized that this list was neither a classified nor official document.

Mr. Franklin would not meet with Mr. Weissman again for more than a year, when he would meet him in northern Virginia under FBI surveillance on July 9. A grand jury convening in Alexandria, Va., is expected to release a formal indictment of Mr. Franklin today.

KRAMARSIC, BRETT M. (WF) (FBI)**From:** PORATH, ROBERT J. (WF) (FBI)**Sent:** Friday, June 03, 2005 7:59 AM**To:** FORTIN, BRIAN G. (WF) (FBI); DOUGLAS, STEPHANIE (WF) (FBI); KRAMARSIC, BRETT M. (WF) (FBI); HANNA, CATHERINE M. (WF) (FBI); MCDERMOTT, WILLIAM R. (WF) (FBI); BRIDGES, TRACEY J. (WF) (FBI); O'DONNELL, THOMAS J. (WF) (FBI); ANDERSON, JESSICA T. (WF) (FBI); PAULLING, SCOTT M. (WF) (FBI); LOEFFERT, JANICE S. (WF) (FBI); MARKLEY, JAMES S. (WF) (FBI); LURIE, ERIC S. (WF) (FBI); FALLER, LARISSA (WF) (FBI); THOMAS, KIMBERLY J. (WF) (FBI); JOHANSEN, MARK D. (CD) (FBI); WRIGHT, SUSAN C. (CD) (FBI); BUTLER, M J. (CD) (FBI); STRZOK, PETER P. (CD) (FBI); MOFFA, JONATHAN C. (CD) (FBI); GAY, SUSAN (WF) (FBI)**Subject:** articleUNCLASSIFIED
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FBI Tapped Talks About Possible Secrets

Case Against Ex-AIPAC Officials Could Focus On Several Contacts With Defense Analyst

The Washington Post

By Jerry Markon
June 3, 2005

ARLINGTON, VA -- In July 2004, a Defense Department analyst and a senior official from an influential pro-Israel lobbying group met at the Pentagon City mall in Arlington.

Amid the stores and shoppers, the analyst warned that Iranian agents were planning attacks against American soldiers and Israeli agents in Iraq, sources familiar with the meeting said. Alarmed, the American Israel Public Affairs Committee official, Keith Weissman, left the mall and went to the office of colleague Steve Rosen. The two men then relayed the information to the Israeli Embassy in Washington and a reporter for The Washington Post. What the AIPAC officials did not know, the sources said, was that the FBI was listening in -- to both the meeting and their subsequent phone calls -- and that the Pentagon analyst, Lawrence Franklin, was cooperating in an investigation of whether classified U.S. information was being passed on to the government of Israel.

That meeting and those phone calls are a focus of a criminal case prosecutors are building against Rosen and Weissman, who recently left their

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jobs at AIPAC, according to multiple sources familiar with the investigation. Franklin has already been charged, and a looming court battle will probably turn on whether he and others were illegally passing government secrets or were merely conduits of the type of policy-related information that is frequently bandied about in official Washington. The meeting at the mall is not mentioned in the publicly filed charges, and new details are emerging about a series of FBI-monitored meetings between Franklin and the former AIPAC officials dating back to early 2003. But many questions remain unanswered, such as whether the information Franklin allegedly passed along at those sessions was classified, and if it was, whether Rosen and Weissman knew it was classified, and whether any damage was done to U.S. national security.

Rosen and Weissman have been notified that prosecutors are preparing to charge them with disclosing classified information, sources familiar with the investigation said. Federal prosecutors and the FBI would not comment, nor would John Nassikas, an attorney for Weissman. An attorney for Rosen, Abbe D. Lowell, said that "when all the facts come out, the government will have more to explain about its conduct than Steve Rosen will about his." Earlier, he said that Rosen "never solicited, received or passed on any classified documents" from Franklin. A spokesman for the Israeli Embassy did not return phone calls. A Post spokesman confirmed that the reporter, Glenn Kessler, recently declined a Justice Department request to be interviewed. Kessler would not comment yesterday.

Franklin's attorney, Plato Cacheris, confirmed that Franklin briefly cooperated with investigators in the summer of 2004, during the time of the meeting at the mall. Cacheris said that Franklin, whom he described as a "loyal and patriotic American citizen," is no longer cooperating and plans to go to trial. Last month, Franklin was charged in a criminal complaint in U.S. District Court in Alexandria with disclosing classified information related to potential attacks on U.S. forces in Iraq. Court documents did not reveal who received the information, but federal law enforcement sources have said that Franklin disclosed it to Rosen and Weissman at an Arlington restaurant in June 2003.

The sources also said the attacks would have been carried out by Iran. At the time, the U.S. government was concerned about Iranian activities in Iraq after the U.S.-led invasion that year. Federal prosecutors in Alexandria have notified Franklin that he would be indicted by a grand jury, and Franklin has been told to appear in federal court June 13. Sources familiar with the case said the court appearance relates to a sealed indictment. Franklin was also charged again last week in federal court in West Virginia with possessing 83 classified documents dating back three decades. They were found at his West Virginia home.

The contacts between Franklin, an Iran specialist, and former AIPAC policy director Rosen and senior analyst Weissman extend back before the June 2003 lunch. In February 2003, the three met at the Ritz-Carlton Pentagon City hotel in Arlington in a session that they only learned later was under FBI surveillance, sources said. It is unclear whether agents were following Franklin or the AIPAC officials. After the 2004 meeting, sources said that Rosen and Weissman called Kessler and relayed what Franklin had told Weissman about possible Iranian attacks against Americans and Israelis in Iraq. Law enforcement sources said that Kessler, who did not write an article based on the phone conversation, is not a target of the investigation.

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U.S. Eyes Pressing Uprising In Iran

Officials Cite Al Qaeda Links, Nuclear Program

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By Glenn Kessler
Washington Post Staff Writer
Sunday, May 25, 2003; Page A01

The Bush administration, alarmed by intelligence suggesting that al Qaeda operatives in Iran had a role in the May 12 suicide bombings in Saudi Arabia, has suspended once-promising contacts with Iran and appears ready to embrace an aggressive policy of trying to destabilize the Iranian government, administration officials said.

Senior Bush administration officials will meet Tuesday at the White House to discuss the evolving strategy toward the Islamic republic, with Pentagon officials pressing hard for public and private actions that they believe could lead to the toppling of the government through a popular uprising, officials said.

The State Department, which had encouraged some form of engagement with the Iranians, appears inclined to accept such a policy, especially if Iran does not take any visible steps to deal with the suspected al Qaeda operatives before Tuesday, officials said. But State Department officials are concerned that the level of popular discontent there is much lower than Pentagon officials believe, leading to the possibility that U.S. efforts could ultimately discredit reformers in Iran.

In any case, the Saudi Arabia bombings have ended the tentative signs of engagement between Iran and the United States that had emerged during the wars against Afghanistan and Iraq.

U.S. and Iranian officials had met periodically to discuss issues of mutual concern, including search-and-rescue missions and the tracking down of al Qaeda operatives. But, after the suicide bombings at three residential compounds in Riyadh, the Bush administration canceled the next planned meeting.

"We're headed down the same path of the last 20 years," one State Department official said. "An inflexible, unimaginative policy of just say no."

U.S. officials have also been deeply concerned about Iran's nuclear weapons program, which has the support of both elected reformers and conservative clerics. The Bush administration has pressed the International Atomic Energy Agency, the U.N. nuclear watchdog, to issue a critical report next month on Iran's nuclear activities. Officials have sought to convince Russia and China -- two major suppliers of Iran's nuclear power program -- that Iran is determined to possess nuclear weapons, a campaign that one U.S. official said is winning support.

But a major factor in the new stance toward Iran consists of what have been called "very troubling intercepts" before and after the Riyadh attacks, which killed 34 people, including nine suicide bombers. The intercepts suggested that al Qaeda operatives in Iran were involved in the planning of the bombings.

Earlier this week, Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld accused Iran of harboring al Qaeda members. "There's no question but that there have been and are today senior al Qaeda leaders in Iran, and they are busy," Rumsfeld said. Iranian officials, however, have vehemently denied that they have granted al Qaeda leaders safe haven in the country.

Until the Saudi bombings, some officials said, Iran had been relatively cooperative on al Qaeda. Since

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the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks, Iran has turned over al Qaeda officials to Saudi Arabia and Afghanistan. In talks, U.S. officials had repeatedly warned Iranian officials that if any al Qaeda operatives in Iran are implicated in attacks against Americans, it would have serious consequences for relations between the two countries.

Those talks, however, were held with representatives of Iran's foreign ministry. Other parts of the Iranian government are controlled not by elected reformers, but by conservative mullahs.

A senior administration official who is skeptical of the Pentagon's arguments said most of the al Qaeda members -- fewer than a dozen -- appear to be located in an isolated area of northeastern Iran, near the border with Afghanistan. He described the area as a drug-smuggling terrorist haven that is tolerated by key members of the Revolutionary Guards in part because they skim money off some of the activities there. It is not clear how much control the central Iranian government has over this area, he said.

"I don't think the elected government knows much about it," he said. "Why should you punish the rest of Iran," he asked, just because the government cannot act in this area?

Flynt Leverett, who recently left the White House to join the Brookings Institution's Saban Center for Middle East Policy, said the administration may be taking a gamble. "It is imprudent to assume that the Islamic Republic will collapse like a house of cards in a time frame that is going to be meaningful to us," he said. "What it means is we will end up with an Iran that has nuclear weapons and no dialogue with the United States with regard to our terrorist concerns."

Ever since President Bush labeled Iran last year as part of an "axis of evil" -- along with North Korea and Iraq -- the administration has struggled to define its policy toward the Islamic republic, which terminated relations with the United States after Iran's 1979 revolution. The administration never formally adopted a policy of "regime change," but it also never seriously tried to establish a dialogue.

In July, Bush signaled a harder line when he issued a strongly worded presidential statement in which he praised large pro-democracy street demonstrations in Iran. Administration officials said at the time that they had abandoned any hope of working with President Mohammad Khatami and his reformist allies in the Iranian government, and would turn their attention toward democracy supporters among the Iranian people.

But the prospect of war with Iraq reopened some discreet contacts, which took place under U.N. supervision in Europe. The contacts encouraged some in the State Department to believe that there was an opening for greater cooperation.

In an interview in February with the Los Angeles Times, Deputy Secretary of State Richard L. Armitage drew a distinction between the confrontational approach the administration had taken with Iraq and North Korea and the approach it had adopted with Iran. "The axis of evil was a valid comment, [but] I would note there's one dramatic difference between Iran and the other two axes of evil, and that would be its democracy. [And] you approach a democracy differently," Armitage said.

At one of the meetings, in early January, the United States signaled that it would target the Iraq-based camps of the Mujaheddin-e Khalq (MEK), or People's Mujaheddin, a major group opposing the Iranian government.

The MEK soon became caught up in the policy struggle between the State Department and the Pentagon.

After the camps were bombed, the U.S. military arranged a cease-fire with the group, infuriating the Iranians. Some Pentagon officials, impressed by the military discipline and equipment of the thousands of MEK troops, began to envision them as a potential military force for use against Tehran, much like the Northern Alliance in Afghanistan.

But the MEK is also listed as a terrorist organization by the State Department. Under pressure from State, the White House earlier this month ordered the Pentagon to disarm the MEK troops -- a decision that was secretly conveyed by U.S. officials to Iranian representatives at a meeting in Geneva on May 3.

Nine days later, the suicide bombers struck in Saudi Arabia.

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May 23, 2003 Friday

SECTION: MAIN; Pg. 5A

LENGTH: 778 words

HEADLINE: Bush advisers weigh undermining Iran regime

BYLINE: BY WARREN P. STROBEL; Washington Bureau

BODY:

WASHINGTON -- Prompted by evidence that Iran is harboring top al-Qaida operatives linked to last week's suicide bombings in Saudi Arabia and fears that Tehran may be closer to building a nuclear weapon than previously believed, the Bush administration has begun debating whether to try to destabilize the Islamic republic, U.S. officials said Thursday.

Officials in Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld's office are using both issues to press their view that the United States should adopt overt and covert measures to undermine the regime, said the officials, who are involved in the debate.

Other officials argue that such a campaign would backfire by discrediting the moderate Iranians who are demanding political reforms.

Although one senior official engaged in the debate said "the military option is never off the table," others said no one was suggesting an invasion of Iran.

However, some officials say the United States should launch a limited airstrike on Iran's nuclear weapons facilities if Iran appears on the verge of producing a nuclear weapon. By some estimates, Iran could have a nuclear weapon within two years.

Some Pentagon officials suggested using the remnants of an Iranian opposition group once backed by Saddam Hussein, the Mujahedeen el-Khalq (MEK), to instigate armed opposition to the Iranian government. U.S. military forces in Iraq have disarmed the roughly 6,000-strong MEK, which is on the State Department's list of foreign terrorist groups. But the group's weapons are in storage, and it hasn't disbanded.

However, national security adviser Condoleezza Rice and other top officials rejected the idea, saying that while some might consider the MEK freedom fighters, "a terrorist is a terrorist is a terrorist," according to officials involved in the debate.

Bush has designated Iran a member of an "axis of evil," along with Iraq and North Korea. But until now, he's pursued a middle course with Iran, approving talks on issues of common concern such as Afghanistan, while not trying to re-establish diplomatic ties.

A formal statement of U.S. policy toward Iran, called a National Security Presidential Directive, has been on hold about a year because of internal administration debates and the war in Iraq, American officials said. The document is being resurrected, they said.

Bush's senior foreign-policy advisers were to have met at the White House on Thursday to discuss Iran policy, said a knowledgeable administration official, but the meeting was postponed until next week to give Iran several more days to meet U.S. demands that it turn over the suspected al-Qaida terrorists. If it doesn't, Washington is likely to react with harsher measures, the official said.

The United States has suspended a series of meetings between U.S. and Iranian diplomats in Geneva at which the two countries -- which have no formal diplomatic relations -- have been discussing terrorism, Afghanistan and Iraq.

The suspension followed intelligence data, including intercepted telephone calls, indicating that an al-Qaida cell based in Iran helped organize the bombings in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, which were apparently part of a larger al-Qaida plot that was partially foiled by Saudi authorities. The bombings killed 34 people.

The cell of 10 or so al-Qaida members is run by top al-Qaida operative Salf al Adel, who is third on the U.S. government's list of most-wanted al-Qaida leaders, following Osama bin Laden and his deputy, Ayman al-Zawahri.

"There's no question but that there have been and are today senior al Qaida leaders in Iran, and they are busy," Rumsfeld said this week.

Iranian officials have denied harboring al-Qaida fugitives, and U.S. officials acknowledge that Iran has turned over some al-Qaida suspects to Saudi Arabia and Pakistan and blocked others from entering Iran.

On Thursday, a close aide to Iranian President Mohammad Khatami demanded that Washington prove its charges.

Saeed Pourazizi said in Tehran that it was Iran's policy to crack down on al-Qaida -- not support it -- and that the network "is a terrorist group threatening Iran's interests."

"Its extremist interpretation of Islam contradicts the Islamic democracy Iran is trying to promote. There is no commonality of anything between us."

The senior U.S. intelligence official said it wasn't clear whether al-Adel's group, which is believed to be in an area of southeastern Iran near the Pakistan border, was operating with the acquiescence of at least part of the Iranian government.

Advocates of regime change want to bolster popular opposition in Iran to the religious leadership.

The Associated Press contributed to this report.

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June 15, 2003 Sunday
Final Edition

SECTION: A SECTION; Pg. A20

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HEADLINE: Pressure Builds for President to Declare Strategy on Iran

BYLINE: Michael Dobbs, Washington Post Staff Writer

BODY:

Soon after George W. Bush took office in January 2001, his advisers began drafting a strategy for dealing with Iran, a radical Islamic state long suspected by Washington of supporting international terrorism and pursuing weapons of mass destruction.

More than two years later, the national security presidential directive on Iran has gone through several competing drafts and has yet to be approved by Bush's senior advisers, according to well-placed sources. In the meantime, experts in and outside the government are focusing on Iran as the United States' next big foreign policy crisis, with some predicting that the country could acquire a nuclear weapon as early as 2006.

Critics on the left and the right point to the unfinished directive as evidence the administration lacks a coherent strategy toward a country Bush described as a key member of the "axis of evil," along with North Korea and Saddam Hussein's Iraq.

"Our policy toward Iran is neither fish nor fowl, neither engagement nor regime change," said Flynt L. Leverett, a Bush adviser on the Middle East who left the National Security Council staff in March and is now with the Brookings Institution.

The Bush administration has yet to formulate a true Iran policy, agreed Michael A. Ledeen, a Middle East expert with the American Enterprise Institute. With other neoconservative intellectuals, Ledeen has founded the Coalition for Democracy in Iran, which is looking for ways to foment a democratic revolution to sweep away the mullahs who came to power in 1979.

Senior administration officials refused to talk about the status of the Bush policy directive on Iran, on the grounds that it is classified, but they say they have had some success in mobilizing international opinion against Iran's nuclear weapons program. As evidence, they cite recent threats by Russia to cut off nuclear assistance to Tehran and moves by the International Atomic Energy Agency to censure Iran for failing to report the processing of nuclear materials.

While the officials have stopped short of embracing a policy of "regime change" in Iran, U.S. officials from Bush down have talked about providing moral support to the "reform movement" in Iran in its struggle against an unelected government. As defined by Secretary of State Colin L. Powell, the U.S. goal is to speak directly to the Iranian people "over the heads of their leaders to let them know that we agree with them."

The internal and external debate about what to do about Iran has been brought to a head by recent revelations suggesting the Iranian nuclear weapons program is much further along than many suspected. Tomorrow, the IAEA Board of Governors in Vienna is to discuss findings showing that Iran has a wide range of options for producing fissile material for a nuclear bomb, from using heavy water reactors to produce plutonium to experiments in uranium enrichment.

U.S. officials have also accused Iran of harboring members of the al Qaeda terrorist network who escaped from Afghanistan after the fall of the Taliban in December 2001. They say some al Qaeda supporters hiding in Iran appear to have known in advance about recent terrorist attacks in Saudi Arabia, although there is no direct evidence of operational ties between the Iranian government and al Qaeda.

The escalating Iranian nuclear threat and suspicions of Iranian ties to terrorists have sharpened long-standing divisions in the administration over how to deal with Tehran. In the past, the State Department has put the emphasis on opening a dialogue with reformist elements in the Iranian leadership while the Pentagon has been more interested in looking for ways to destabilize the authoritarian Islamic government.

Bureaucratic tensions have reached the level where each side has begun accusing the other of leaking unfavorable stories to the media to block policy initiatives. "The knives are out," said a Pentagon official, who criticized national security adviser Condoleezza Rice for failing to end the dispute by issuing clear policy guidelines.

Powell, meanwhile, insisted to journalists that there has been no change in policy on Iran, despite what he depicted as frenzied media speculation "about what this person in that department might think or that person in another department might think."

The Iran debate goes back to a failed attempt by the Clinton administration to open an "unconditional dialogue" with Tehran. Even though the Iranians rejected the U.S. offer of unconditional talks, some Bush administration officials led by the State Department's director for policy planning, Richard N. Haass, favored making renewed overtures.

The proposals for a dialogue with Iran were partly inspired by the 1994 framework agreement with North Korea under which the North Korean government agreed to accept international controls over its nuclear program in return for economic assistance, including the construction of a civilian nuclear reactor. But the State Department approach ran into strong opposition from the Pentagon and Vice President Cheney's office, and was shot down in interagency meetings at the end of 2001.

While there would be no "grand bargain" with the Iranian leadership, the Bush administration agreed to a more limited diplomatic dialogue, focusing on specific areas such as the war in Afghanistan or cooperation over Iraq. Several rounds of such talks took place in Geneva and Paris, with the involvement of a special presidential envoy, Zalmay Khalilzad, but were suspended after the bombings in Saudi Arabia on May 12.

The administration debate has been echoed by a much more public debate among Middle East analysts,

nuclear proliferation experts, and leaders of the Iranian diaspora. Congress has also weighed in with legislation sponsored by Sen. Sam Brownback (R-Kan.) that would funnel more than \$ 50 million to Iranian pro-democracy initiatives, including private California-based satellite television and radio stations set up by Iranian exiles.

"We are not calling for a military attack on Iran," said Brownback, whose proposed Iran Democracy Act has drawn bipartisan support but is opposed by the leadership of the Foreign Relations Committee. The goal, he said, is to support Iranian democracy activists, including students who took to the streets of Tehran again last week to protest the closure of opposition newspaper and the jailing of dissidents.

Just how far the United States should go in supporting the protests is the subject of heated argument inside and outside the government, even among conservatives. Some argue Iran is ripe for revolution. Others contend there is little guarantee of radical change in Tehran in the three-year period some independent proliferation experts estimate it will take before Iran could acquire nuclear weapons, and the United States should be thinking about other options, including preemptive action against suspected nuclear sites.

"The internal democratic forces in Iran are real and growing, but they're not going to save us from having to think about what we are going to do about the Iranian nuclear program and support for terrorism," said Reuel Marc Gerecht, a CIA case officer for Iran now with the American Enterprise Institute.

Some analysts say that U.S. financial and propaganda support for the Iranian democracy movement could be counterproductive. "It allows the hardliners to argue that there is an external threat, and they must crack down in the name of national unity," said Kaveh Ehsani, an editor of the pro-reform journal Dialogue in Iran, now visiting the United States. "There is a kind of an unholy alliance between the Bush administration and the Iranian hardliners."

"We have tried appeasement, we have tried containment, and we have tried engagement," countered S. Rob Sobhani, a co-founder of the Coalition for Democracy in Iran and adjunct professor of government at Georgetown University. "All these policies have failed. What have we got to lose by empowerment?"

The White House has avoided taking a position on the Brownback legislation and has restricted its encouragement of democracy in Iran to verbal broadsides against the mullahs. In comments Thursday, Rice described Iran's pursuit of weapons of mass destruction as "not acceptable" and said that the United States "cannot tolerate circumstances in which al Qaeda operatives come in and out of Iran." She also accused Iran of stirring up trouble among Shiite communities in southern Iraq.

"We have to stand with the aspirations of the Iranian people which have been clearly expressed," she told a meeting in Los Angeles, as thousands of Iranians took to the streets of Tehran in anti-government protests.

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August 9, 2003 Saturday
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HEADLINE: Meetings With Iran-Contra Arms Dealer Confirmed

BYLINE: Bradley Graham and Peter Slevin, Washington Post Staff Writers

BODY:

Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld acknowledged yesterday that Pentagon officials met secretly with a discredited expatriate Iranian arms merchant who figured prominently in the Iran-contra scandal of the mid-1980s, characterizing the contact as an unexceptional effort to gain possibly useful information.

While Rumsfeld said that the contact occurred more than a year ago and that nothing came of it, his aides scrambled during the day to piece together more details amid other reports that Rumsfeld's account may have been incomplete.

Last night, a senior defense official disclosed that another meeting with the Iranian arms dealer, Manucher Ghorbanifar, occurred in June in Paris. The official said that, while the first contact, in late 2001, had been formally sanctioned by the U.S. government in response to an Iranian government offer to provide information relevant to the war on terrorism, the second one resulted from "an unplanned, unscheduled encounter."

A senior administration official said, however, that Pentagon staff members held one or two other meetings with Ghorbanifar last year in Italy. The sessions so troubled Secretary of State Colin L. Powell, the official said, that he complained to Rumsfeld and Condoleezza Rice, President Bush's national security adviser.

Powell maintained that the Pentagon activities were unauthorized and undermined U.S. policy toward Iran by taking place outside the terms defined by Bush and his top advisers. The White House instructed the Pentagon to halt meetings that do not conform to policy decisions, said the official, who requested anonymity.

The Defense Department personnel who met with Ghorbanifar came from the policy directorate. Sources identified them as Harold Rhode, a specialist on Iran and Iraq who recently served in Baghdad as the Pentagon liaison to Iraqi National Congress leader Ahmed Chalabi, and Larry Franklin, a Defense

Intelligence Agency analyst.

State Department officials were surprised by news of the latest meeting with Ghorbanifar. Tension runs deep in the Bush administration between State and the Pentagon, which under Rumsfeld has aspired to a powerful role in foreign policy. The two agencies have sparred repeatedly over strategy toward Iran and Iraq.

The United States does not have formal relations with Iran, although a small number of sanctioned meetings between U.S. and Iranian officials have taken place, most notably to address U.S. war plans in Afghanistan and Iraq.

The Bush administration has struggled to develop a coherent and consistent approach to Iran. In his State of the Union address last year, Bush characterized Iran as being part of an axis of evil, along with Iraq and North Korea, and administration officials have repeatedly accused Iran of supporting terrorist groups and of seeking to acquire nuclear weapons. While broad agreement exists within the administration favoring changes in Iran's Islamic government, officials differ on how to accomplish them.

More than two years after the administration began drafting a national security presidential directive on Iran, the policy document remains unfinished. While the State Department favors increased dialogue and engagement with potential reformers inside Iran, prominent Pentagon civilians believe the policy should be more aggressive, including measures to destabilize the existing government in Tehran.

The Iran-contra scandal erupted over a decision by the Reagan administration to sell weapons to Iran in an effort to win the release of U.S. hostages in Lebanon. The proceeds of the arms sales were illegally funneled to contra fighters opposing Nicaragua's leftist Sandinista government.

Ghorbanifar was enlisted in the effort, helping to arrange the delivery by Israel of 508 TOW antitank missiles to Iran. The White House had drafted him as an intermediary despite warnings from the CIA that he was a cheat and had failed lie-detector tests.

The intelligence agency had instructed its operatives not to do business with him.

News of the Pentagon's contact with Ghorbanifar was first reported yesterday by Newsday, and Rumsfeld was asked about the story when he emerged with Bush from a meeting at the president's ranch in Crawford, Tex.

Saying he had just been told of the Newsday article by a senior aide and by Rice, Rumsfeld acknowledged that "one or two" Pentagon officials "were approached by some people who had information about Iranians that wanted to provide information to the United States government."

He said that a meeting took place "more than a year ago" and that the information received was circulated to various federal departments and agencies but did not lead to anything.

"That is to say, as I understand it, there wasn't anything there that was of substance or of value that needed to be pursued further," he said.

Asked if the Pentagon contact was intended to circumvent official U.S. exchanges with Iran, Rumsfeld replied: "Oh, absolutely not. I mean, everyone in the interagency process, I'm told, was apprised of it, and it went nowhere. It was just -- this happens, of course, frequently, that in -- people come in, offering suggestions or information or possible contacts, and sometimes they're pursued. Obviously, if it looks as

though something might be interesting, it's pursued. If it isn't, it isn't."

Standing by Rumsfeld's side, Bush was asked if the meeting was a good idea and if his administration wants a change in government. "We support the aspirations of those who desire freedom in Iran," the president said, then took a question on a different subject.

According to the account given later by the senior Pentagon official, the contact in 2001 occurred after Iranian officials passed word to the administration that they had information that might be useful in the global war on terrorism. Two Pentagon officials met with the Iranians in several sessions over a three-day period in Italy. Ghorbanifar attended these meetings, "but he was not the individual who had approached the United States or the one with the information," the official said.

What his role was, however, the official did not know.

The official said the June meeting involved one of the two Pentagon representatives who had been present at the 2001 meeting, but he declined to say which one.

Staff writer Dana Priest contributed to this report.

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The Observer

August 10, 2003

SECTION: Observer News Pages, Pg. 22

LENGTH: 863 words

HEADLINE: IRAQ CONFLICT: Make Iran next, says Ayatollahs grandson: Khomeini calls US freedom the best in the world from base in occupied Baghdad

BYLINE: by Jamie Wilson, Baghdad

BODY:

SAYYID Hussein Khomeini is sitting cross-legged on a sofa inside a garish palm-fringed mansion nestled on the banks of the Tigris. It is the very heart of American-occupied Baghdad, not the first place that you might look for the grandson of Ayatollah Khomeini. The late Iranian leader built his Islamic revolution on a deep hatred of everything associated with the Stars and Stripes.

But then very little about the younger Khomeini is quite what might be expected.

'American liberty and freedom is the best freedom in the world,' he said, puffing on a cigarette and sipping a glass of sweet tea. 'The freedom for the individual that is written into the American Constitution you do not see in such concentration in any other constitution in the world. The Americans are here in Iraq, so freedom is here too.'

It is an extraordinary statement from a man whose grandfather labelled the US 'the Great Satan', but what Khomeini has to say about the current situation in Iran is even more radical: 'Iranians need freedom now, and if they can only achieve it with American interference I think they would welcome it. As an Iranian, I would welcome it.'

Not surprisingly, Khomeini, 45, has caused something of a stir in Baghdad, with the US media beating a path to the door of the house where he is staying.

According to his armed bodyguards, the luxurious house has been taken over by an Iraqi cleric, who shares Khomeini's view that religion and state should be separated. It used to belong to Izzat Ibrahim, vice-chairman of the deposed Revolutionary Command Council and one of Saddam Hussein's closest advisers. The King of Clubs on the list of most wanted Baathists, Ibrahim remains at large, although he is unlikely to return to evict the current tenants. There is, however, plenty to remind the visitor of the previous owner. A black Rolls-Royce with a golden grill is gathering dust in the drive, while the sitting room, with its three gold-trim sofas, is also home to a couple of enormous glass tanks containing dozens of tropical fish and several cages of canaries, chirping away merrily.

Wearing a black turban - a piece of clothing that marks him out as a descendant of the Prophet Muhammad - Khomeini dismisses as 'nonsense' a question about whether his grandfather would approve of his support for the Americans. 'He is not here, and in this case we cannot predict what position he would take,' he said.

As for Iraqi resistance to the US occupying forces - or liberators as Khomeini insists on calling them - in his opinion there is none.

'The persons who are carrying out the attacks have been paid previously to attack the US and the Americans are just in a position of defending themselves,' he said.

So what is a man whose grandfather cemented the Islamic theocracy in Iran by exploiting the 1979 US Embassy hostage crisis doing espousing views that could have come straight from an American foreign policy briefing or have been written by the press office of the Coalition Provisional Authority situated in the former presidential palace a couple of miles down the road?

Exactly how close Khomeini's ties are with the US is not clear, but the cleric has met officials from the CPA on several occasions. 'He's my favourite Khomeini!', one senior US official joked at a dinner the other night. A spokesman said that they found his ideas about the separation of religion and state 'interesting'.

Although he does not command a wide following, the very fact of who he is could in time make him a significant player, while any voice helping to dilute calls from some Iraqi Shia leaders for a system of clerical rule in Iraq will be welcomed with open arms by the Americans.

But the US might just have bigger plans for Khomeini. He spent 14 years of his life in Iraq, between 1964 and 1979, while his grandfather was plotting the Islamic revolution and conducting a campaign of snapping at the heels of the Shah from the holy city of Najaf. Listening to his grandson condemning the current situation in Tehran, it is difficult not to get a sense that perhaps history is repeating itself.

The Bush administration, which includes Iran in its diminishing axis of evil, has repeatedly accused the country of supporting terrorist groups and seeking to acquire nuclear weapons. But apart from general agreement that a change of government in Iran would be a good thing, there is no broad consensus within the administration about how best to achieve that aim. It is two years since the State Department began drafting a national security presidential directive on Iran, but the document remains unfinished.

Doves in Colin Powell's State Department are said to favour increased dialogue with potential reformers in the country, while Donald Rumsfeld's Pentagon is thought to be intent on pursuing aggressive destabilisation tactics towards Tehran.

Whatever way the administration decides to play it, Khomeini could be useful to both sides.

Asked when he thought he might return to Iran, Khomeini replied 'Inshallah' - It is God's will.

But some observers might argue that it is just as likely to be the Pentagon's.

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Lawrence Franklin, center, surrounded by his attorneys, leaves U.S. District Court in Martinsburg, W.Va., Thursday. (Photo credit: by Kevin G. Gilbert / Staff Photographer)

Friday June 10, 2005

Franklin case goes to grand jury

by PEPPER BALLARD

pepperb@herald-mail.com

MARTINSBURG, W.Va. - Probable cause was found Thursday at the U.S. District Courthouse in Martinsburg to send to a grand jury a charge that a Pentagon analyst illegally took classified government documents to his Kearneysville, W.Va., home.

The charge against Lawrence Anthony Franklin, 58, who holds a doctorate in Asian studies and taught history courses at Shepherd University for the past five years, will be referred to the next grand jury, U.S. Magistrate Judge David J. Joel said

Thursday after his finding at the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of West Virginia.

"Dr. Franklin knowingly and unlawfully possessed classified documents in a place he was not permitted to keep them," Joel said. "He admitted he possessed these documents."

Franklin faces up to 10 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine if convicted of the charge.

A June 30, 2004, search of Franklin's home turned up 83 classified documents, 37 of which were classified as top secret, meaning the release of which would cause "exceptionally great damage" to national security, and 34 of which were classified as secret, meaning the release of which would cause "great damage" to national security, FBI Special Agent Thomas Convoy, who specializes in counterterrorism and espionage, testified Thursday.

The charge centered on six documents, written between October 2003 and June 2004, which included CIA documents about al-Qaida and Osama bin Laden, terrorism documents and an Iraq memorandum, Convoy testified.

Franklin was authorized to carry classified documents in Maryland, Virginia and Washington, D.C., but not in West Virginia, Convoy testified.

Convoy testified that Franklin was a member of the Department of Defense since 1979 and held top-secret clearance since then, but it since has been revoked.

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Franklin's attorney, Plato Cacheris, contended that his client was inappropriately charged.

"There is no allegation in this complaint that he intended to injure the U.S.," Cacheris said. He said that such an allegation would have needed to support the claim that Franklin unlawfully held the documents.

Franklin, wearing a dark suit, sat behind Cacheris' chair throughout the hearing, nearly motionless.

Cacheris said Franklin "had those documents in his home because he was preparing for an interview" for a government position.

Convoy testified Franklin was under surveillance prior to the search.

"Did you see him transmit those documents to any unauthorized people?" Cacheris asked Convoy.

"No, I did not," he responded.

U.S. Attorney Thomas E. Johnston, of West Virginia's northern district, said Franklin "was not authorized to retain these documents, at least at his home."

"There is no evidence he delivered them to the employee or officer of the U.S. intended to receive them," he said.

Johnston said Cacheris' contention that he had to show intent to cause injury to the country "does not apply to this particular charge."

Joel, in announcing his finding, said, "Whether or not the government properly charged" Franklin is "a matter for another day."

In May, Franklin was charged with providing top-secret information about potential attacks against U.S. forces in Iraq to two executives of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, the influential pro-Israel lobbying group.

Already out on \$100,000 bond on the May charge, Franklin was released after this most-recent charge on \$50,000 bond. Joel ordered Thursday that Franklin continue on his present bond.

The Associated Press contributed to this story.

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Cheers for Wolfy

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The New York Post

May 31, 2003

<http://www.nypost.com/seven/05312003/postopinion/opedcolumnists/35893.htm>

Last Sunday saw a remarkable event in Washington - one that defied stereotypes about Muslims and the Bush administration's "hard-liners": Deputy Defense Secretary Paul D. Wolfowitz, widely identified (and denounced) as the main architect of America's Iraq intervention, won multiple standing ovations from an audience of hundreds of Muslims.

He praised the coalition's use of force to remove evil, and he hailed the new reality in Iraq. For the first time in 26 years, he said, Shia Muslims had freedom to observe their Arbæen festival in Iraq. The room exploded in applause.

The venue: the first-ever national convention of Shia Muslims from the United States and Canada.

Wolfowitz is said to be the hardest of neoconservative hardliners. The Shias have a reputation as the most extreme, anti-Western, ultraradical Muslims. Yet they came together through the ideal of freedom, and the principle of liberation through the exercise of U.S. military power.

Pundits and experts have been wrong about both Wolfowitz and his Shia hosts.

Most of the media paint Wolfowitz as an arch-conspiratorial fanatic. Yet the truth, as anybody who has met with him quickly learns, is that he has an extensive and nuanced understanding of Islam. He served as U.S. ambassador to Indonesia for three years under President Ronald Reagan.

He is also a defender of democracy, taking pride in his key role in helping change the Philippines in the 1980s. He supported the removal of dictator Ferdinand Marcos and the triumph of democratic champion Corazon Aquino.

Shia Muslims, for their part, are typically described as extremists in the mold of Ayatollah Khomeini - dismissed with claims that all Shias everywhere support the Lebanese radicals of Hezbollah. The most recent dire prediction is that the Shia majority in Iraq will establish a rigid Islamic order.

But Shias are victims of mass murder in Pakistan, where followers of the Saudi-backed Wahhabi sect hunt and kill them relentlessly. When the Pakistani group Sipah-e-Sahaba (Order of the Prophet's Companions) murdered American reporter Daniel Pearl, he was their first victim who was not a Shia Muslim. Before him, the group had slain hundreds of innocents.

In addition, Shia Muslims, including a considerable community in the New York area, are better educated than many other Muslims. Their dedication to self-improvement often makes them a target.

In Saudi Arabia, where they are the majority in the oil-rich Eastern Province, they are also an economic elite. But within the Saudi kingdom, they still suffer extraordinary cruelties at the hands of the Wahhabis, who teach in Saudi schools that Shia Islam is the product of a Jewish conspiracy.

Life is tough for Shias, a minority of 200 million, or 15 percent of the world's Muslims. In America, where estimates of the total Muslim population vary from 2 million to 10 million, one in four is Shia. Most came here from Pakistan and Iraq to escape violence.

The Shia national convention in Washington, held by the Universal Muslim Association of America

(UMAA) with 3,000 participants, represented a new trend in American Muslim life. Until now, the discourse on Islam in America was dominated, from the Muslim side, by the "Wahhabi lobby" - groups toeing the extremist line of the Saudi regime.

The "Wahhabi lobby" includes such entities as the Council on American Islamic Relations (CAIR) and the Islamic Society of North America (ISNA). These groups have skewed discussion of Islam and Muslims in this country, by presenting America as an aggressive power internationally and as an enemy of Muslims.

Shia Muslims living in America see the world in very different terms. Agha Shaukat Jafri, a Shia community leader in New York and organizer of the UMAA convention, said, "We see America as our homeland and ourselves as American Muslims. We consider ourselves an integral part of its body politic. We condemn all forms of terrorism, and we consider these so-called Muslim fighters, who carry out terror, as enemies of our faith."

He described the reception for Wolfowitz as "very warm." He added: "We should thank the Bush administration for liberating the Shias of Iraq. I think Dr. Wolfowitz understands our viewpoint and our deep opposition to extremism. We were thrilled to have him attend and to hear his words."

Others, including non-Muslims, who attended the event were struck by the enthusiasm shown to Paul Wolfowitz. But Jafri put the emphasis in the right place: "The convention inaugurated a new period in the history of American Muslims, of heightened awareness of our responsibilities to the country we live in and hope for the future flourishing of Islam and democracy. At our convention next year, we would like to have President Bush as a guest."

And why did a story like this go unreported in the rest of our media?

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FOREIGN MEDIA PERCEPTION SUMMARY

Tuesday, July 22, 2003

Terrorism	Afghanistan			
Iraq (IZ)	IZ-North	IZ-Central	IZ-South	
IZ-WMD	IZ-Regime/Political	IZ- Humanitarian Issues		
Yemen/Horn of Africa	Iran	GCC	India/Pakistan	Central Asian States

Disclaimer: The articles presented in the Foreign Media Perception are derived entirely from open sources in and around the CENTCOM AOR. The articles selected are a representative sample of the local media views and interpretations of current events. The "General Themes" section is a summary of the most prevalent messages and is not an endorsement of the validity of the information contained in the articles.

General Themes: A foreign media source in the CENTCOM AOR reported that an organization calling itself Al-Jihad Brigades Organization called on the Iraqis not to deal with the new provisional Governing Council. They threatened to kill anyone who supports the Governing Council and the coalition forces occupying Iraq. Foreign media sources report that the Iraqi Christian Democratic Party has refused to recognize Iraq's transitional Governing Council, describing its members as administrative workers without powers. Foreign sources report that Pakistan is seriously considering sending troops to Iraq as a result of the formation of the Governing Council should the Iraqi people request support.

13. Jedda Arab News (Saudi Arabia): Tis the Season to Be Worried

Paul Wolfowitz, in the latest Vanity Fair, basically justified using a "convenient" argument, i.e. weapons of mass destruction, to achieve the great goal: Iraqi oil. Such politically vulgar messages are not new from Wolfowitz and his neo-con gang, but they spread reasonable doubt regarding America's "democratic" intentions for the Middle East. Now as Wolfowitz is visiting Baghdad, his face can't conceal a sense of worry.

Worry regarding the exposed lies, the increased number of killings of American military personnel, and the growing public opinion against the war. Wolfowitz is like a stray cat stuck in a corner. Stray cats when stuck in a corner usually attack. The question that is asked frequently is: Who fed all these lies about the Iraqi weapons WMD program to the president? Most fingers point at the Pentagon's Office of Special Plans, headed by Adam Shulsky, a hard-line neo-conservative. The Office of Special Plans was set up in the fall of 2001 as a two-man shop, but it grew into an eighteen-member nerve center of the Pentagon's effort to create disinformation, alleging that Iraq possessed WMD and had connections with terrorist groups.

Much of the garbage produced by that office found its way into speeches by Rumsfeld, Cheney and Bush. It should be noted that the office was created after Sept. 11 by two of the most fervent and determined neo-cons: Paul Wolfowitz himself, the deputy defense secretary, and Douglas Feith, undersecretary of defense for policy, to probe into Saddam's WMD programs and his links to al-Qa'ida, because, it is alleged, they did not trust other intelligence agencies of the US government to come up with the goods. Most prominent neo-cons are right-wing Jews, and tend to be pro-Israeli zealots who believe that American and Israeli interests are inseparable -- much to the alarm of the liberal pro-peace Jews, whether in America, Europe, or Israel itself. Friends of Ariel Sharon's Likud party, they tend to loathe Arabs and Muslims.

For them, the cause of "liberating" Iraq had little to do with the well being of Iraqis, just as the cause of "liberating" Iran and ending its nuclear program -- recently advocated by Shimon Peres -- has little to do with the well being of Iranians. What they seek is an improvement in Israel's military and strategic environment. So who will put the brakes on this madness, defend US national interests and give the administration wise counsel? Congress? It doesn't appear that way. The issue should go back to the American people. The integrity and credibility of their values and their future economic prosperity are very much at stake here. People in the Middle East need to see the ugly words of Wolfowitz and his like muted, and they need to see objective democratic results. Only then will Wolfowitz and his gang be marginalized. At least for a while.

The United States and Shi'ite Religious Factions in Post-Ba'thist Iraq

Juan Cole

In post-Saddam Husayn Iraq, Shi'ite militias rapidly established their authority in East Baghdad and other urban neighborhoods of the south. Among the various groups which emerged, the Sadr Movement stands out as militant and cohesive. The sectarian, anti-American Sadrists wish to impose a puritanical, Khomeinist vision on Iraq. Their political influence is potentially much greater than their numbers. Incorporating them into a democratic Iraq while ensuring that they do not come to dominate it poses a severe challenge to the US Administration.

In planning the war on Iraq, the American Defense Department and intelligence organizations appear to have been unaware that millions of Iraqi Shi'ites had joined a militant and puritanical movement dedicated to the establishment of an Iran-style Islamic Republic in Iraq, even though these developments had been detailed in many Arabic-language books and articles. On February 18, 2003, Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz gave an interview on National Public Radio in which he maintained that "The Iraqis are . . . by and large quite secular. They are overwhelmingly Shi'a which is different from the Wahabis of the peninsula, and they don't bring the sensitivity of having the holy cities of Islam being on their territory."¹ Even more disturbingly, this quote shows that Wolfowitz did not realize that religious Iraqi Shi'ites are extremely sensitive about foreigners in their shrine cities such as Najaf and Karbala, or that these cities are religious power centers of great symbolic potency.

US Defense Department leaders such as Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld and his deputies, Wolfowitz and Douglas Feith, mistakenly thought that the middle and lower strata of the Ba'th bureaucracy, police, and army would survive the war, and that they could simply hand it over to secular expatriate figure Ahmad Chalabi and his Iraqi National Congress. Although from a Shi'ite background, Chalabi was largely unknown in Iraq and was wanted in Jordan on embezzlement charges. The CIA and the State Department broke with Chalabi late in 2002 when he proved unable

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1. "Deputy Secretary Wolfowitz Interview with National Public Radio," February 19, 2003 at <http://www.washingtonfile.net/2003/Feb/Feb21/EUR509.HTM>.
MIDDLEEASTJOURNAL ★ VOLUME 57, NO. 4, AUTUMN 2003

to account for about \$2 million of the \$4 million they had given his Iraqi National Congress. The major religious Shi'ite groups with which the Americans were negotiating were part of Chalabi's group and included the Tehran-based Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq, the London branch of the al-Da'wa Party, and the Khoei Foundation, of which only al-Da'wa had much popularity on the ground in Iraq. The US was ignorant of the Sadr Movement, the main indigenous Shi'ite force. This ignorance was to cost the US great political capital in the first months of the occupation.

When the Ba'th fell on April 9, 2003, Shi'ite militias seemed suddenly to emerge and take control of many urban areas in the south of the country, as well as in the desperately poor slums of East Baghdad. The moral authority of Grand Ayatollah Ali Sistani and his more quietist colleagues in Najaf had been known to the US, but it transpired that other ayatollahs and leaders had more political clout. The rank and file of Iraqi Shi'ites in the urban areas was far more radicalized by the last decade of Ba'th rule than anyone on the outside had realized. These developments alarmed Washington, given that some 60% to 65% of Iraqis are Shi'ites, and this group would therefore predominate in a democratic Iraq. The religious groups constitute only one section of the Shi'ite population, perhaps a third or more, but they are well organized and armed.

My thesis here is that the Sadr Movement is at the moment the most important tendency among religious Shi'ites in post-Ba'thist Iraq, and that it is best seen as a sectarian phenomenon in the "sociology of religions" sense. It is primarily a youth movement and its rank and file tend to be poor. It is highly puritanical and xenophobic, and it is characterized by an exclusivism unusual in Iraqi Shi'ism. To any extent that it emerges as a leading social force in Iraq, it will prove polarizing and destabilizing. In spring and summer of 2003 its leadership had decided not to challenge actively the coalition military. In contemporary theories of the sociology of religion, a "sect" is characterized by a high degree of tension with mainstream society, employing a rhetoric of difference, antagonism, and separation.² The "high-tension" model of the sect predicts that it will attempt strongly to demarcate itself off from the mainstream of society. It will also cast out those members who are perceived to be too accommodating of non-sectarian norms. That is, it demands high levels of loyalty and obedience in the pursuit of exclusivism.

IRAQI SHI'ISM IN HISTORY

Under the Ottomans, a Sunni political elite flourished in what is now Iraq, with political ties to Istanbul. Shi'ism remained vigorous, however. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, many tribespeople of the south converted to the Shi'ite branch of Islam, under the influence of missionaries sent out from the shrine cities of Najaf and Karbala, where Shi'ite holy figures Imam 'Ali and Imam Husayn were interred.

2. Rodney Stark and William Sims Bainbridge, *The Future of Religion* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1985), pp. 19-34, 135.

The Rule of the Turban

Last September, Paul Wolfowitz was the special guest at a memorial service in Arlington, Va., for an influential Shiite cleric killed in a car bombing in Najaf, Iraq. The deputy defense secretary hailed Ayatollah Mohammad Baqir al-Hakim as a "true Iraqi patriot," and he quoted from the Gettysburg Address as he likened the slain leader to the Union soldiers who had died to preserve their country. It was a eulogy that al-Hakim undoubtedly would have found jarring. His Islamist political party, the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq, and its 15,000-man militia had been funded by Iran, a member of President Bush's "axis of evil." And al-Hakim himself had long been wary of perceived American imperialism in the Middle East, even as his party, known as SCIRI (pronounced "SEA-ree") [and otherwise also known in Supreme Assembly for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SAIRI)], cooperated with the Coalition Provisional Authority on the transfer to Iraqi sovereignty -- the likely reason he was targeted for assassination.

As symbolism goes, the memorial service served to highlight the tangled politics in post-Saddam Iraq, where idealized notions of "friend" and "foe" have dissolved into a murkier reality. Once, Pentagon war planners like Wolfowitz envisioned the toppling of Saddam Hussein with clarity, predicting that the long-suppressed Shiite majority in Iraq would greet Americans as liberators and that democracy would naturally flower. But clarity has been washed away by images of charred American bodies swinging from bridges and naked Iraqi prisoners on dog leashes. Yet to emerge is a clear outline of a new Iraq, which has been tugged in opposite directions by official enemies -- Iran and the United States -- that happen to have shared a common interest in Saddam's removal. As the largest mainstream Shiite party, SCIRI is an important player in Iraq's future, but one with an ambivalent history with the United States. It was one of the opposition groups that the United States counted on to help bring down Saddam.

Yet SCIRI is also a vehicle in which Iran has invested heavily in a bid for influence in post-Saddam Iraq. And so despite Wolfowitz's hailing of the slain Ayatollah al-Hakim as a kind of Shiite Abraham Lincoln, it is far from clear that his Islamist party, which supports an Iraqi government run according to Islamic principles, will help build the kind of secular democracy that the United States said it hoped to leave behind in Iraq. It is likely that the new Iraqi constitution will be influenced in some manner by Islamic principles, but it's anybody's guess whether a sovereign Iraq -- assuming it stays united -- will look more like a secular Turkey, a cleric-run Iran or something in between.

There are too many competing motives and agendas to predict any outcome with certainty, no matter what face US policymakers put on it. The blurring of Iranian, American and Iraqi interests came into sharp relief last month when Iraqi and American forces raided the Baghdad home and offices of Iraqi National Congress leader Ahmad Chalabi on suspicion that the one-time Pentagon favorite had betrayed US secrets to Iran. It was a confusing turn of events, made even more perplexing by the fact that Chalabi, a Shiite, had worked openly with Iranians for many years, most prominently through his contacts with SCIRI, which was known to be an arm of Iranian intelligence. In fact, SCIRI was active in Chalabi's INC from 1992 through 1996 and was named in the 1998 Iraqi Liberation Act, signed into law by President Clinton, as one of the opposition groups that the United States should work with to topple Saddam. It was thus no secret that Chalabi had a relationship

with Iranian intelligence. But the salient question quickly became: Which American official was so stupid as to tell the INC leader that the United States had broken Iran's secret communications code, information that US intelligence said Chalabi then passed on to Iran? Chalabi had long been an informal conduit between the United States and Iran, which have not had formal diplomatic relations since American hostages were seized in the 1979 Islamic revolution.

Through SCIRI, the United States kept a back door to Tehran propped open. Had that game now gone awry? SCIRI was founded in 1980, at the beginning of the Iran-Iraq war, by Iraqi Shiite clerics who sought a haven from oppression by Saddam with fellow Shiites in neighboring Iran. But the relationship was controversial from the beginning, according to Imam Mustafa al-Qazwini, an Iraqi-born Shiite in Los Angeles whose father was a founder of SCIRI. A handsome 42-year-old with a neatly trimmed, graying beard, al-Qazwini wears a black turban, symbolizing his family's descent from the prophet Mohammed. A naturalized US citizen, he speaks fluent, colloquial English. We met earlier this month at a Washington conference of the Universal Muslim Association of America, an organization of politically active American Shiite Muslims. His father, Ayatollah Mortada al-Qazwini, broke with SCIRI's al-Hakim soon after the group's founding amid a dispute about its alliance with Iran, al-Qazwini told me. His father believed that Iraqi Shiites would be better served by leaders who remained independent of foreign governments -- Iranian or American.

In the mid-1980s, the Qazwini clan left Iran for the United States and its open political system. The elder al-Qazwini returned to Iraq last year, settling in Karbala, and, in the model of Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, remains aloof from politics in the belief that clergy should not play a direct role in governance, his son told me. Al-Qazwini said that he and his father have rebuffed overtures from the US State Department and the Central Intelligence Agency over the years because they did not want to align themselves with any foreign governments. "I always feel, if you can work freely from these governments you should," al-Qazwini said. "Generally Iraqis don't like the idea of dependence. Once someone is seen as collaborating with a foreign government, they might not be as trusted." That has been a problem to varying degrees for both Chalabi and SCIRI in Iraq, he added. Still, SCIRI, now led by Ayatollah al-Hakim's younger brother, Abdul Aziz al-Hakim, retains significant clout as the best organized Shiite party, in part because of the support it had from Iran. SCIRI is believed to have taken from Iran an amount similar to the more than \$30 million Chalabi's INC accepted in U.S. funding before being abruptly cut off last month. And despite its quasi-official relationship with the United States, SCIRI mostly kept the Great Satan at arm's length.

Until 2002, most contacts with the United States were made informally through Chalabi and Kurdish representatives, according to SCIRI's US-based representative, Karim Khutar al-Musawi, who told me about the group over coffee recently in Washington's Mayflower Hotel. Aside from acting as a kind of liaison between the United States and Iran, in the mid-'90s SCIRI agents also worked openly with Chalabi in northern Iraq on operations to undermine Saddam. Chalabi was then working for the CIA, whose small team in northern Iraq was headed by former CIA operative Bob Baer. "SCIRI was never under any sort of Western supervision or control. They did exactly what they wanted. And they reported to Tehran," Baer told me. As an American agent, Baer was keen to learn all he could about Iran. Chalabi invited him to meet his contacts in Tehran, but Baer had to decline. "I would

have been happy to, but that was a firing offense. The State Department would have gone nuts," he said. But there was no restriction on meeting with SCIRI, which, after all, was part of the American-backed Iraqi National Congress.

So, Baer said, he talked often with SCIRI agents in northern Iraq, where the Americans and Iranians shared a common enemy in Saddam Hussein. A master manipulator, Chalabi frequently played Iranian and American intelligence off each other, Baer said. The most serious stunt occurred in February 1995, when Chalabi was gathering support for an uprising against Saddam. The Americans were noncommittal and, among other moves, the INC leader went fishing for Iranian support. He forged a letter from America's National Security Council that appeared to direct him to assassinate Saddam, then left it on his desk for Iranian intelligence agents to read, hoping the disinformation would convince the Iranians that the United States was serious about toppling Saddam, Baer said. "He was being very practical about this. He needed the Iranians to think the plan would go through so they would let loose with the Badr Brigades," the armed wing of SCIRI. Chalabi's uprising, and a parallel coup planned by Sunni Iraqi military officers inside Iraq, collapsed amid betrayals by the Kurds and continued ambivalence from Washington.

The debacle caused both the CIA and SCIRI to part ways with Chalabi in 1996. But by 2002, when it looked as if President Bush was serious about toppling Saddam, SCIRI began sniffing around again. Its representative, al-Musawi, set up shop in Washington. And in August 2002, SCIRI logged its first formal contact with the United States when Ayatollah al-Hakim's younger brother, Abdul, traveled to Washington as its representative for a pre-war round of meetings with Bush administration officials. Al-Hakim and other Iraqi opposition figures met with Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, Secretary of State Colin Powell and (via satellite hookup) Vice President Dick Cheney, al-Musawi said. Also at the 2002 meetings were Chalabi, Iyad Allawi -- the recently named interim prime minister of Iraq, who has longtime ties to the CIA -- and two Kurdish representatives, Massoud Barzani and Jalal Talabani. "This was the first official contact for SCIRI, because before we did not automatically believe in the American direction -- whether they meant it or not," al-Musawi said, referring to the United States' historical ambivalence toward removing Saddam, most prominently its failure to support Kurds and Shiites in their revolt after the Persian Gulf War, which Saddam brutally suppressed.

Graham Fuller, former vice chairman of the National Intelligence Council at the CIA and an expert on Islam, said that the United States must deal with SCIRI, despite America's preference that Iraq have a strictly secular government. Although SCIRI wants Iraq's government to be run according to Islamic principles, that probably does not mean an Iranian-style theocracy Fuller said. SCIRI's al-Musawi confirmed that view, explaining that the party wants a "kind of separation of church and state" in which clergy would not become politicians or government officials. Added Fuller of SCIRI: "They are uncomfortable with American goals in the region, and they would see the American policy as hostile, rightly or wrongly, to any Islamic state, however you interpret that ... They're wary of American imperialism in general. But that doesn't mean they weren't willing to cooperate in furthering the greater goal of removing Saddam." Abdul Aziz al-Hakim became SCIRI's representative on the United States' handpicked Iraqi Governing Council after the March 2003 invasion of Iraq. But when his brother was killed in the car bombing at the Imam Ali Mosque in Najaf last August, al-Hakim blamed the United States for creating instability and demanded an end to the occupation. Such positions are part of

SCIRI's balancing act, Fuller said. "As the majority, the Shiites are the beneficiary of [any] democracy, so they're willing to cut the United States a lot of slack as long as the US is bringing about the goal of democracy. But once they get to democracy, they want the United States to please leave," he said.

A SCIRI member, Adel Abdul Mahdi, will serve as Iraq's finance minister in the interim government that takes power in Iraq June 30. Mahdi recently declared that the majority Shiites would not stand for limited Kurdish self-rule in the north, setting the stage for a showdown with the Kurds, who have said they will secede from the central government without some guarantee of autonomy. Shiites, meanwhile, believe that radical Sunni Muslims -- both Iraqis and those newly arrived from other countries -- are targeting their leaders for assassination with suicide bombings in an attempt to drive a wedge between the two sects. What's more, "Al-Qaida is trying to make a war between the Sunni and Shia, to destroy the American project in Iraq and break up the country so the Wahhabis can have influence" with Sunnis, asserted al-Musawi, referring to the strict fundamentalist brand of Islam that is the official state religion in Saudi Arabia. In that regard Iran, like the United States, also faces uncertainty about its interests in post-Saddam Iraq. A Wahhabi foothold in its next-door neighbor would be an unwelcome development for Iranian Shiites, whom Wahhabis loathe as infidels. Saddam had kept both Sunni and Shiite religious fervor in check through his authoritarian rule. But now there is no guarantee it can be contained. Looming behind this internal political struggle between religious factions are the two major powers of the Gulf, Saudi Arabia and Iran.

The degree to which Iraq might become a chessboard on which they move their pawns remains uncertain. There are already indications that Wahhabi Islam is taking root in Iraq, worried Shiites say. Al-Qazwini, the Shiite imam from Los Angeles, said that on a recent visit to Baghdad he discovered that the Um al-Tubul mosque had been renamed after 13th century Islamic theologian Taqi al-Din Ibn Taymiyya, an intellectual founder of Saudi Arabia. "There are big signs for the Ibn Taymiyya mosque now. You can see them from the highway," al-Qazwini said. Fuller thinks it makes sense, with all the countervailing forces in the region, for the United States to deal with all major players, even those that have ties to Iran. "The United States has slowly come around," he said. "The first Bush administration didn't want to touch the Shia. They were afraid the Shia would take over in Iraq" with an Iranian-style theocracy. But, he added, "I think now the US has learned something about the Shia and their more complex nature. The Shia do not love us, but they are grateful that we threw out Saddam. Now they want us to complete the job and leave." It remains unclear which legacy will have the most lasting imprint in the new Iraq -- that of Abraham Lincoln or that of the turbaned clerics in Tehran.

Source: Salon (US), Mary Jacoby, June 16, 2004

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May 28, 2004

Chalabi-gate: None Dare Call It Treason

Neocons behind bars? Sounds good to me....

by Justin Raimondo

The fallout from Chalabi-gate continues to rain down on the heads of the War Party, opening up the exciting prospect that some neocons might well wind up behind bars.

The charge? Espionage, as Sidney Blumenthal informs us:

"At a well-appointed conservative think tank in downtown Washington and across the Potomac River at the Pentagon, FBI agents have begun paying quiet calls on prominent neoconservatives, who are being interviewed in an investigation of potential espionage, according to intelligence sources. Who gave Ahmed Chalabi classified information about the plans of the U.S. government and military?"

This information, says Vince Cannistraro, formerly at the CIA and the Pentagon, was so "very, very sensitive" that only a few U.S. government officials had access to it:

"The evidence has pointed quite clearly, not only the fact that Chalabi might be an agent of influence of the Iranian government and that [Chalabi's intelligence chief, Aras Karim Habib] may be a paid agent of the Iranian intelligence service, but it is shown that there is a leak of classified information from the United States to Iran through Chalabi and Karim and that is the particular point that the FBI is investigating. In other words, some U.S. officials are under investigation on suspicion of providing classified information to these people that ended up in Iran."

Blumenthal has more:

"A former staff member of the Office of Special Plans and a currently serving defense official, two of those said to be questioned by the FBI, are considered witnesses, at least for now. Higher figures are under suspicion. Were they witting or unwitting? If those who are being questioned turn out to be misleading, they can be charged ultimately with perjury and

obstruction of justice. For them, the Watergate principle applies: It's not the crime, it's the coverup."

The lies Chalabi fed to Washington policymakers, who eagerly scarfed them up and regurgitated them to the American public, originated with Iranian intelligence, as we are beginning to learn. But the neocon-Tehran information superhighway ran in both directions. As Julian Borger reports in the *Guardian*:

"An intelligence source in Washington said the CIA confirmed its long-held suspicions when it discovered that a piece of information from an electronic communications intercept by the National Security Agency had ended up in Iranian hands. The information was so sensitive that its circulation had been restricted to a handful of officials. 'This was 'sensitive compartmented information' – SCI – and it was tracked right back to the Iranians through Aras Habib,' the intelligence source said."

UPI's Richard Sale reports that "the Federal Bureau of Investigation has launched a full field investigation into the matter," and gives more information on what was compromised and how the Iranians pulled off this intelligence coup:

"Chalabi allegedly passed National Security Agency/CIA intercepts to intelligence agents of the Iranian government using intermediaries or 'cut-outs' or 'gophers' within the INC, another former CIA agent said. Some of the intercepts, dated from December, were the basis for a recent Newsweek story, but there are others of a later date in possession of the FBI, this source said."

How did Chalabi get his hot little hands on highly secret information? That's why the FBI – instead of going after, say, Brandon Mayfield, or some other completely innocent person, as per usual – is now calling on "prominent" neocons at Washington's poshest thinktanks. I hope they're bringing an ample supply of handcuffs. But whom might they be handcuffing and frog-marching out the door, into a waiting paddywagon? UPI gives us the scoop, citing "a former very senior CIA official" as saying:

"Chalabi passed specially compartmented intelligence, extraordinarily sensitive stuff, to the Iranians.' This source said that some of the intercepts are believed to have been given Chalabi by two U.S. officials of the Coalition Provision Authority, both of whom are not named here because UPI could not reach them for comment."

Well, they aren't named, but they might as well have been:

"One former CPA official has returned to the United States and is employed at the American Enterprise Institute, the former very senior

official said, a fact which FBI sources confirmed without additional comment. The other is still a working Pentagon official, federal law enforcement officials and former CIA officials said."

Independent journalist Bob Dreyfuss, whose excellent articles on the neocons in *The American Prospect* and *Mother Jones* puts him up there with Jim Lobe, Michael Lind, and Joshua Marshall as a veritable maven of neocon-ology, names names:

"The two officials in the UPI story are, according to my sources, Harold Rhode, an official in the Pentagon's Office of Net Assessment, and Michael Rubin, now at the American Enterprise Institute."

Rubin, formerly of the Office of Special Plans and the CPA, who served as liaison with Chalabi's group, the Iraqi National Congress, certainly fits the bill. No wonder he's been so ... cranky lately, what with FBI agents barging into his office and giving him the third degree.

Rhode, a longtime Pentagon official assigned to the Office of Net Assessment and a specialist on Islam, is reportedly Douglas Feith's chief enforcer of the anti-Arab party line among the civilian Pentagon hierarchy. In refusing to be interviewed by Dreyfuss for a piece on the neocons in *Mother Jones*, Rhode's laconic reply was:

"Those who speak, pay."

Prescient words, and truer than perhaps even Rhode realized at the time. Hauled up before a grand jury, however, Rhode, Rubin, and the rest of Chalabi's Pentagon fan club may have no choice about speaking – especially with the prospect of a long "vacation" at a federal facility staring them in the face.

Much is being made of how the Iranians "duped" us into invading Iraq, and "used" the U.S. in getting rid of Saddam Hussein and "paving the way," as Julian Borger puts it, for a Shi'ite-ruled Iraq. But a simple map of the region and rudimentary knowledge of the history of the past decade or so would have revealed as much. As I wrote in this space over a year ago:

"In view of Iran's growing sphere of influence in Iraq, it seems rather disingenuous to destroy the Sunni minority government run by the Ba'ath Party and then deny any responsibility for the Shi'ite-y outcome. The U.S. has made a gift of Iraq to Teheran, reigniting the religious passions that overthrew the U.S.-backed Shah Reza Pahlavi of Iran and propelled Khomeini to power."

In charting the outlines of "phase two" of the invasion of Iraq, that same week last year, I pointed out:

"The main political consequence of the war, internally, is to increase Iranian influence: if free elections were held in the southern Shi'a provinces of Iraq, they would undoubtedly usher in some sort of 'Islamic Republic.' The effort by the neocons in the administration to install Ahmed Chalabi as the Pentagon's puppet, far from forestalling this possibility, only makes it a more credible threat to the postwar order."

But why would the militantly pro-Israel neocons, American partisans of the ultra-nationalist Likud party, act as patrons and promoters of an outfit, Chalabi's INC, that was really a cover for Iranian intelligence – their alleged mortal enemies? That's what I couldn't quite figure out, at least not until I read Robert Parry's excellent piece on the subject, and here's the money quote:

"As Chalabi's operation fed anti-Saddam propaganda into the U.S. decision-making machinery, Bush also should have been alert to the Israeli role in opening doors for Chalabi in Washington. One intelligence source told me that Israel's Likud government had quietly promoted Chalabi and his Iraqi National Congress with Washington's influential neoconservatives. That would help explain why the neoconservatives, who share an ideological alliance with the conservative Likud, would embrace and defend Chalabi even as the CIA and the State Department denounced him as a con man."

"The idea of Israel promoting an Iranian agent also is not far-fetched if one understands the history. The elder Bush could tell his son about the long-standing strategic ties that have existed between Israel and Iran, both before and after the Islamic revolution of 1979. It was Menachem Begin's Likud Party that rebuilt the covert intelligence relationship in 1980. Since then, it has been maintained through thick and thin, despite Iran's public anti-Israeli rhetoric."

The enemy of my enemy is my friend: it's a principle often invoked to justify a course of action seemingly in contradiction to the professed ideology of the actors. Lined up against a common enemy, American Likudniks and Ahmed Chalabi, an Iranian intelligence asset, teamed up to drag us into the Iraqi quagmire, with both members of this oddly coupled tag-team benefiting from the deal. While the neocons fed Chalabi – and his intelligence chief, Arras Karim Habib, a paid Iraqi agent – a steady diet of U.S. secrets, Chalabi fed the neocons (in government and much of the American media) a fresh serving of tall tales cooked up in the INC's kitchen, and delivered piping hot to Judith Miller's doorstep.

The Iranians, for their part, feasted on U.S. secrets so deep and dark that only a few top officials were privy to them – and had a good chunk of Iraq handed to them, while a *de facto* Kurdish state emerged as a buffer between Israel and the Shi'ite power rising in the East. The whole thing was

supposed to have been presided over by the ostensibly pro-Western Chalabi, the neocons' Alger Hiss. That was the plan, at any rate, but something seems to have gone awry....

As in the Abu Ghraib photo-gallery of horrors, the nature of the crime suggests that a few lowly spear carriers – Rubin is just barely out of knee pants, and Rhode was certainly not in the loop on super-sensitive intelligence – didn't pull this off all on their own. Before it's all over, Chalabi-gate will reach into the favored nesting place of the neocons, the very top echelons of the Pentagon.

As UPI editor Martin Walker reports:

"The real target goes beyond Chalabi. The hunt is on, in the Republican Party, in Congress, in the CIA and State Department and in a media which is being deluged with leaks, for Chalabi's friends and sponsors in Washington – the group known as the neo-cons. In particular, the targets seem to be Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz, the former assistant secretary (in Reagan's day) Richard Perle, Vice President Dick Cheney's national security aide Scooter Libby, and the National Security Council's Middle East aide Elliott Abrams. The leaking against them – from sources who insist on anonymity, but some CIA and FBI veterans – is intense. Some of the sources are now private citizens, making a good living through business connections in the Arab world."

Speaking of business connections, how does Richard Perle make his living except by using his government connections to profit handsomely from the war-driven neocon agenda? Oh well, never mind that: let's get to the juicy part. Walker also reports that these poor persecuted neocons "are now beginning to fight back," and in a familiar fashion:

"Richard Perle told this reporter Tuesday that the gloves were off. ... Perle has no doubts that some of the attacks on him are coming directly from the CIA, in order to cover their own exposed rears, attacking Chalabi's intelligence to distract attention from their own mistakes. 'I believe that much of the CIA operation in Iraq was owned by Saddam Hussein,' Perle said. 'There were 45 decapitation attempts against Saddam – and he survived them all. How could that be, if he was not manipulating the intelligence?'"

Gee, I guess this means that, on account of all those failed "decapitation attempts" on Fidel Castro over the years, the Cuban Communists exercised joint ownership of the CIA along with Saddam's Ba'athists. Oh, what a Perle of wisdom, but the Prince of Darkness was just getting started:

"Perle went on to suggest an even darker motive behind the attacks on the neo-cons; that the real target was Israel's Likud government and the

staunch support for Israel's prime minister Ariel Sharon in the Bush administration. When this was put to one CIA source, the reply was mocking: 'That's what they always do. As soon as these guys get any criticism, they scream Israel and anti-Semitism, and I think people are finally beginning to see through that smokescreen.'"

How and why an investigation into Iranian penetration of our most closely guarded secrets constitutes evidence of "anti-Semitism" is a question I'll leave for weightier intellects to ponder. But such an unseemly outburst ought to put to rest any doubts about a neocon-Iranian convergence of interests: we know something's afoot when both Richard Perle and the Iranian mullahs sound absolutely identical in tone as well as content.

We knew what the neocons were capable of: smearing their enemies, lying about practically anything, even outing a CIA agent doing high-priority undercover work. Is anyone surprised that they're capable of espionage?

Perle is right about one thing: it's time to take the gloves off.

—Justin Raimondo

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THE NEW YORKER FACT

LETTER FROM WASHINGTON REAL INSIDERS

by JEFFREY GOLDBERG

A pro-Israel lobby and an F.B.I. sting.

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Several years ago, I had dinner at Galileo, a Washington restaurant, with Steven Rosen, who was the director of foreign-policy issues at the American Israel Public Affairs Committee. The group, which is better known by its acronym, AIPAC, lobbies for Israel's financial and physical security. Like many lobbyists, Rosen cultivated reporters, hoping to influence their writing while keeping his name out of print. He is a voluble man, and liked to demonstrate his erudition and dispense aphorisms. One that he often repeated could serve as the credo of K Street, the Rodeo Drive of Washington's influence industry: "A lobby is like a night flower: it thrives in the dark and dies in the sun."

Lobbyists tend to believe that legislators are susceptible to persuasion in ways that executive-branch bureaucrats are not, and before Rosen came to AIPAC, in 1982 (he had been at the RAND Corporation, a defense-oriented think tank), the group focussed mainly on Congress. But Rosen arrived brandishing a new idea: that the organization could influence the outcome of policy disputes within the executive branch—in particular, the Pentagon, the State Department, and the National Security Council.

Rosen began to court officials. He traded in gossip and speculation, and his reports to AIPAC's leaders helped them track currents in Middle East policymaking before those currents coalesced into executive orders. Rosen also used his contacts to carry AIPAC's agenda to the White House. An early success came in 1983, when he helped lobby for a strategic cooperation agreement between Israel and the United States, which was signed over the objections of Caspar Weinberger, the Secretary of Defense, and which led to a new level of intelligence sharing and military sales.

AIPAC is a leviathan among lobbies, as influential in its sphere as the National Rifle Association and the American Association of Retired Persons are in theirs, although it is, by comparison, much smaller. (AIPAC has about a hundred thousand members, the N.R.A. more than four million.) President Bush, speaking at the annual AIPAC conference in May of 2004, said, "You've always understood and warned against the evil ambition of terrorism and their networks. In a dangerous new century, your work is more vital than ever." AIPAC is unique in the top tier of lobbies because its concerns are the economic health and security of a foreign nation, and because its members are drawn almost entirely from a single ethnic group.

AIPAC's professional staff—it employs about a hundred people at its headquarters, two blocks from the Capitol—analyzes congressional voting records and shares the results with its members, who can then contribute money to candidates directly or to a network of pro-Israel political-action committees. The Center for Responsive Politics, a public-policy group, estimates that between 1990 and 2004 these PACs gave candidates and parties more than twenty million dollars.

Robert H. Asher, a former AIPAC president, told me that the PACs are usually given euphemistic names. "I started a PAC called Citizens Concerned for the National Interest," he said. Asher, who is from Chicago, is a retired manufacturer of lamps and shades, and a member of the so-called Gang of Four—former presidents of AIPAC, who steered the group's policies for more than two decades. (The three others are Larry Weinberg, a California real-estate developer and a former owner of the Portland Trail Blazers.)

Blazers; Edward Levy, a construction-materials executive from Detroit; and Mayer "Bubba" Mitchell, a retired builder based in Mobile, Alabama.)

AIPAC, Asher explained, is loyal to its friends and merciless to its enemies. In 1982, Asher led a campaign to defeat Paul Findley, a Republican congressman from Springfield, Illinois, who once referred to himself as "Yasir Arafat's best friend in Congress," and who later compared Arafat to Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr.

"There was a real desire to help Findley out of Congress," Asher said. He identified an obscure Democratic lawyer in Springfield, Richard Durbin, as someone who could defeat Findley. "We met at my apartment in Chicago, and I recruited him to run for Congress," he recalled. "I probed his views and I explained things that I had learned mostly from AIPAC. I wanted to make sure we were supporting someone who was not only against Paul Findley but also a friend of Israel."

Asher went on, "He beat Findley with a lot of help from Jews, in-state and out-of-state. Now, how did the Jewish money find him? I travelled around the country talking about how we had the opportunity to defeat someone unfriendly to Israel. And the gates opened." Durbin, who went on to win a Senate seat, is now the Democratic whip. He is a fierce critic of Bush's Iraq policy but, like AIPAC, generally supports the Administration's approach to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Durbin says that he considers Asher to be his "most loyal friend in the Jewish community."

Mayer Mitchell led a similar campaign, three years ago, to defeat Earl Hilliard, an Alabama congressman who was a critic of Israel. Mitchell helped direct support to a young Harvard Law School graduate named Artur Davis, who challenged Hilliard in the Democratic primary, and he solicited donations from AIPAC supporters across America. Davis won the primary, and the seat. "I asked Bubba how he felt after Davis won," Asher said, "and he said, 'Just like you did when Durbin got elected.'" Mitchell declined to comment.

AIPAC's leaders can be immoderately frank about the group's influence. At dinner that night with Steven Rosen, I mentioned a controversy that had enveloped AIPAC in 1992. David Steiner, a New Jersey real-estate developer who was then serving as AIPAC's president, was caught on tape boasting that he had "cut a deal" with the Administration of George H. W. Bush to provide more aid to Israel. Steiner also said that he was "negotiating" with the incoming Clinton Administration over the appointment of a pro-Israel Secretary of State. "We have a dozen people in his"—Clinton's—"headquarters . . . and they are all going to get big jobs," Steiner said. Soon after the tape's existence was disclosed, Steiner resigned his post. I asked Rosen if AIPAC suffered a loss of influence after the Steiner affair. A half smile appeared on his face, and he pushed a napkin across the table. "You see this napkin?" he said. "In twenty-four hours, we could have the signatures of seventy senators on this napkin."

Rosen was influential from the start. He was originally recruited for the job by Larry Weinberg, one of the Gang of Four, and he helped choose the group's leaders, including the current executive director, Howard Kohr, a Republican who began his AIPAC career as Rosen's deputy. Rosen, who can be argumentative and impolitic, was never a candidate for the top post. "He's a bit of a *kochleff*"—the Yiddish term for a pot-stirrer, or meddler—Martin Indyk, who also served as Rosen's deputy, and who went on to become President Clinton's Ambassador to Israel, says. Rosen has had an unusually eventful private life, marrying and divorcing six times (he is living again with his first wife); and he has a well-developed sense of paranoia. When we met, he would sometimes lower his voice, even when he was preparing to deliver an anodyne pronouncement. "Hostile ears are always listening," he was fond of saying.

Nevertheless, he is a keen analyst of Middle East politics, and a savvy bureaucratic infighter. His

views on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict are not notably hawkish; he once called himself "too right for the left, and too left for the right." He is a hard-liner on only one subject—Iran—and this preoccupation helped shape AIPAC's position: that Iran poses a greater threat to Israel than any other nation. In this way, AIPAC is in agreement with a long line of Israeli leaders, including Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, who fears Iran's nuclear intentions more than he ever feared Saddam Hussein's. (AIPAC lobbied Congress in favor of the Iraq war, but Iraq has not been one of its chief concerns.) Rosen's main role at AIPAC, he once told me, was to collect evidence of "Iranian perfidy" and share it with the United States.

Unlike American neoconservatives, who have openly supported the Likud Party over the more liberal Labor Party, AIPAC does not generally take sides in Israeli politics. But on Iran AIPAC's views resemble those of the neoconservatives. In 1996, Rosen and other AIPAC staff members helped write, and engineer the passage of, the Iran and Libya Sanctions Act, which imposed sanctions on foreign oil companies doing business with those two countries; AIPAC is determined, above all, to deny Iran the ability to manufacture nuclear weapons. Iran was a main focus of this year's AIPAC policy conference, which was held in May at the Washington Convention Center. Ariel Sharon and Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, among others, addressed five thousand AIPAC members. One hall of the convention center was taken up by a Disney-style walk-through display of an Iranian nuclear facility. It was kitsch, but not ineffective, and Rosen undoubtedly would have appreciated it. Rosen, however, was not there. He was fired earlier this year by Howard Kohr, nine months after he became implicated in an F.B.I. espionage investigation. Rosen's lawyer, Abbe Lowell, expects him to be indicted on charges of passing secret information about Iranian intelligence activities in Iraq to an official of the Israeli Embassy and to a *Washington Post* reporter. A junior colleague, Keith Weissman, who served as an Iran analyst for AIPAC until he, too, was fired, may face similar charges.

The person who, in essence, ended Rosen's career is a fifty-eight-year-old Pentagon analyst named Lawrence Anthony Franklin, who is even more preoccupied with Iran than Steven Rosen. Franklin, until recently the Pentagon's Iran desk officer, was indicted last month on espionage charges. The Justice Department has accused him of giving "national-defense information" to Rosen and Weissman, and classified information to an Israeli official. Franklin has pleaded not guilty; a tentative trial date is set for September. If convicted, he will face at least ten years in prison.

I first met Franklin in November of 2002. Paul Wolfowitz, then the Deputy Secretary of Defense, was receiving the Henry M. (Scoop) Jackson award from the Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs, a conservative-leaning group that tries to build close relations between the American and Israeli militaries. In the ballroom of the Ritz-Carlton Hotel at Pentagon City, a shopping mall, were a number of American generals and the Israeli Ambassador to the United States, Danny Ayalon.

Franklin, a trim man with blond hair and a military bearing, is a colonel in the Air Force Reserve who spent several years as an analyst at the Defense Intelligence Agency. He has a doctorate in Asian studies and describes himself as a capable speaker of Farsi. In addition, he was a Catholic in a largely Jewish network of Pentagon Iran hawks.

Franklin was particularly close to the neoconservative Harold Rhode, an official in the Office of Net Assessment, the Pentagon's in-house think tank. Franklin was also close to Michael Ledeen, who, twenty years ago, played an important role in the Iran-Contra scandal by helping arrange meetings between the American government and the Iranian arms dealer Manucher Ghorbanifar. Ledeen, now a resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute, is one of the most outspoken advocates in Washington of confrontation with the Tehran regime.

The conversation at the banquet, and just about everywhere else in official Washington at that time, centered on the coming war in Iraq. "We may well hope that with the demise of a truly evil and despotic regime in Iraq, we will see the liberation of one of the most talented peoples in the Arab world," Wolfowitz said in his speech. Franklin did not seem especially concerned with the topic at hand. As we stood outside the banquet hall, he said that Iran, not Iraq, would turn out to be the most difficult challenge in the war on terror.

Then, as now, the Administration was divided on the question of Iran. Many of the political appointees at the Defense Department hoped that America would support dissidents in an attempt to overthrow Iran's ruling clerics, while the State Department argued for containment. Even within the Defense Department, many officials believed that it would be imprudent to make regime change in Tehran a top priority. "There are neocons who thought Iran should come sooner and neocons who thought it should come later," Reuel Marc Gerecht, of the American Enterprise Institute, told me. As for Franklin, Gerecht, a former Iran specialist in the C.I.A.'s Directorate of Operations, said, "It's fair to say that Larry was impatient with Bush Administration policy on Iran." In the Pentagon's policy office, I learned later, it was sometimes said that Franklin inhabited a place called Planet Franklin. Gerecht referred to him as "sweet, bumbling Larry."

A year later, on a reporting assignment in Israel, I ran into Franklin at the Herzliya Conference, which is the Davos of the Israeli security establishment. He said that he was there on Defense Department business. We talked briefly about Iraq—it was eight months after the invasion—and, as we spoke, General Moshe Ya'alon, then the Israeli Army chief of staff, swept into the room surrounded by bodyguards and uniformed aides. "Wow," Franklin said.

We stepped outside, and he talked only about Iran's threat to America. "Our intelligence is blind," he said. "It's the most dangerous country in the world to the U.S., and we have nothing on the ground. We don't understand anything that goes on. I mean, the C.I.A. doesn't have anything. This goes way deeper than Tenet"—George Tenet, who was the director of central intelligence at the time. He continued, "Do you know how dangerous Iran is to our forces in the Gulf? We have great force-concentration issues now"—the presence of American troops in Iraq—"and the Iranians are very interested in making life difficult for American forces. They have the capability. You watch what they're doing in Iraq. Their infiltration is everywhere."

Franklin seemed more frustrated with American policy in Iran than he had the year before. "We don't understand that it's doable—regime change is doable," he said. "The people are so desperate to become free, and the mullahs are so unpopular. They're so pro-American, the people." Referring to the Bush Administration, he said, "That's what they don't understand," and he added, "And they also don't understand how anti-American the mullahs are." Franklin was convinced that the Iranians would commit acts of terrorism against Americans, on American soil. "These guys are a threat to us in Iraq and even at home," he said.

Franklin was not a high-ranking Pentagon official; he was five steps removed in the hierarchy from Douglas Feith, the Under-Secretary for Policy. For two years, though, he had been trying to change American policy. His efforts took many forms, including calls to reporters, meetings with Rosen and Weissman and with the political counsellor at the Israeli Embassy, Naor Gilon. According to Tracy O'Grady-Walsh, a Pentagon spokeswoman, he was not acting on behalf of his superiors: "If Larry Franklin was formally or informally lobbying, he was doing it on his own."

Franklin also sought information from Iranian dissidents who might aid his cause. In December of 2001, he and Rhode met in Rome with Michael Ledeen and a group of Iranians, including Manucher Ghorbanifar. Ledeen, who helped arrange the meeting, told me that the dissidents gave Franklin and Rhode information about Iranian threats against American soldiers in Afghanistan.

(Rhode did not return calls seeking comment.) Franklin was initially skeptical about the meeting, Ledeen said, but emerged believing that America could do business with these dissidents.

Franklin's meetings with Gilon and with the two AIPAC men make up the heart of the indictment against him. The indictment alleges that Rosen—"CC-1," or "Co-Conspirator 1"—called the Pentagon in early August of 2002, looking for the name of an Iran specialist. He made contact with Franklin a short time later, but, according to the indictment, they did not meet until February of 2003. In their meetings, according to several people with knowledge of the conversations, Franklin told the lobbyists that Secretary of State Colin Powell was resisting attempts by the Pentagon to formulate a tougher Iran policy. He apparently hoped to use AIPAC to lobby the Administration.

The Franklin indictment suggests that the F.B.I. had been watching Rosen as well; for instance, it alleges that, in February of 2003, Rosen, on his way to a meeting with Franklin, told someone on the phone that he "was excited to meet with a 'Pentagon guy' because this person was a 'real insider.'" Franklin, Rosen, and Weissman met openly four times in 2003. At one point, the indictment reads, somewhat mysteriously, "On or about March 10, 2003, Franklin, CC-1 and CC-2"—Rosen and Weissman—"met at Union Station early in the morning. In the course of the meeting, the three men moved from one restaurant to another restaurant and then finished the meeting in an empty restaurant."

On June 26, 2003, at a lunch at the Tivoli Restaurant, near the Pentagon, Franklin reportedly told Rosen and Weissman about a draft of a National Security Presidential Directive that outlined a series of tougher steps that the U.S. could take against the Iranian leadership. The draft was written by a young Pentagon aide named Michael Rubin (who is now affiliated with the American Enterprise Institute). Franklin did not hand over a copy of the draft, but he described its contents, and, according to the indictment, talked about the "state of internal United States government deliberations." The indictment also alleges that Franklin gave the two men "highly classified" information about potential attacks on American forces in Iraq.

In mid-August of 2002, according to the indictment, Franklin met with Gilon—identified simply as "FO," or "foreign official"—at a restaurant, and Gilon explained to Franklin that he was the "policy" person at the Embassy. The two met regularly, the indictment alleges, often at the Pentagon Officers' Athletic Club, to discuss "foreign policy issues," particularly regarding a "Middle Eastern country"—Iran, by all accounts—and "its nuclear program." The indictment suggests that Franklin was receiving information and policy advice from Gilon; after one meeting, Franklin drafted an "Action Memo" to his supervisors incorporating Gilon's suggestions. Gilon is an expert on weapons proliferation, according to Danny Ayalon, the Israeli Ambassador, and has briefed reporters about Israel's position on Iran. According to Lawrence Di Rita, a Pentagon spokesman, it is part of the "job description" of Defense Department desk officers to meet with their foreign counterparts. "Desk officers meet with foreign officials all the time, not with ministers, but interactions with people at their level," he said. The indictment contends, however, that on two occasions Franklin gave Gilon classified information.

The issue of Israel's activities in Washington is unusually sensitive. Twenty years ago, a civilian Naval Intelligence analyst named Jonathan Pollard was caught stealing American secrets on behalf of an Israeli intelligence cell—a "rogue" cell, the Israelis later claimed. Pollard said that he was driven to treason because, as a Jew, he could not abide what he saw as America's unwillingness to share crucial intelligence with Israel. Pollard's actions were an embarrassment for American Jews, who fear the accusation of "dual loyalty"—the idea that they split their allegiance between the United States and Israel. For Israel, the case was a moral and political disaster. And there are some in the American intelligence community who suspect that Israel has never stopped spying on the United States.

Earlier this month, Ayalon told me that Israel does not "collect any intelligence on the United States, period, full stop. We won't do anything to risk this most important relationship." In any case, he said, there was no need to spy, "because coöperation is so intimate and effective between Israel and the U.S." Ayalon also said that Gilon, who is returning to Jerusalem later this summer, remains an important member of his staff; in recent months, Gilon has attended meetings at the State Department, the Pentagon, and the White House.

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In June of 2004, F.B.I. agents searched Franklin's Pentagon office and his home in West Virginia, and allegedly found eighty-three classified documents. Some had to do with the Iran debate, but some pertained to Al Qaeda and Iraq. (A separate federal indictment, citing the documents, has been handed down in West Virginia.) According to a person with knowledge of Franklin's case, the agents told Franklin that Rosen and Weissman were working against America's interests. Franklin faced ruin—the documents found in his house could cost him his job, the agents said. Franklin, who did not have a lawyer, agreed to coöperate in the investigation of Rosen and Weissman, although apparently he was not given in return a specific promise of leniency. Soon, he was wired, and was asked to contact the two AIPAC employees. On July 21st, Franklin called Weissman and said that he had to speak to him immediately—that it was a matter of life and death. They arranged to meet outside the Nordstrom's department store at Pentagon City.

A month before that meeting, *The New Yorker* had published an article by Seymour Hersh about the activities of Israeli intelligence agents in northern Iraq. Franklin, who held a top-secret security clearance, allegedly told Weissman that he had new, classified information indicating that Iranian agents were planning to kidnap and kill the Israelis referred to by Hersh. American intelligence knew about the threat, Franklin said, but Israel might not. He also said that the Iranians had infiltrated southern Iraq, and were planning attacks on American soldiers. Rosen and Weissman, Franklin hoped, could insure that senior Administration officials received this news. It is unclear whether what Franklin relayed was true or whether it had been manufactured by the F.B.I. The Bureau has refused to comment on the case.

Weissman hurried back to AIPAC's headquarters and briefed Rosen and Howard Kohr, AIPAC's executive director. According to AIPAC sources, Rosen and Weissman asked Kohr to give the information to Elliott Abrams, the senior Middle East official on the National Security Council. Kohr didn't get in touch with Abrams, but Rosen and Weissman made two calls. They called Gilon and told him about the threat to Israeli agents in Iraq, and then they called Glenn Kessler, a diplomatic correspondent at the *Washington Post*, and told him about the threat to Americans.

A month later, on the morning of August 27, 2004, F.B.I. agents visited Rosen at his home, in Silver Spring, Maryland, seeking to question him. Rosen quickly called AIPAC's lawyers. That night, CBS News reported that an unnamed Israeli "mole" had been discovered in the Pentagon, and that the mole had been passing documents to two officials of AIPAC, who were passing the documents on to Israeli officials.

Within days, the names of Franklin, Rosen, and Weissman were made public. The F.B.I. informed Franklin that he was going to be charged with illegal possession of classified documents. Franklin was said by friends to be frightened, and surprised. He said that he could not afford to hire a lawyer. The F.B.I. arranged for a court-appointed attorney to represent him. The lawyer, a former federal prosecutor, advised him to plead guilty to espionage charges, and receive a prison sentence of six to eight years.

At about this time, Franklin received a call from Michael Ledeen, his ally in matters of Iran.

policy. "I called him and said, 'Larry, what's going on?' " Ledeen recalled. "He said, 'Don't worry, Sharansky' "—Natan Sharansky, the former Soviet dissident—" 'survived years in the Gulag, and I'll survive prison, too.' I said, 'What are you talking about?' He told me what was going on. I asked him if he had a good lawyer." Ledeen called the criminal-defense attorney Plato Cacheris. "I knew him from when he served as Fawn's attorney," Ledeen said, referring to Fawn Hall, who was Colonel Oliver North's secretary at the time of the Iran-Contra affair. Cacheris has also represented Monica Lewinsky and the F.B.I. agent Robert Hanssen, who spied for Moscow. Cacheris offered to represent Franklin pro bono, and Franklin accepted the offer.

AIPAC launched a special appeal for donations—for the organization, not for Rosen and Weissman. "Your generosity at this time will help ensure that false allegations do not hamper our ability or yours to work for a strong U.S.-Israel relationship and a safe and secure Israel," AIPAC's leaders wrote in the letter accompanying the appeal.

But in December four AIPAC officials, including Kohr, were subpoenaed to testify before a grand jury in Alexandria, Virginia. In March, AIPAC's principal lawyer, Nathan Lewin, met with the U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia, Paul McNulty, who agreed to let Lewin see some of the evidence of the Pentagon City sting. According to an AIPAC source, an eleven-second portion of the telephone conversation between Rosen, Weissman, and the *Post's* Glenn Kessler, which the F.B.I. had recorded, was played for Lewin. In that conversation, Rosen is alleged to have told Kessler about Iranian agents in southern Iraq—information that Weissman had received from Franklin. In the part of the conversation that Lewin heard, Rosen jokes about "not getting in trouble" over the information. He also notes, "At least we have no Official Secrets Act"—the British law that makes journalists liable to prosecution if they publish classified material.

Prosecutors argued to Lewin that this statement proved that Rosen and Weissman were aware that the information Franklin had given them was classified, and that Rosen must therefore have known that he was passing classified information to Gilon, a foreign official. Lewin, who declined to comment on the case, recommended that AIPAC fire Rosen and Weissman. He also told the board that McNulty had promised that AIPAC itself would not be a target of the espionage investigation. An AIPAC spokesman, Patrick Dorton, said of the firing, "Rosen and Weissman were dismissed because they engaged in conduct that was not part of their jobs, and because this conduct did not comport with the standards that AIPAC expects and requires of its employees."

When I asked Abbe Lowell, Rosen's lawyer, about the firings, he said, "Steve Rosen's dealings with Larry Franklin were akin to his dealings with executive-branch officials for more than two decades and were well known, encouraged, and appreciated by AIPAC."

Last month, I met with Lowell and Rosen in Lowell's office, which these days is a center of Washington scandal management. (He also represents the fallen lobbyist Jack Abramoff.) Lowell had instructed Rosen not to discuss specifics of the case, but Rosen expressed disbelief that his career had been ended by an F.B.I. investigation. "I'm being looked at for things I've done for twenty-three years, which other foreign-policy groups, hundreds of foreign-policy groups, are doing," Rosen said, and went on, "Our job at AIPAC was to understand what the government is doing, in order to help form better policies, in the interests of the U.S. I've never done anything illegal or harmful to the U.S. I never even dreamed of doing anything harmful to the U.S." Later, he said, "We did not knowingly receive classified information from Larry Franklin." Lowell added, "When the facts are known, this will be a case not about Rosen and Weissman's actions but about the government's actions." Lowell said that he would not rehearse his arguments against any charges until there is an indictment.

Rosen said that he was particularly upset by the allegation that, because he had informed Gilon

that Israeli lives might be in danger, he was a spy for Israel. "If I had been given information that British or Australian soldiers were going to be kidnapped or killed in Iraq, I think I would have done the same thing," he said. "I'd have tried to warn them by calling friends at those embassies." He wants to believe that he could return to AIPAC if he is exonerated, but this does not seem likely. AIPAC leaders are downplaying Rosen's importance to the organization. "AIPAC is focussed primarily on legislative lobbying," Dorton told me. Rosen's severance pay will end in September, although AIPAC, in accordance with its bylaws, will continue to pay legal fees for Rosen and Weissman.

Rosen's defenders are critical of AIPAC for its handling of the controversy. Martin Indyk, who is now the director of the Saban Center for Middle East Policy, a think tank within the Brookings Institution, thinks that AIPAC made a tactical mistake by cutting off the two men. "It appears they've abandoned their own on the battlefield," he says. "Because they cut Steve off, they leave him no choice." Indyk wouldn't elaborate, but the implication was clear: Rosen and Weissman will defend themselves by arguing that they were working in concert with the highest officials of the organization, including Kohr.

Until there is an indictment, the government's full case against Rosen and Weissman cannot be known; no one in the Justice Department will comment. The laws concerning the dissemination of government secrets are sometimes ambiguous and often unenforced, and prosecutors in such cases face complex choices. According to Lee Strickland, a former chief privacy officer of the C.I.A., prosecutors pressing espionage charges against Rosen and Weissman would have to prove that the information the two men gave to Gilon not merely was classified but rose to the level of "national-defense information," meaning that it could cause dire harm to the United States. Yet a reporter who called the Embassy to discuss the same information in the course of preparing a story—thus violating the same statute—would almost certainly not be prosecuted. Strickland continued, "Twice in the Clinton Administration we had proposals to broaden the statutes to include the recipients, not just the leakers, of classified information. The *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* went bat-shit about this legislation. They saw it as an attempt to shut down leaks." If American law did punish those who receive, and then pass on, or publish, privileged information, much of the Washington press corps would be in jail, according to Lee Levine, a First Amendment lawyer. So would a great many government officials, elected and appointed, for whom classified information is the currency of conversation with reporters and lobbyists.

Strickland, who said that he had spent much of his career at the C.I.A. "shutting down" leaks, called the AIPAC affair "uncharted territory." It is uncommon, he said, for an espionage case to be built on the oral transmission of national-defense information. He also said, "Intent is always an element. If I were a defense attorney, I would argue that this was a form of entrapment. The F.B.I. agents deliberately set my client up, put him in a moral quandary." He added, however, that although a jury might recognize the quandary, the law does not. "Just because you have information that would help a foreign country doesn't make it your job to pass that information."

Even some of AIPAC's most vigorous critics do not see the Rosen affair as a traditional espionage case. James Bamford, who is the author of well-received books about the National Security Agency, and an often vocal critic of Israel and the pro-Israel lobby, sees the case as a cautionary tale about one lobbying group's disproportionate influence: "What Pollard did was espionage. This is a much different and more unique animal—this is the selling of ideology, trying to sell a viewpoint." He continued, "Larry Franklin is not going to knock on George Bush's door, but he can get AIPAC, which is a pressure group, and the Israeli government, which is an enormous pressure group, to try to get the American government to change its policy to a more aggressive policy." Bamford, who believes that Weissman and Rosen may indeed be guilty of soliciting information and passing it to a foreign government, sees the case as a kind of brushback pitch, a way of limiting AIPAC's long—and, in Bamford's view, dangerous—reach.

Other AIPAC critics see the lobby's behavior as business as usual in Washington. "The No. 1 game in Washington is making people talking to you feel like you're an insider, that you've got information no one else has," Sam Gejdenson, a former Democratic congressman from Connecticut, says. When Gejdenson opposed a proposal to increase Israel's foreign-aid allocation at the expense of more economically needy countries, AIPAC, he said, responded by "sitting on its hands" during his reelection campaigns, despite the fact that he is Jewish. "It's like any other lobbying group," he said. "Its job isn't to come up with the best ideas for mankind, or the U.S. It's narrowly focussed."

AIPAC officials insist that the case has not affected the organization's effectiveness. But its operations have certainly been hindered by the controversy of the past year, and the F.B.I. sting may force lobbyists of all sorts to be more careful about trying to penetrate the executive branch—and about leaking to reporters. And AIPAC now seems acutely sensitive to the appearance of dual loyalty. The theme of this year's AIPAC conference was "Israel, an American Value," and, for the first time, "Hatikvah," the Israeli national anthem, was not sung. The only anthem heard was "The Star-Spangled Banner." ♦



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Lawyer: Franklin Used In AIPAC Sting

Ron Kampeas and Matthew E. Berger
Special to the Jewish Times

JULY 11, 2005
Washington

Lawrence Franklin, the Pentagon analyst at the center of the government's espionage case against two former employees of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, "walked onstage" into an ongoing investigation of AIPAC officials, according to his attorney:

Plato Cacheris, one of Washington's best-known espionage lawyers, told JTA in a recent interview that he is representing Franklin for free because he feels his client was unfairly targeted.

"I felt for him," Cacheris said. "I felt he was unfairly put upon."

Franklin was indicted last month on charges that he conspired to reveal classified information to two AIPAC officials, former policy director Steve Rosen and former Iran analyst Keith Weissman, and an Israeli Embassy employee.

Franklin's trial is set to start Sept. 6. The midlevel Iran analyst has plead not guilty.

"Franklin walked onstage; there already was an investigation going on not involving him," Cacheris said.

Prosecutors and other government officials have refused to comment on the case.

The information that Franklin allegedly relayed to Rosen and Weissman centered on Iran's activities in post-invasion Iraq.

Cacheris' assertion that Franklin was an accidental target in the case reinforces the perception held by those close to the defense of Weissman and Rosen that the two former AIPAC employees were the FBI's original targets.

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Indeed, Franklin's indictment cites as evidence apparently tapped phone conversations of Rosen even before he met Franklin, suggesting that the government stumbled across Franklin in the course of tracking Rosen.

Another source familiar with the government's case against Rosen says an investigation was launched as early as September 2001 because the Bush administration wanted to quash what it believed was a promiscuous culture of leaking in Washington. Rosen was renowned for his access to inside information.

Cacheris would not speculate about the government's rationale for the case. "There seems to me there is something driving it," he said. "What it is, I don't know yet."

Five of the six charges in Franklin's indictment focus on his relationship with Rosen and Weissman; the sixth involves his relationship with Naor Gilon, head of the political desk at the Israeli Embassy in Washington. According to the indictment, Franklin's acquaintance with Gilon predates his meetings with Rosen and Weissman.

Cacheris said a relationship between Gilon and Franklin — two men with a professional interest in Iran — was hardly surprising. He characterized the indictment's implication that Franklin sought something from Israel in exchange for information as "rather flimsy."

The indictment mentions a store gift card Franklin received from Gilon and a letter of reference Gilon wrote on behalf of Franklin's daughter, who was going to visit Israel.

Franklin sought Cacheris' legal assistance late last year after the FBI said it would press charges against him, even though he had cooperated with the government's investigation of Rosen and Weissman.

Asked why Franklin agreed to the FBI's alleged request last June to participate in a sting operation involving Weissman and Rosen without even asking for a lawyer or any quid pro quo, Cacheris smiled.

"Larry's a little bit guileless — maybe a lot guileless — and maybe a bit unsophisticated for a guy with a Ph.D. in Asian studies," said Cacheris, a Southerner with an avuncular manner and a fondness for seersucker suits. "The questions that you would have asked, he didn't ask."

"If he had a lawyer up front, we wouldn't be talking today," Cacheris said.

In the alleged sting on July 21, 2004, Franklin called Weissman and insisted that they meet as soon as possible. When they met later that day at a shopping mall, Franklin told Weissman that Iranian agents planned to imminently kidnap, torture and kill Israeli and American agents in northern Iraq, according to sources.

Franklin reportedly asked Weissman to relay the information to Elliott Abrams, then the assistant national security adviser at the White House in charge of dealing with the Middle East. The presumption was that AIPAC would have better access to the White House than a mid-level Iran analyst at the Pentagon.

The reliability of the information has never been verified, but Cacheris insists Franklin was embroiled in a sting operation.

"He was given a script," the attorney said.

Weissman relayed the information to Rosen, and together they told their boss, AIPAC's executive director Howard Kohr, asking him to pass it on to Abrams, according to multiple sources. There is no evidence that Kohr shared the information with Abrams or anyone else or that he knew it was classified.

The government has assured AIPAC that neither it nor Kohr are targets in the investigation, AIPAC has said.

Cacheris said he does not know if the alleged sting was directed at anyone beyond Rosen or Weissman.

The two AIPAC staffers also relayed the information to Gilon at the Israeli Embassy and to Glenn Kessler, The Washington Post's State Department correspondent, according to sources close to the defense.

Those two conversations are expected to be central to the case against Rosen and Weissman. Indictments against the two are expected to be handed down sometime this summer.

The government will argue that relaying classified information to a foreign agent is an act of espionage and that Rosen and Weissman made it clear in their conversation with Kessler that the information was classified, according to defense sources familiar with the government's case.

Weissman and Rosen will say they did not know that the information was classified and that the government is distorting their conversation with Kessler, according to sources close to the former AIPAC officials.

In August 2004, about a month after the alleged sting, FBI agents raided the offices of Rosen and Weissman at AIPAC headquarters. In

January, the government convened a grand jury in Virginia to consider the case.

Cacheris, famous for handling high-profile espionage cases -- including those against the FBI's Robert Hannsen and the CIA's Aldrich Ames -- doesn't believe the government has a lot to go on.

The exchanges that Rosen, Weissman and Franklin allegedly had are "very common," Cacheris said. "People in this city are talking every day about stuff they're not allowed to talk about. It's not inappropriate."

AIPAC fired Weissman and Rosen in March, after months of defending their integrity, citing information that arose out of the FBI investigation.

Franklin also faces charges in West Virginia, his place of residence, where he is alleged to have violated a ban on removing classified documents from the Virginia-Maryland-D.C. region by taking some items home. Franklin was reprimanded in the late 1990s for the same reason but was allowed to keep his security clearance.

Cacheris said he wasn't currently negotiating a deal for Franklin.

"We will not plead to an espionage count because we don't think that is justified," he said.

Cacheris did not rule out agreeing to a plea bargain on a lesser charge in the future.

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The Big Chill

by LAURA ROZEN

[posted online on July 14, 2005]

A chill has taken hold lately among both government officials and the US media. It comes in the wake of a US district court's decision to jail a *New York Times* reporter for refusing to reveal to a grand jury her sources in the Bush Administration and the FBI investigation of a Pentagon Iran analyst for leaking classified information to former officials with the pro-Israel lobby group AIPAC. As a result, those who engage in what have long been standard Washington practices--reporters ferreting out information from government sources, those sources confiding in policy associates, lobbyists and reporters--have become increasingly inhibited in carrying out their jobs.

Even as a press frenzy surrounds a grand jury investigation of whether top presidential advisor Karl Rove leaked a CIA officer's identity to the press, unease in the Washington policy and journalistic communities is also evident. In the wake of *Times* reporter Judith Miller's jailing and in fear of government prosecution, the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* has decided, on the advice of its lawyers, not to publish two major articles based on leaked government information. At a recent gathering in a suburban Maryland living room, the conversation among a handful of foreign policy experts and reporters was about the sense of fear and clampdown. One government expert was convinced office phone conversations were regularly monitored by higher-ups, and reporters noted that senior government sources, intimidated by the Franklin investigation, have become more tight-lipped.

While the Franklin/AIPAC investigation is often described as a counterintelligence case, it too is really about government leaks, and the Bush Administration's determination to plug them. On September 9, 2001, the *New York Times* published a story by then-State Department correspondent Jane Perlez, who reported a major shift in what had been the Bush Administration's rejection of the Clinton Administration's deep engagement in trying to broker a peace settlement between Israelis and Palestinians. Perlez reported that after months of refusing to meet with Yasir Arafat, George W. Bush would grant the

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Palestinian leader his first audience with the new US President at an upcoming UN General Assembly gathering in New York "if progress were made in high-level talks between the Palestinians and the Israelis."

That meeting between Bush and Arafat never happened. Two days after the Times story appeared, Al Qaeda terrorists crashed planes into the World Trade Center, the Pentagon and a field in Pennsylvania, killing almost 3,000 people. In the aftermath of those attacks, few people recalled that for a brief moment in the late summer of 2001, the Bush Administration had considered meeting with Arafat and deepening its political involvement in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Everyone forgot, except the FBI. According to a recent report by the Jewish Telegraphic Agency, it was that September 2001 news article, based on leaks of sensitive Administration deliberations, that prompted then-National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice to demand an FBI leak investigation that has since taken on a dramatic life of its own. Most recently, the investigation has led to the federal grand jury indictment, unsealed last month, of Pentagon Iran desk officer Larry Franklin on charges involving conspiracy to disclose classified national defense information to unauthorized recipients. It is expected to lead to indictments, under the Espionage Act, of two recently dismissed employees of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee for engaging in a conspiracy to receive and pass on to other unauthorized recipients what they knew to be classified information. They are AIPAC's former director of foreign policy research, Steve Rosen, and his deputy, Iran specialist Keith Weissman. Among those the FBI reportedly wants to interview as a potential witness in its investigation is a Washington Post journalist who was allegedly briefed on some of the classified information by the former AIPAC officials--information those officials had allegedly received from Franklin in an FBI-arranged sting. In addition, Franklin, Rosen and Weissman are all alleged to have relayed classified national defense information to an Israeli Embassy official. It is this latter connection that has raised talk of espionage.

How does an investigation of a leak to the news media turn into an indictment that alleges a conspiracy to disclose US national security information illegally to, among others, a foreign official, with more indictments expected? The evidence available in the Franklin indictment and other sources does not seem to show the intention to commit espionage on behalf of Israel so much as the desire to cultivate Washington alliances that Franklin, Rosen and Weissman considered useful in the promotion of their own policy positions in the US government. As with most administrations, in the Bush Administration leaks have been employed by bureaucratic warriors on all sides of the heated Mideast policy debates to influence sensitive deliberations and take stabs at their opponents. It's worth noting that President Bush's top political adviser, Karl Rove, has been revealed as a suspect in a federal grand jury investigation (the same one in which Times reporter Miller has been jailed) of the circumstances by which a CIA officer's identity was leaked to Washington reporters in an apparent Administration effort to discredit her husband, Joseph Wilson, a former diplomat critical of the President's Iraq War policy.

In interviewing several sources knowledgeable about the investigation, what emerges is a complex portrait of Washington Mideast policy-making at a critical time, in the aftermath of the September 11 attacks, when there were near-constant interagency battles over the direction of US policy, not just on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict but toward Iran and Iranian-backed forces in Iraq as well. What also emerges is a more detailed picture of the modus operandi of a brilliant and, some say, ruthless bureaucratic infighter at the country's premiere Mideast lobbying group, who was emboldened by his long relationships with figures in and around the Bush Administration and the Washington scene to behave almost as an unofficial diplomatic entity in his own right.

The fact that that brilliant player, Steve Rosen, could become the target of a counterintelligence investigation during this Republican Administration is rich in irony. Several former Rosen associates describe him as a genius at political strategy and subterfuge, the Karl Rove of Jewish-American politics, who helped engineer the lobby group's shift to the right on the American political spectrum; helped broker a strategic alliance between the pro-Israel lobby and Republican far-right legislators, including Senator Jesse Helms, in the 1980s; and who marshaled his organization's resources to conduct de facto intelligence operations of his own.

As former associates and AIPAC officials describe it, those operations were replete with enemies' lists of journalists and public figures. Rosen sent AIPAC interns as spies to take notes on the political views of other members of the small world of Jewish community political activism. One former AIPAC intern told The Nation that he was sent by Rosen to Arab-American conferences disguised as a WASP-y, pro-Palestinian liberal to find out which US Congressional candidates the attending groups were supporting. Former associates recite a list of AIPAC officials with Democratic staff connections on Capitol Hill who were purged from the organization in part, they allege, because of Rosen's strategic efforts to move AIPAC decisively to the right. (Sources close to Rosen say that he wasn't acting on his own in any of these endeavors, but as part of the organization. A source close to AIPAC downplays these activities and suggests that many of them ended years ago.)

Rosen's "entire goal was to shift the organization away from a heavy reliance on Democrats and switch it to Republicans," says M.J. Rosenberg, director of the Washington office of the Israel Policy Forum and the former editor of an AIPAC weekly newsletter who overlapped with Rosen at the organization in the early 1980s. "Why? Because he thought, maybe correctly, that the wave of the future was the right wing of the Republican Party."

While such alleged efforts have made Rosen an object of controversy among some more left leaning members of the politically-active Washington Jewish policy community, even those who are not his fans do not believe Rosen is a spy. They describe a man motivated not so much by concern for Israel as a quest for behind-the-scenes power in Washington. "Steve Rosen doesn't give a damn about Israel," a Jewish community activist who requested anonymity explained. "These are game players. For them, it's all about the game."

For Rosen, that game became focused on Iran some time ago, in the early 1990s. According to former AIPAC sources, the reasons included a request by then-Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin that AIPAC to stay out of delicate US-Israel negotiations over the Mideast peace process.

"From...when Rabin came in, Steve's mandate has been to go after Iran, largely because Rabin didn't want him messing around with the peace process," says one veteran lobbyist who requested anonymity. "Steve took it and ran with it beyond anyone's expectations. So what comes out of it is that you have a [US] Iran policy that AIPAC is driving. And this went well into the last [Clinton] Administration.

"Then along comes a new Administration that is made up of the same neocons that were promoting the [hawkish] Iran policy," the veteran lobbyist continued, "but this Administration was divided down the center.... On the one hand, you have the neocons...on the other side, you have Powell and Richard Armitage and the State department [and the CIA], who want to try to open up a dialogue. One is for confrontation, and one is for dialogue.... So the neocons, the Iran hawks, know that they have got a natural ally...at other think tanks around town who feel the same way they do.... They also have AIPAC, which has made [Iran] its number-one issue.... My guess is that they went to AIPAC and the others with the same message: 'You have friends we don't have. Help us to persuade them to see it our way.'"

Persuading political heavyweights to see things his way was what Rosen was all about. Sources tell *The Nation* that Rosen has a long history of cultivating executive branch sources [see Rozen, "Hall of Mirrors," posted here in May], milking them for information, boasting about his access to AIPAC's funders and leadership, and engaging in strategic press leaks as a regular part of his efforts to influence policy and engage in bureaucratic warfare.

Indeed, the unsealed twenty-page Franklin indictment offers a fascinating peek into the government's view of the Pentagon analyst and the AIPAC officials cultivating one another, presumably attempting to tip the Bush Administration toward a harder line against Iran. For the AIPAC officials, Franklin--who often appears frustrated at bureaucratic obstacles to this harder line--seems to have offered grumbling and insights on the bitter interagency Iran policy debates inside the Administration. For Franklin, the AIPAC officials must have seemed like sympathetic political sophisticates, freed from the tyranny of working in the government bureaucracy but with impressive influence among high-level officials in the White House and key members of Congress. Indeed, in a fascinating reversal of the ordinary official-lobbyist relationship, it appears from the indictment that Franklin thought Rosen could bypass the bureaucracy and take Franklin's information straight to the White House, and possibly "put in a good word for him" to get a job at the National Security Council.

But the Franklin indictment raises a key question: What exactly is the nature of the conspiracy the government believes it has uncovered? The kind of information the AIPAC officials seemed most interested in wasn't intelligence but policy information:

who in the bureaucracy was arguing which position on Iran, who were the obstacles to the adoption of hard-line policies and the like.

"I don't think anyone's spying for anyone," says a Jewish community activist, no fan of Rosen's, who asked not to be named. "Rosen is not working for Israel, because he was working for a separate sovereign entity [AIPAC]. Franklin just wanted to be a policy nerd, to advocate for a policy he thought wasn't getting enough attention."

But there are seeming anomalies to this benign interpretation of the relationship to be found in the Franklin indictment as well. The most interesting and surprising part of the indictment describes fourteen meetings between Franklin and an "FO" (foreign officer), widely reported to be Israeli Embassy political officer Naor Gilon. They met in the open, at the Pentagon Officers' Athletic Club and Washington-area coffee shops and restaurants, between 2002 and 2004. The last part of the indictment asserts that at some point Franklin disclosed to Gilon "classified United States government information relating to a weapons test conducted by a Middle Eastern country," presumably Iran. It is hard to discount such an unauthorized disclosure to a foreign government official as an ordinary leak.

Another intriguing issue: The indictment describes Franklin's returning from one of his meetings with Gilon in May 2003 and drafting an "Action Memo to his supervisors, incorporating suggestions made by the FO during the meeting." This suggests the FBI may be interested not only in alleged leaks from Franklin to unauthorized recipients but in the possibility of Franklin's feeding information from those officials back into the system, in an effort to influence US policy toward Iran. This raises the question of whether the government thinks the nature of the conspiracy was not only a matter of unauthorized leaks but also a coordinated effort by Franklin and perhaps his alleged co-conspirators to shape the US policy environment in a kind of agent-of-influence scenario. The US Attorney's office declined to comment on the case.

The Nation has learned that among the documents the FBI has in its possession is a memo written by Rosen in 1983, soon after he joined AIPAC, to his then-boss describing his having been informed about the contents of a classified draft of a White House position paper concerning the Middle East and telling his boss that their inside knowledge of the draft might enable the group to influence the final document. The significance would seem to be an effort by the FBI to establish a pattern of Rosen's accessing classified information to which he was not authorized, not just from Franklin but over many years. Rosen's attorneys declined to comment on the allegation.

Stephen Green, a Vermont state legislator and former UN official who in the 1980s pursued independent scholarship critical of Israeli-US relations including by requesting through the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) State Department documentation on counterintelligence probes, says the FBI's concerns about Rosen pre-date the September 2001 news leak incident. Green says in meetings with FBI investigators last year, "I was told by investigators that his name has showed up in wiretaps more than once over time,"

Green told *The Nation*. What's more, Green says, he believes the FBI considers Franklin only a little fish useful to getting Rosen.

Former FBI attorney Harvey Rishikof says that both theories, that this investigation is about leaking, or that it is motivated by graver counter-intelligence concerns, could be true. "They are not necessarily opposing theories," Rishikof told *The Nation*. "If you are worried about counterintelligence issues, and counterintelligence issues are also related to leak issues, so that individuals are using strategic leaks basically for counterintelligence purposes, you then link up the two threads...If you were the government, the leaks then become the method by which you are able to shut down what appears to be a counterintelligence problem."

The full picture of the government's case against Rosen will not emerge until an indictment is handed down, assuming there even is one. It is not even clear how he originally appeared on the FBI's radar screen. But if prosecutors focus on Rosen's alleged long-term cultivation of executive branch sources, who might have improperly shared with him privileged information about US national security deliberations, it's a twist on what we understand as a typical spy story, because such behavior, at least in its unclassified form, is the very currency of the capital: Washington lobbyists cultivating inside sources and trading information with them to influence policy.

Whether it was the FBI's intention or not, one result of the Franklin/AIPAC investigation, along with the jailing of Miller in the Wilson investigation, has been the fortressing of the executive branch; the danger is that this could enable the Bush Administration to shape policies with even less consultation from the public and Congress.

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Last update - 09:42 09/08/2005

The silence of the Jewish leaders

By Shmuel Rosner

Last week, an indictment was issued against Steve Rosen and Keith-Weissman, two former AIPAC employees. They are charged with passing classified security information, received during their work at the Jewish lobby, to various people, including employees of the Israeli Embassy in Washington. This charge sheet raises troubling questions. But is this the whole story? Is this why Rosen was under surveillance for six years?

Commentators, reporters, legal experts and various organizations have already begun delving into the material. Lucy Dalglish, executive director of the Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press, was quoted in a short article in The New York Times as saying she was concerned about the chilling effect such an investigation will have on journalists. The same word was used by Laura Rosen in The Nation, a radical left institution which cannot be accused of instinctive sympathy for AIPAC, under the headline "The Big Chill."

They both appear to believe that the investigation serves the interests of the Bush administration, which is stricter on leaks than its predecessors. If one buys this explanation, the meaning is simple: Rosen and Weissman are the victims through whom a message is being delivered. Anyone who tries to get information will have to face Federal investigators. Bad news for media representatives, lobbyists and members of research institutes.

The investigation is also bad news for the Jewish community. Dozens of people, most of them Jews, have already been questioned. There were those who felt anger, particularly when asked questions such as, "Does AIPAC have dual loyalties?" or "Why do Jews actually have to act on behalf of Israel?" They told their friends they were asked "strange questions." Some of them called one Jewish organization or another in order to ask, "Why don't you say something? Why don't you make your voice heard?"

They are still waiting. Jewish leaders are keeping silent - but not because they have nothing to say. On the contrary, in private

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conversations in the U.S. and Jerusalem they have a great deal to say about the investigation. For example: "The motives behind it are not pure. Even if I did not always like the organization [AIPAC], I don't feel comfortable with this inquiry;" or "The FBI's motives are anti-Semitic. It is no coincidence that they made problems for [former ambassador to Israel] Martin Indyk because of a computer he took out of the office, and [the former national security adviser] Sandy Berger about documents. They suspect all the Jews;" or "There is nothing to this affair. It is total nonsense. Someone decided to latch onto AIPAC to take them down a peg or two;" or "There are people who don't like the idea that an organization connected with Israel has so much power and influence. They anyway consider the Jews' loyalty as questionable. They are going to try people for something that is done in Washington every day."

This is how leaders on the right and left, Orthodox and Reform, heads of communities and organizations put it. Dozens of conversations revealed almost identical opinions. It is amazing: In private conversations they will talk, but in public they keep mum. No persecution, no anti-Semitism and no exaggeration.

Jewish leaders believe that enmity toward Israel or toward Jews has made someone go crazy. But they remain quiet because this enmity paralyses them. It leads Jews to wonder whether it is worthwhile to get involved in a public debate that will end in sensitive questions of dual loyalty. A debate that those who hate Israel would be happy to see and use to sow doubt and suspicion and to incite. The media and the Internet are already full of stupid or bad people who are eager to use the affair to lambast "the Jewish/Israeli/neo-Conservative lobby."

Those who wish Rosen well are prepared to e-mail anyone who requests it an article by Prof. Aaron Kirschenbaum, "The Bystander's Duty to Rescue in Jewish Law." The charges against Rosen include using classified information in order to warn the Israeli embassy about Iranian agents who might abduct Israeli soldiers in Iraq. Is there any Jewish leader who would get information of this kind and keep silent? It's a difficult question. The answer cannot always be explained easily to the public.

Therefore it is possible that the decision to remain silent makes sense from a tactical point of view. Perhaps, as one of those who is keeping quiet told Haaretz, it is best to "let the legal authorities do their job" in the hope that the pair will be exonerated. Perhaps, as one expert lobbyist proposed, "There are tacit ways to deal with matters like this," or perhaps, "We have to wait until the facts are completely clear."

Only it would have been much easier to believe all of these explanations if those who express them did not already have firm opinions about the investigation, without waiting for the "facts" and without relying on "the legal system." A reasonable opinion, considering the flimsy nature of the charges.

If I'm not mistaken, it was law professor Alan Dershowitz who said that Jews in America are not "guests in someone else's house," but their silence about the AIPAC affair sometimes seems like the silence of a guest. Even if it is justified for reasons of caution or etiquette, even if it can be understood, it nevertheless makes one feel somewhat uneasy.

Some of the Jewish leaders admit to this. But only in private:

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Sent: Friday, August 12, 2005 8:09 AM

To: PAULLING, SCOTT M. (WF) (FBI); LOEFFERT, JANICE S. (WF) (FBI); O'DONNELL, THOMAS J. (NY) (FBI); PORATH, ROBERT J. (WF) (FBI); FORTIN, BRIAN G. (WF) (FBI); LURIE, ERIC S. (WF) (FBI); MARKLEY, JAMES S. (WF) (FBI); DOUGLAS, STEPHANIE (WF) (FBI); MCDERMOTT, WILLIAM R. (WF) (FBI); KRAMARSIC, BRETT M. (WF) (FBI)

Subject: FW: WOO HOO for you guys...

Two Ex-AIPAC Staffers Indicted

JewishTimes.com

Ron Kampeas and Matthew E. Berger

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ALEXANDRIA, VA -- The indictment of two former officials of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee suggests that the government wants to prove an extensive pattern of trading classified information.

Paul McNulty, the U.S. attorney for eastern Virginia who handed down the indictment here Aug. 4, decisively counted out the pro-Israel lobby as a target in the inquiry. Still, the broad scope of the charges -- stretching back more years and covering a broader array of U.S. and Israeli officials than was previously known -- is sure to send a chill through Washington's lobbying community. The indictment charges Steve Rosen, AIPAC's former policy director, and Keith Weissman, its former Iran analyst, with "conspiracy to communicate national defense information to people not entitled to receive it," which carries a maximum sentence of 10 years in prison. Rosen is also charged with actual communication of national defense information, also punishable by 10 years in prison.

The charges against the former AIPAC staffers do not rise to the level of espionage, which the defendants and their supporters had feared. Weissman and Rosen are expected to appear in an Alexandria, Va., federal court on Aug. 16. Attorneys for Rosen and Weissman expressed confidence that they would handily beat the charges. "The charges in the indictment announced today are entirely unjustified," said a statement from Rosen's attorney, Abbe Lowell. "For 23 years, Dr. Steve Rosen has been a passionate advocate for America's national interests in the Middle East. He regrets that the government has moved ahead with this indictment but looks forward to being

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vindicated at trial." Weissman's lawyer, John Nassikas, said he looked forward to challenging the charges "vigorously in court."

AIPAC announced last Friday that it had hired former Justice Department officials who now work for Howrey LLP, a major Washington-based law firm that consults with organizations engaged in lobbying, to review its lobbying practices. "The conduct of Rosen and Weissman was clearly not part of their job," an AIPAC official said. "However, we made a decision that the events of the last year warranted an internal review of policies and procedures related to information collection and dissemination." "The goal is to ensure that nothing like this can ever happen again," the official said. Previously disclosed government documents have focused only on activity dating back to 2003.

Those documents outlined interactions with only one midlevel government official, former Pentagon Iran analyst Larry Franklin, who has already been indicted in the case, and one Israeli diplomat, political officer Naor Gilon, who ended a three-year tour of duty in early August. The indictment lists charges involving incidents dating back to 1999, four years before the AIPAC staffers met Franklin. The charges are related to information on Iran and terrorist attacks in Central Asia and Saudi Arabia that was allegedly exchanged with three U.S. government officials and three staffers at Israel's Embassy in Washington. A source close to the defense said one of the U.S. officials involved, who has not been indicted, was recently appointed to a senior Bush administration post.

The source, who asked not to be identified, would not name the official. The indictment for the first time acknowledges that the FBI used Franklin in a sting operation against Rosen and Weissman. It includes five charges against Franklin in addition to those against the two former AIPAC staffers. In indicting all three with "conspiracy to communicate national defense information to persons not entitled to receive it," McNulty made it clear that the target was much broader: those in Washington who trade in classified information. "Those entrusted with safeguarding our nation's secrets must remain faithful to that trust," McNulty said. "Those not authorized to receive classified information must resist the temptation to acquire it, no matter what their motivation may be."

The charges against the two former AIPAC staffers do not rise to the level of the crime committed by Jonathan Pollard, who plead guilty in 1986 to spying for Israel. Pollard plead guilty to a single count of conspiracy to deliver national defense information to aid a foreign government, which is punishable by life imprisonment. The indictment against Rosen and Weissman does not anywhere allege that Israeli officials ever solicited the information, nor does it say that Israel compensated them for the information. McNulty suggested he

would argue that the intent was critical. He described Franklin, Rosen and Weissman as "individuals who put their own interests and views of American foreign policy ahead of America's national security." Lowell, Rosen's attorney, described the charges as a "misguided attempt to criminalize the public's right to participate in the political process."

The indictment includes a laundry list of contacts Rosen and Weissman had with U.S. government officials and Israeli Embassy officials. It notes that Rosen had security clearance when he was an official at the Pentagon-allied Rand Corporation think tank in the late 1970s and early 1980s, apparently to underscore that Rosen would have known the implications of receiving classified information. The indictment also lists conversations Rosen allegedly had with an Israeli diplomat in 1999 about terrorist acts in Central Asia that Rosen allegedly described as "an extremely sensitive piece of intelligence." It does not name the official. Also outlined is a conversation that Weissman had in 1999 with the same official about a 1996 attack on U.S. troops in Saudi Arabia, in which Weissman discussed what he allegedly called a "secret FBI, classified FBI report."

In 2000, the indictment alleges, Rosen relayed classified information from a U.S. government official to the media. The information, according to the indictment, concerned U.S. strategy in the Middle East. In 2002, Rosen relayed information about the terrorist group Al-Qaida from another government official -- the official a defense source says was recently promoted to a senior government position -- to other AIPAC officials, the indictment alleges. In March 2003, Rosen and Weissman allegedly received classified information from Franklin on U.S. policy on Iran and relayed it to another Israeli diplomat. He also allegedly disclosed the information to a "senior fellow at a Washington, D.C., think tank" and to the media, the indictment said.

In June of the same year, Franklin allegedly relayed to Weissman and Rosen classified information about Iranian activity in Iraq, newly occupied by a U.S.-led force. By July 2004, the indictment said, the government had co-opted Franklin and used him to set up Weissman and Rosen in a sting. In that operation, Franklin allegedly warned Weissman that Iranian agents planned to kidnap, torture and kill U.S. and Israeli agents in northern Iraq. The indictment alleges that Franklin made clear that the information was "highly classified."

According to well-placed sources, Weissman relayed this information to Rosen, who relayed it to Gilon at the Israeli Embassy; Glenn Kessler, the State Department correspondent at The Washington Post; and Howard Kohr, AIPAC's executive director, identified in the indictment as "another AIPAC employee." McNulty made it clear that neither AIPAC nor any of its other

employees were targets. "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."

McNulty would not comment on what prompted the initial investigation into the AIPAC officials, but sources close to the defense believe Israeli officials in Washington were being monitored in 1999. AIPAC fired Rosen and Weissman this past April, eight months after the FBI probe came to light. "AIPAC dismissed Rosen and Weissman because they engaged in conduct that was not part of their jobs and because this conduct did not comport in any way with standards that AIPAC expects of its employees," spokesman Patrick Dorton told JTA on Aug. 4, repeating the group's previous position. "AIPAC could not condone or tolerate the conduct of the two employees under any circumstances. The organization does not seek, use or request anything but legally obtained, appropriate information as part of its work."

A source close to AIPAC said the group is not concerned that the indictment identifies two occasions -- in 2002 concerning the Al-Qaida information and in 2004 concerning the sting -- when Rosen allegedly shared information with AIPAC staffers. "There was no indication by Steve Rosen within AIPAC that he was" obtaining classified information, said the source, who asked not to be identified. AIPAC has already scaled back its lobbying of the executive branch of government -- something the indictment pointedly notes was Rosen's expertise. Kohr, the group's executive director, has said that AIPAC is instituting changes in how it operates as a result of the investigation, without providing details. Israeli officials have confirmed to JTA that the FBI is seeking an interview with Gilon. It is not clear if the FBI also wants to talk with the two other Israeli Embassy officials cited in the indictment; they are not named.

"It's premature to comment on the substance of the affidavit since we've just received it," an Israeli official said. "We're fully confident in the professional conduct of our diplomats who fully conduct themselves in accordance with diplomatic practice. We have seen no information that would suggest anything to the contrary." The FBI raided AIPAC's offices on Aug. 27, 2004, the first time the investigation was made public. One major question likely to come up during the trial is why the two U.S. government officials listed in the indictment as leaking the information are not facing trial. "They should be going after all the guys who gave the information," said Malcolm Hoenlein, the executive vice president of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations. Soliciting classified information is hardly unusual in Washington, Hoenlein said. "Reporters do it every single day."

BEHIND THE HEADLINES

New revelations in AIPAC case raise questions about FBI motives

By Matthew E. Berger

WASHINGTON, Aug. 18 (JTA) — New revelations in the case against two former American Israel Public Affairs Committee staffers raise questions about why FBI investigators have been focused on the pro-Israel lobby.

The New York Times reported Thursday that David Satterfield, the No. 2 man at the U.S. mission in Baghdad, was one of two government officials who allegedly gave classified information to Steve Rosen, AIPAC's former director of foreign policy issues, but he wasn't named in the indictment handed down against Rosen and two others earlier this month.

Satterfield allegedly spoke with Rosen on several occasions in 2002 — when Satterfield was the deputy assistant secretary of state for Near Eastern affairs — and shared classified information. At one point, Rosen allegedly relayed the secret information in a memorandum to other AIPAC staffers.

The fact that Satterfield is not a target of the case and was allowed to take a sensitive position in Iraq has raised questions about the severity of the information allegedly given to AIPAC officials, as well as about the government's motives for targeting Rosen and Keith Weissman, a former AIPAC Iran analyst, neither of whom had classified access.

The defendants and AIPAC supporters see the new revelations as evidence that federal prosecutors are targeting the powerful pro-Israel lobby for simply conducting the normal Washington practice of trading sensitive information. Officials inside and outside government privately acknowledge that classified information routinely changes hands among influential people in the foreign policy community and that the exchanges often are advantageous to diplomats.

"If, in fact, Satterfield passed on classified information that other people should not have had, then they should all be guilty of the same thing," said Malcolm Hoenlein, the executive vice chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations. "The fact that Satterfield hasn't been prosecuted suggests that's not the case."

Rosen and Weissman both pleaded not guilty Tuesday to a charge of conspiracy to communicate national defense information. Rosen also is charged with communicating national defense information to people not entitled to receive it.

Larry Franklin, a Pentagon Iran analyst, has been charged with five similar counts, including conspiracy to communicate classified information to a foreign agent. Franklin, who also pleaded not guilty, is accused of passing classified information to Rosen and Weissman from 2002 through last year.

Observers say the case is likely to create a chill among lobbyists and others

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who seek to garner foreign-policy information from the government.

The second U.S. government official, who allegedly met with Rosen and Weissman in 2000, remains anonymous but reportedly has left government service. Their identification is seen as central to the government's case that the AIPAC staffers followed a pattern of seeking classified information and disseminating it to journalists and officials at the Israeli Embassy in Washington. A spokeswoman for Paul McNulty, the U.S. attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia, would not comment.

Attorneys for Rosen and Weissman, who are collaborating on their defense, will likely use the same information to show that sharing documents and other information was normal practice between government officials and AIPAC.

Leaders of other pro-Israel groups say State Department and other government aides handling the Middle East portfolio frequently share information.

"When we discuss issues, it's an exchange. It's not one-sided," Hoenlein said. "What people forget is they benefit from these exchanges too, because they learn things from us."

Those who have worked with Rosen say a large part of his task was capturing sensitive material and that numerous government officials aided his pursuits over the years.

Tom Dine, a former AIPAC executive director, said Rosen had claimed in a 1983 memo, shortly after joining the pro-Israel lobby, that he received a classified review of U.S. policy in the Middle East.

Dine, who recently left his post as president of Radio Free Europe to head the San Francisco Jewish federation, told the New York Jewish Week that he was shown the document by FBI investigators.

"Everybody knew that Steve was quite capable of luring important information, which was exceedingly useful to the mission of the office," said Neal Sher, another former AIPAC executive director. "It was understood by the people in the organization, both professional and lay."

But they say Rosen's work mirrored what was being done throughout Washington.

"The trafficking in sensitive information, some of which might have been classified, is the norm in many instances," said Sher, a former federal prosecutor. "While I don't recall ever being specifically told that info they passed on to me was classified, I would not have been shocked if that was done."

A spokesman for AIPAC denied any wrongdoing by the organization.

"AIPAC does not seek, use or request anything but legally obtained information as part of its work," Patrick Dorton said. "All AIPAC employees

are expected and required to uphold this standard."

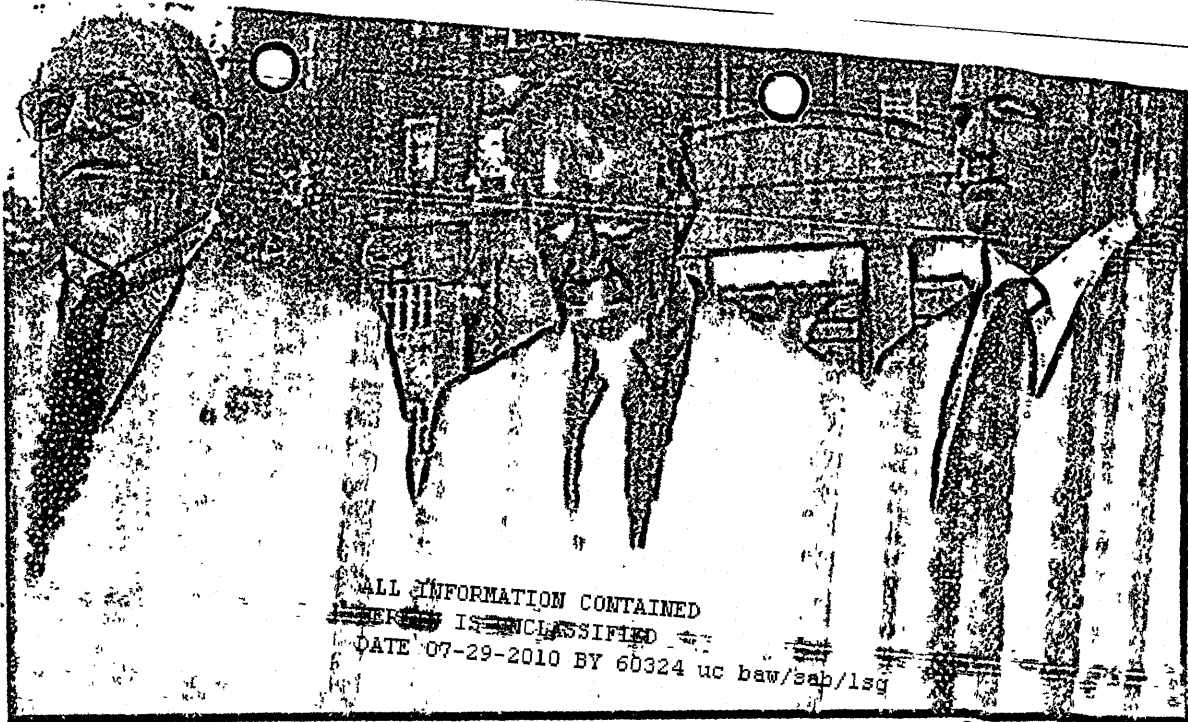
Satterfield is not considered a subject of the government's probe, and he reportedly was cleared by the Justice Department for his Iraq post.

State Department spokesman Sean McCormack said he could not comment on an ongoing investigation.

"I will say, though, that David Satterfield is an outstanding public servant, he is a distinguished Foreign Service officer and diplomat, and that he has worked on behalf of the American people for a number of years," McCormack said Thursday.

A State Department official said it was within Satterfield's portfolio to work with policy groups such as AIPAC. As the deputy assistant secretary for Near Eastern affairs, Satterfield led the State Department group dealing with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, as well as other regional issues on AIPAC's agenda.

"It wasn't out of the normal at all for a deputy assistant secretary, as he was, to be meeting with AIPAC on a regular basis," said the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity. "Our office tries to meet with interested people of all groups, and it's supposed to be an informational exchange."



Lawrence A. Franklin, center, with his lawyers, Plato Cacheris, left, and John Hundley in Alexandria, Va., after admitting yesterday that he had passed secret information to pro-Israeli lobbyists and an Israeli official.

Pentagon Analyst Admits Sharing Secret Data

By ERIC LICHTBLAU

ALEXANDRIA, Va., Oct. 5 — A senior Defense Department analyst admitted Wednesday that he shared secret military information with two pro-Israeli lobbyists and an Israeli official in an effort to create a "back-channel" to the Bush administration on Middle East policy.

The analyst, Lawrence A. Franklin, pleaded guilty in federal court here to three criminal counts for improperly retaining and disclosing classified information, and he gave the first account of his motives and thinking in establishing secret liaisons with people outside the government.

The offenses carry a maximum of 25 years in prison, but as part of a plea agreement, prosecutors are expected to recommend leniency for Mr. Franklin in return for his cooperation in a continuing investigation in the January trial of the two lobbyists, Steven J. Rosen and Keith Weissman.

The lobbyists were dismissed last year by the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, or Aipac, after the investigation became public.

Mr. Franklin, 58, said in entering his guilty pleas that he had shared with the lobbyists "my frustrations with a particular policy" during repeated meetings from 2002 to 2004. He did not divulge the particular policy, but officials in the case said he was referring to the Bush adminis-

tration's dealings with Iran.

Some of the more hawkish officials in the administration have pushed for a harder line in confronting Iran about its nuclear ambitions, but the administration has been deeply divided about how to engage with the country.

Mr. Franklin worked for a time as a senior analyst on Iran under Douglas Feith, a former under secretary at the Pentagon. Mr. Franklin said in court that he believed the Aipac lobbyists had access and influence at the National Security Council, which coordinates policy issues for the president and was deeply involved in setting the administration's course on Iran.

He said he hoped the lobbyists could help influence policy by passing on information that he knew was classified. "I asked them to use their contacts to get this information backchannels to people at the N.S.C.," he said.

Mr. Franklin was also applying for a position at the N.S.C. in early 2003 and asked Mr. Rosen to "put in a good word" for him, according to a filing on Wednesday by prosecutors as part of the plea agreement. Mr. Rosen said, "I'll see what I can do."

In addition to his contacts with the lobbyists, Mr. Franklin admitted meeting with an official with the Israeli Embassy and passing on classified information regarding weapons tests in the Middle East, military ac-

tivities in Iraq and other issues.

Mr. Franklin said he assumed that such "tidbits" were already known to Israel, and he said that the Israeli official "gave me far more information than I gave him."

Prosecutors said Mr. Franklin knew that the classified information he shared "could be used to the injury of the United States or to the advantage of a foreign nation." But Mr. Franklin said, "It was never my intent to harm the United States."

He said he did not even consider one of the documents cited by prosecutors to have been classified, but when he started to discuss the document in open court — referring to a one-page fax with a "list of murders," apparently in Iran — lawyers from both sides jumped up to cut him off. The judge, T. S. Ellis, agreed at the urging of prosecutors to put Mr. Franklin's reference to the list under seal in the court record.

Mr. Franklin will lose his government pension, but his wife will be allowed to keep her survivor's benefits from the government in the deal, officials said.

Mr. Franklin has been financially struggling since his arrest last year, and he told the court he has been working as a waiter and bartender at a pub, and as a valet at a racetrack and has also been teaching course on Asian history and terrorism at Shepherd University near his home in West Virginia.

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NATIONAL NEWS

THE WASHINGTON POST

Defense Analyst Guilty in Israeli Espionage Case

By JERRY MARKON
Washington Post Staff Writer

A Defense Department analyst pleaded guilty yesterday to passing government secrets to two employees of a pro-Israel lobbying group and revealed for the first time that he also gave classified information directly to an Israeli government official in Washington.

Lawrence A. Franklin told a judge in U.S. District Court in Alexandria that he met at least eight times with Naor Gilon, who was the political officer at the Israeli Embassy before being recalled last summer.

The guilty plea and Franklin's account appeared to cast doubt on longstanding denials by Israeli officials that they engage in any intelligence activities in the United States. The possibility of continued Israeli spying in Washington has been a sensitive subject between the two governments since Jonathan J. Pollard, a U.S. Navy intelligence analyst, admitted to spying for Israel in 1987 and was sentenced to life in prison.

David Siegel, a spokesman for the Israeli Embassy, said Israeli officials have been approached by U.S. investigators and are cooperating. "We have full confidence in our diplomats, who are dedicated professionals who conduct themselves in full accordance with established diplomatic practices," Siegel said.

Court documents filed along with Franklin's plea said he provided classified data — including information about a Middle Eastern country's activities in Iraq and weapons tests conducted by a foreign country — to an unnamed "foreign official."

The country was not named, but as



Lawrence Franklin, left, with attorney John Richards, after pleading guilty to giving classified information to Israel.

Franklin entered his plea, he disclosed that some of the material he gave the lobbyists related to Iran. His attorneys stopped him from speaking further, and prosecutors immediately accused Franklin of revealing classified information in court.

Franklin said he passed the information because he was "frustrated" with the direction of U.S. policy and thought he could influence it by having them relay the data through "back channels" to officials on the National Security Council. He said he never intended to harm the United States, "not even for a second," and that he received far more information from Gilon than he gave. "I knew in my heart that his government already had the information," he said.

Franklin, 58, a specialist on Iran, pleaded guilty to two conspiracy counts and a third charge of possessing classified documents. As part of the plea agreement, Franklin has agreed to cooperate in the larger fed-

eral investigation.

Legal experts called the plea a major development in the long-running investigation of whether U.S. secrets were passed to the Israeli government. Franklin said he disclosed classified data to two former employees of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee. Those employees, Steven J. Rosen and Keith Weissman, have been charged in what prosecutors said was a broad conspiracy to obtain and illegally pass classified information to foreign officials and news reporters.

Franklin probably will become the star witness against Rosen and Weissman. "This is not good news for the other defendants or for AIPAC," said Michael Greenberger, a former Justice Department official who heads the Center for Health and Homeland Security at the University of Maryland.

Prosecutors have said they have no immediate plans to charge anyone else, but Franklin's cooperation could change that, said Preston Burton, a Washington defense lawyer with long experience in espionage cases.

"Espionage debriefings are exhaustive and meticulous," said Burton, who is a former law partner of a Franklin attorney, Plato Cacheris, but is not involved in the Franklin case.

Also uncertain is how yesterday's developments will affect U.S. ties with Israel. The case has complicated relations between the two countries, which are close allies, and angered many supporters of the American Israel committee, which is considered one of Washington's most influential lobbying organizations.

Gilon is a career Israeli foreign service officer who spent three years in Washington focusing on weapons pro-

liferation issues. His recall to Israel was unrelated to the investigation, Siegel said, and he is awaiting a new foreign posting.

One of Rosen's attorneys, Abba Lowell, said Franklin's plea "has no impact on our case because a government employee's actions in dealing with classified information is simply not the same as a private person; whether that person is a reporter or a lobbyist."

Rosen, 63, of Silver Spring, is charged with two counts related to unlawful disclosure of national defense information obtained from Franklin and other unidentified government officials since 1999 on topics including Iran, Saudi Arabia and al Qaeda. Rosen was the American Israel committee's director of foreign policy issues and was instrumental in making the committee a formidable political force.

Weissman, 53, of Bethesda, faces one count of conspiracy to illegally communicate national defense information. His attorneys did not return calls late last night. American Israel Public Affairs Committee officials declined comment.

Franklin pleaded guilty to two counts of conspiring to communicate secret information and a third charge of keeping numerous classified documents at his West Virginia home. He said he took the documents home to keep up his expertise and prepare for "point-blank questions" from his bosses, including Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld.

The Defense Department suspended Franklin, who said in court that he works as a waiter and bartender and at a racetrack. He faces up to 25 years in prison at his sentencing Jan. 20.

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Kramarsic, Brett M.

From: Strzok, Peter P. II
Sent: Friday, October 07, 2005 7:48 AM
To: Porath, Robert J.; Kramarsic, Brett M.

Did you see this on JTA? Need to start calling Reilly "That's Classified!" instead.

Former Pentagon man pleads guilty,
will testify against ex-AIPAC officials
By Ron Kampeas

ALEXANDRIA, Va., Oct. 6 (JTA) — Lawrence Franklin's plea-bargain pledge to cooperate with the U.S. government in its case against two former AIPAC officials was put to the test as soon as it was made.

"It was unclassified and it is unclassified," Franklin, a former Pentagon analyst, insisted in court Wednesday, describing a document that the government maintains is classified. The document is central to one of the conspiracy charges against Steve Rosen, the former foreign policy chief of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee.

Guilty pleas usually are remorseful, sedate affairs. But Franklin appeared defiant and agitated Wednesday as he pleaded guilty as part of a deal that may leave him with a reduced sentence and part of his government pension.

Franklin's prickliness could prove another setback for the U.S. government in a case that the presiding judge already has suggested could be dismissed because of questions about access to evidence.

Franklin's performance unsettled prosecutors, who will attempt to prove that Rosen and Keith Weissman, AIPAC's former Iran analyst, conspired with Franklin to communicate secret information. The case goes to trial Jan. 2.

The argument over the faxed document furnished the most dramatic encounter Wednesday.

"It was a list of murders," Franklin began to explain to U.S. District Judge T.S. Ellis when Thomas Reilly, a youthful, red-headed lawyer from the Justice Department, leapt from his seat, shouting, "Your Honor, that's classified!"

Ellis agreed to seal that portion of the hearing. JTA has learned that the fax was a list of terrorist incidents believed to have been backed by Iran.

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There were other elements of Franklin's plea that suggest he is not ready to cooperate to the fullest extent. The government says Franklin leaked information to the AIPAC employees because he thought it could advance his career, but Franklin says his motivation was "frustration with policy" on Iran at the Pentagon.

Franklin said he believed Rosen and Weissman were better connected than he and would be able to relay his concerns to officials at the White House's National Security Council.

He did not explicitly mention in court that Iran was his concern. But JTA has learned that Franklin thought his superiors at the Pentagon were overly distracted by the Iraq war in 2003 — when he established contact with Rosen and Weissman — and weren't paying enough attention to Iran.

The penal code criminalizes relaying information that "could be used to the injury of the United States or to the advantage of any foreign nation." Franklin's testimony would not be much use to the prosecution if he believed Rosen and Weissman simply were relaying information from the Pentagon to the White House, sources close to the defense of Rosen and Weissman said.

"I was convinced they would relay this information back-channel to friends on the NSC," he said.

In any case, the section of the penal code that deals with civilians who obtain and relay classified information rarely, if ever, has been used in a prosecution, partly because it runs up against First Amendment protections for journalists and lobbyists, who frequently deal with secrets.

A spokesman for Abbe Lowell, Rosen's lawyer, said Franklin's guilty plea "has no impact on our case because a government employee's actions in dealing with classified information is simply not the same as a private person, whether that person is a reporter or a lobbyist."

The essence of Franklin's guilty plea seemed to be only that he knew the recipients were unauthorized to receive the information. Beyond that, he insisted, he had no criminal intent.

Admitting guilt to another charge, relaying information to Naor Gilon, the chief political officer at the Israeli Embassy in Washington, Franklin said that he wasn't giving away anything that the Israeli didn't already know.

"I knew in my heart that his government had this information," Franklin said. "He gave me far more information than I gave him."

Franklin turned prosecutors' heads when he named Gilon, the first

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public confirmation that the foreign country hinted at in indictments is Israel. Indictments refer to a "foreign official."

The suggestion that Franklin was mining Gilon for information, and not the other way around, turns on its head the hype around the case when it first was revealed in late August 2004, after the FBI raided AIPAC's offices. At the time, CBS described Franklin as an "Israeli spy."

Asked about his client's outburst, Franklin's lawyer, Plato Cacheris, said only that it was "gratuitous."

But Franklin's claim reinforced an argument put forward by Israel — that Gilon was not soliciting anything untoward in the eight or nine meetings he had with Franklin beginning in 2002.

"We have full confidence in our diplomats, who are dedicated professionals and conduct themselves in accordance with established diplomatic practice," said David Siegel, an embassy spokesman. "Israel is a close ally of the United States, and we exchange information on a formalized basis on these issues. There would be no reason for any wrongdoing on the part of our diplomats."

Franklin also pleaded guilty to removing classified documents from the authorized area, which encompasses Maryland, Virginia and Washington, when he brought material to his home in West Virginia.

He sounded another defensive note in explaining the circumstances: He brought the material home on June 30, 2004, he said, to bone up for the sort of tough questions he often faced from Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld and Rumsfeld's then-deputy, Paul Wolfowitz.

Franklin, who has five children and an ill wife, said he is in dire circumstances, parking cars at a horse-race track, waiting tables and tending bar to make ends meet. Keeping part of his government pension for his wife was key to Franklin's agreement to plead guilty, Cacheris told JTA.

Franklin pleaded guilty to three different charges, one having to do with his alleged dealings with the former AIPAC officials; one having to do with Gilon; and one for taking classified documents home.

The language of the plea agreement suggests that the government will argue for a soft sentence, agreeing to Franklin's preferred minimum-security facility and allowing for concurrent sentencing. But it conditions its recommendations on Franklin being "reasonably available for debriefing and pre-trial conferences."

The prosecution asked for sentencing to be postponed until Jan. 20, more than two weeks after the trial against Rosen and Weissman

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begins, suggesting that government leniency will be proportional to Franklin's performance.

Franklin is a star witness, but he's not all the government has up its sleeve. The charges against Rosen and Weissman, apparently based on wiretapped conversations, allege that the two former AIPAC staffers shared classified information with fellow AIPAC staffers, the media and foreign government officials.

Two other U.S. government officials who allegedly supplied Rosen and Weissman with information have not been charged. They are David Satterfield, then deputy assistant secretary of state for Near Eastern affairs and now the No. 2 man at the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad, and Kenneth Pollack, a Clinton-era National Security Council staffer who is now an analyst at the Brookings Institution.

The problem with the wiretap evidence lies in the government's refusal to share much of it or even to say exactly how much it has. In a recent filing, the government said that even the quantity of the material should remain classified.

In a Sept. 19 hearing, Ellis suggested to prosecutor Kevin DiGregori that his failure to share the defendants' wiretapped conversations with the defense team could lead to the case being dismissed.

"I am having a hard time, Mr. DiGregori, getting over the fact that the defendants can't hear their own statements, and whether that is so fundamental that if it doesn't happen, this case will have to be dismissed," Ellis said.

DiGregori said the government might indeed prefer to see the case dismissed rather than turn over the material.

AIPAC fired Rosen and Weissman in April but is paying for their defense because of provisions in its bylaws. AIPAC had no comment, nor did lawyers for Weissman.

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Sent:

Saturday, October 15, 2005 11:33 AM

To: [REDACTED]

Subject:

Fw: [Fwd: LexisNexis(R) Email Request (1822:65913757)]

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From: [REDACTED]

To: [REDACTED]

Sent: Sat Oct 15 08:34:54 2005

Subject: [Fwd: LexisNexis(R) Email Request (1822:65913757)]

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October 10, 2005

SECTION: Pg. 13

LENGTH: 2968 words

HEADLINE: Low Clearance

BYLINE: by eli lake

HIGHLIGHT:

Trouble for journalists.

BODY:

Eli Lake is a reporter for The New York Sun.

In January 2006, a court in Northern Virginia will hear a case in which, for the first time, the federal government has charged two private citizens with leaking state secrets. CBS News first reported the highly classified investigation that led to this prosecution on the eve of the Republican National Convention. On August 27, 2004, Lesley Stahl told her viewers that, in a "full-fledged espionage investigation," the FBI would soon "roll up" a "suspected mole" who had funneled Pentagon policy deliberations concerning Iran to Israel. At the heart of the probe, CBS said, was one of Washington's most powerful lobbying groups, the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (aipac). Within three days, the lobbyists involved were identified as aipac's director of foreign policy, Steve Rosen, and an Iran specialist named Keith Weissman; the mole was outed as Lawrence Franklin, an Iran analyst at the Defense Department.

But weeks and then months passed, and there were no arrests. Franklin, after initially being put on leave (and taking a job parking cars at a nearby restaurant), returned briefly to his desk at the Pentagon; and, until April, Rosen and Weissman were still writing memos, meeting journalists and government officials, and going about their daily business at aipac. When the indictments from the federal government finally came down this summer, none of these men were charged with spying.

Instead, all three were indicted for conspiring "to communicate national defense information ... [to] persons not entitled to receive it." To the lay reader, that may simply sound like espionage-lite. After all, some of the people not entitled to receive

the national defense information in this case were Israeli diplomats. But, in fact, a prosecution of this kind is unprecedented. Far from alleging the two aipac officials were foreign agents, U.S. Attorney Paul McNulty is contending that the lobbyists are legally no different than the government officials they lobbied, holding Rosen and Weissman to the same rules for protecting secrets as Franklin or any other bureaucrat with a security clearance. The indictment even says that, because Rosen long ago held a security clearance when he worked as an analyst for the Rand Corporation, he was duty-bound to protect any classified information he came across after the clearance expired--on July 6, 1982. "Steve Rosen and Keith Weissman repeatedly sought and received sensitive information, both classified and unclassified, and then passed it on to others in order to advance their policy agenda and professional standing," the U.S. attorney said at a press conference announcing the indictment.

But, if it's illegal for Rosen and Weissman to seek and receive "classified information," then many investigative journalists are also criminals--not to mention former government officials who write for scholarly journals or the scores of men and women who petition the federal government on defense and foreign policy. In fact, the leaking of classified information is routine in Washington, where such data is traded as a kind of currency. And, while most administrations have tried to crack down on leaks, they have almost always shied away from going after those who receive them--until now. At a time when a growing amount of information is being classified, the prosecution of Rosen and Weissman threatens to have a chilling effect--not on the ability of foreign agents to influence U.S. policy, but on the ability of the American public to understand it.

Since the inception of the national security state, the intelligence community has worried that our free press is a security risk. In an interview in 1954 with U.S. News and World Report, under the headline "we tell the russians too much," CIA Director Allen Dulles remarked, "I would give a good deal if I could know as much about the Soviet Union as the Soviet Union can learn about us merely by reading the press."

Nonetheless, the federal government has traditionally respected an implicit First Amendment right of publishers and private citizens to determine the public's right to know about national security. Without journalists' ability to disclose secret information, the executive branch would be the sole arbiter of what information the public could have about its government's foreign policy. And, when the public is kept in the dark, it's hard to combat excesses. For example, it's unlikely that the Pentagon would have taken steps to correct abuses in its detention facilities had "60 Minutes II" not obtained photographs of naked prisoners stacked in a pyramid at Abu Ghraib. Had U.S. law been similar to the British Official Secrets Act, which gives 10 Downing Street the authority to prosecute journalists for disclosing classified material, it's unlikely the public would know about the network of contractors responsible for the rendition of terrorists to nations that torture prisoners or the internal debates within the Bush administration regarding the application of the Geneva Convention. To be sure, there are cases in which the press could do great harm to national security, such as publishing the details of how we keep surveillance on our enemies. But, as any reporter who covers these matters will tell you, most of the time journalists negotiate an agreement--without the threat of prosecution--on how to report sensitive material in a way that minimizes harm to intelligence-gathering and military operations. "We've all held back information when a responsible government official makes a compelling case that it's going to cause some damage," says Newsweek reporter Michael Isikoff.

And, while every administration has made internal efforts to go after leakers, criminal prosecutions have been extremely rare. In the two major anti-leaking cases involving classified secrets brought in the last 35 years, both leakers were prosecuted for slipping government property to reporters. In the case of Daniel Ellsberg, it was a classified history of the deliberations of three administrations regarding Vietnam known as the Pentagon Papers; in the case of Samuel Morison (the only successful anti-leaking prosecution), it was classified aerial photographs of a Soviet naval aircraft carrier, which he provided to Jane's Defence Weekly. No one has ever been prosecuted--as Rosen and Weissman currently are--for conveying national security information orally, with no documents involved.

Steve Pomerantz, the former chief of counterterrorism for the FBI, says that his division--which, in the early '90s, also investigated classified disclosure cases--never got very far in their investigations. "If you look at this as a conspiracy, then there are two parties: the leaker and the reporter," he says.

"As a matter of practice, we never went near the reporters," Custom that Pomerantz contends made it nearly impossible to catch the leakers. "I never remember in my time a successful prosecution of a leak case," he says.

But, in recent years, there has been mounting pressure from both federal officials and Congress to end this custom. The reason is articles like one published by The Washington Times on August 21, 1998. The story was a profile of Osama bin Laden, following President Clinton's missile strikes on the Al Shifa chemicals factory in Khartoum and a training compound in Afghanistan. Near the bottom of the dispatch, reporter Martin Sieff wrote that bin Laden "keeps in touch with the world via computers and satellite phones." This may sound like an innocuous detail, but, according to the 9/11 Commission Report, Al Qaeda's leadership stopped using their satellite phones almost immediately after the story was published, thus eliminating the possibility of using satellite signals to locate and assassinate them. As former Clinton National Security Council officials Steve Simon and Daniel Benjamin wrote in their book, *The Age of Sacred Terror*, "When bin Laden stopped using the phone and let his aides do the calling, the United States lost its best chance to find him."

Troubled by the Times report and other similar incidents, Senator Richard Shelby attempted to change the nation's espionage laws in 2000, when he was the chairman of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence. Shelby wanted to expand the category of "national defense information" to include anything from classified diplomatic discussions to more technical intelligence. President Clinton vetoed the original version of the Intelligence Authorization Act in order to block the Shelby proposal. Pentagon spokesman Kenneth Bacon said at the time that the Shelby measure would be "disastrous for journalists." The next year, with a new administration in the White House, Shelby again tried to change the espionage law, but eventually dropped the idea after Attorney General John Ashcroft promised, as he put it in a letter to Congress on October 15, 2002, to review the "current protections against the unauthorized disclosure of classified material." It is from this review that the seeds of the Rosen and Weissman indictment were sown.

Beginning in 2001, after the September 11 attacks, a group of top intelligence professionals began examining the legal authority to go after leakers. The review, commissioned by Ashcroft, ultimately concluded that the current espionage law was adequate. But, at the same time, Ashcroft implemented a policy of aggressively targeting anonymous sources who show up in newspapers touting national secrets. As he wrote to Congress in 2002, the fact "that only a single non-espionage case of an unauthorized disclosure of classified information has been prosecuted in over 50 years provides compelling justification that fundamental improvements are necessary and we must entertain new approaches to deter, identify, and punish those who engage in the practice of unauthorized disclosures of classified information."

Ironically, Shelby himself was among the first snared in the Justice Department's new anti-leaking dragnet. In the summer of 2004, the FBI recommended that the Senate Ethics Committee investigate Shelby for leaking two National Security Agency (NSA) intercepts received before the September 11 attacks to Fox News and CNN in 2002. These were the famous messages that warned, "The match begins tomorrow" and "Tomorrow is zero hour."

But the senator from Alabama was not the only one. According to a government source, the Pentagon's National Criminal Investigative division began probes in 2002--with FBI guidance--to determine who leaked secret war plans to The New York Times and The Washington Post in June 2002. At the State Department, diplomatic security launched an investigation into David Wurmser, an aide to John Bolton, for leaking a letter from Secretary of State Colin Powell to the Pentagon objecting to the Syria Accountability Act. The letter ended up being the basis for a story in The Jerusalem Post. And the White House knows all too well the problems it faces from special prosecutor Patrick Fitzgerald, who has yet to bring charges against the official who told journalist Robert Novak that Valerie Plame was a CIA officer. Fitzgerald has already sent New York Times reporter Judith Miller to jail for not revealing her source for a story about Plame that she never ended up writing. But McNulty's novel prosecution of Rosen and Weissman in many ways provides the legal test case for Ashcroft's new get-tough policy.

From the indictment, it appears that the two aipac officials came to the attention of the FBI at least as far back as 1999, when both lobbyists showed up in intercepted phone conversations and meetings with Israeli embassy officials. The FBI has never said publicly why it began monitoring the lobbyists' activities, but the reason may have to do with the hunt for an Israeli spy code-named

"Mega." In 1997, The Washington Post was leaked a story alleging that the NSA had intercepted a communication from an Israeli intelligence officer in Washington to his superior in Tel Aviv. The Israeli agent was reportedly relaying a request from the Israeli ambassador to use a source called Mega to procure a copy of a letter detailing what assurances then-Secretary of State Warren Christopher had offered Yasir Arafat in light of the withdrawal of Israeli troops from Hebron.

According to sources inside and outside the government, the Israeli embassy has been watched by the FBI ever since the NSA intercepted the Mega message in January 1997. It may well turn out that, as the FBI was watching the Israelis to learn more about Mega, they stumbled upon these two lobbyists who regularly met with Israeli diplomats and suspected they were part of the plot.

Franklin's lawyer, Plato Cacheris, says that the FBI asked his client in 2004 to cooperate in what he was told was an espionage investigation. Franklin agreed in July 2004 to wear a wire and to tell Weissman about an Iranian plot to target Americans and Israelis in Iraq. "From my knowledge of FBI procedure, this was either an espionage case or an intelligence case," Pomerantz said--a contention supported by interviews with three other government officials.

But the two were never charged with espionage. And, as the indictment shows, the activities the prosecutors contend constitute a criminal conspiracy hardly look like spying. To start, Rosen and Weissman made no efforts to hide their meetings with American and Israeli officials. They met with Franklin in Arlington, Virginia, restaurants. Franklin met with Israeli diplomat Naor Gilon at the Pentagon Officers' Athletic Club. In many instances, Rosen and Weissman discussed their meetings with Franklin on the phone.

Instead, what Rosen's and Weissman's moves look like is lobbying. For example, on June 11, 1999, Weissman had a conversation with an Israeli embassy official identified in the indictment as "Foreign Official 1." During that conversation, Weissman tells the foreign official that he has piqued the interest of a reporter regarding a classified FBI report on the terrorist bombing of a U.S. military complex in Saudi Arabia known as Khobar Towers. On December 12, 2000, Rosen interested a reporter in Iraq policy options shared with him and Weissman by an American government official. (The Jewish Telegraphic Agency last month identified that official as former National Security Council Middle East analyst Kenneth Pollack.) When Franklin finally enters the picture, he attempts to enlist Rosen's help in obtaining a job at the National Security Council and presses him to warn the White House about Iran's nefarious intentions against American soldiers in Iraq.

"If there is a conviction in this case, anyone who talks to anyone in government could be liable if he discusses the substance of the conversation with any foreign national or a reporter," says Morris Amitay, a former executive director of aipac. (The current leadership of aipac has taken a very different view of the prosecution. Following the August 4 indictment, aipac spokesman Patrick Dorton said, "Aipac dismissed Rosen and Weissman, because they engaged in conduct that was not part of their jobs, and because this conduct did not comport in any way with the standards that aipac expects of its employees.")

The potential chilling effect the Rosen and Weissman prosecution may have on the press, government watchdog groups, and lobbyists has brought the two former aipac officials plenty of allies. Kate Martin, director of the Center for National Security Studies, a civil liberties group, says, "The truly unprecedented and shocking point of this prosecution is that the government claims that the effort to obtain information for publication is itself a crime." And Steve Aftergood, an intelligence expert at the Federation of American Scientists, notes that "very few people outside of government will ever get their hands on classified documents. But everyone who reads the newspaper is in possession of classified information."

And, arguably, the ability of the press to seek out and publish classified information is more important now than ever before. Last year, the National Archives Information Security Oversight Office, which tracks the proliferation of classified information, said that government agencies reported 15,645,237 decisions to classify material, a 10 percent increase from the year before. It's hard to believe that the Justice Department or the FBI can or should protect that many secrets.

There are those who argue that the war on terrorism necessitates more secrecy than past

conflicts. Representative Peter Hoekstra, the chairman of the House Select Committee on Intelligence, says he is so concerned about recent leaks that he plans to hold hearings, beginning this month, on whether it's necessary to revise the espionage statute to give the Justice Department more authority to prosecute leakers. But Hoekstra also wants to revise the way information is classified to curb what he calls "excessive overclassification."

Until that happens, leaks arguably serve a vital function in U.S. democracy--helping to ensure that the public can make informed decisions about national security policy. As Max Frankel, the former executive editor of The New York Times, put it in 1971, during the Nixon administration's case against the paper for printing the Pentagon Papers, "[P]ractically everything that our Government does, plans, thinks, hears and contemplates in the realms of foreign policy is stamped and treated as secret--and then unraveled by that same Government, by the Congress and by the press in one continuing round of professional and social contacts and cooperative and competitive exchanges of information." The question--to be decided by a Virginia jury next year--is whether that unraveling will continue any longer.

LOAD-DATE: September 29, 2005

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From:

Sent:

To:

Subject: Media Advisory - U.S. v. Franklin

Attachments: 0155.pdf

January 20, 2006

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**Media Advisory
United States v. Franklin**

A \$10,000 fine imposed this morning on Lawrence Franklin at his sentencing hearing has been vacated because he had previously agreed to forfeit his government pension, according to an order issued this afternoon by U.S. District Judge T.S. Ellis, III, in Alexandria, Virginia. A copy of the order is attached.

The other aspects of the sentence imposed this morning by Judge Ellis on Mr. Franklin – 151 months in prison and three years of supervised release – remain in effect. He will begin serving the sentence on a date to be determined, after he cooperates with prosecutors. He remains free on an unsecured bond of \$100,000.

Mr. Franklin, a former employee of the U.S. Department of Defense, was sentenced in U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia after pleading guilty on October 5 to three charges: conspiracy to communicate national defense information, conspiracy to communicate classified information to an agent of a foreign government, and unlawful retention of national defense information.

If you have questions about this media advisory, please contact [REDACTED] the court's public information officer, at [REDACTED]

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Sent: Friday, January 20, 2006 2:57 PM

To: [REDACTED]

Subject: JPost

ONLINE EDITION
JERUSALEM POST**Israel: Franklin's trial won't affect us**

Nathan Guttman, THE JERUSALEM POST

Oct. 8, 2005

Israel alleged that it would not be affected by Lawrence Franklin's plea bargain or by the fact that the names of Israeli diplomats were mentioned in court. Israeli diplomatic sources said Thursday that Naor Gilon, the former political officer at the Israeli embassy in Washington, who was in contact with convicted Pentagon analyst Franklin, had no idea that the information he got from Franklin was classified.

"We are not responsible for what is said to us by American officials", said the diplomatic source, "even if an American official did something he was not authorized to do, we had no way of knowing that."

Mark Regev, the Foreign Ministry spokesman, said in response to the incident that "the Israel embassy staff in Washington conduct themselves in a completely professional manner in accordance with all international conventions, and no one serious has made any allegations to the contrary."

Naor Gilon met between eight and twelve times with Larry Franklin and discussed with him issues regarding Iran's nuclear program and the internal political situation in Iran. Israeli sources described these meetings as routine and common practice for any diplomat. (X) BMC

Franklin himself, in a court hearing Wednesday in which he pleaded guilty to three counts of communicating classified information and holding documents at his home, said he "knew in his heart" that the Israelis already possessed all the information he was giving Gilon. Franklin added that he received more information from the Israeli diplomat than he had given him.

In a short formal reaction to the Franklin plea bargain, David Siegel, spokesman for the Israeli embassy, said, "we have full confidence in our diplomats who are dedicated professionals who conduct themselves in full accordance with established diplomatic practices".

Israel and the US have not reached yet an understanding concerning the method in which Gilon and two other Israeli diplomats from the embassy will be interviewed by investigators probing the case. Israeli suggested that the US relay its questions to the Israelis and will get in return written answers, but there was yet to be an American response to this offer.

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While Israel was mentioned only in passing and court documentation showed it was not accused of any wrongdoing, the prosecutors focused on two former officials at the pro-Israel lobby. The trials of Steve Rosen, former AIPAC director of policy, and Keith Weissman, former Iran analyst at the lobby, were slated to begin on January 3rd.

Abbe Lowell, the attorney representing Rosen in the case, said Wednesday that he was not surprised by the fact that Franklin, who was under great pressure struck a deal with the prosecution. "It has no impact on our case because a government employee's actions in dealing with classified information are simply not the same as a private person, whether that person is a reporter or a lobbyist", said Lowell in a written statement following Franklin's court appearance.

Defense and Foreign Affairs Committee chairman Yuval Steinitz said Thursday that Israel had not 'activated' Franklin, and that Israel was not spying in the United States. He stressed that any conviction was in no way an accusation of Israeli involvement in spying.

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]

Sent: Wednesday, January 25, 2006 10:30 AM

To: [REDACTED]

Subject: JTA article

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Matthew E. Berger

Lawrence Franklin, left, leaves a courthouse in 2005 with his attorney, John Richards.

FOCUS ON ISSUES

Sentence in Franklin case sends chill through free-speech community

By Ron Kampeas

WASHINGTON, Jan. 23 (JTA) — It was surprising enough that the judge quadrupled the prosecution's recommended sentence for Lawrence Franklin, from three years to more than 12.

But the true bombshell at the sentencing of the former Pentagon analyst, who is at the center of the case involving pro-Israel lobbyists and classified information, came as lawyers were shutting their briefcases last Friday.

That's when U.S. District Judge T.S. Ellis III told the courtroom in Alexandria, Va., that he believed civilians are just as liable as government employees under laws governing the dissemination of classified information.

"Persons who have unauthorized possession, who come into unauthorized possession of classified information, must abide by the law," Ellis said. "That applies to academics, lawyers, journalists, professors, whatever."

It was difficult to assess whether Ellis was thinking out loud or was pronouncing his judicial philosophy. The judge earned a reputation as a voluble off-the-cuff philosopher when he adjudicated the case of John Walker Lindh, the "American Taliban."

But if those are Ellis' jury instructions in April, when two former staffers of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee go on trial, the implications could have major consequences — not just for Steve Rosen and Keith Weissman, but for how Americans consider national security questions.

Defense lawyers for Rosen and Weissman have joined a free speech watchdog in casting the case as a major First Amendment battle.

"The implications of this prosecution to news gatherers and others who work in First Amendment cases cannot be overstated," lawyers for the former AIPAC staffers wrote in a brief earlier this month supporting an application from the Reporters Committee for the Freedom of the Press to file an amicus

brief.

The case is believed to be the first in U.S. history to apply a World War I-era statute that criminalizes the dissemination of classified information by U.S. civilians.

Franklin pleaded guilty to a similar statute barring government employees from leaking classified information. That statute rarely has been prosecuted; before Franklin, the last successful prosecution experts can recall was in the 1980s.

JTA has learned that the defense team for Rosen and Weissman last week filed a brief by Viet Dinh, the former assistant attorney general who was the principal drafter of the USA Patriot Act, arguing that federal prosecutors in this case were interpreting classified information protections much too broadly.

Dinh confirmed to JTA in a brief phone conversation that he had signed the brief, which is classified.

Franklin, a mid-level Iran analyst at the Pentagon, admitted to leaking information to Rosen and Weissman in 2003 because he wanted his concerns about the Iranian threat to reach the White House.

His Pentagon colleagues were focused on Iraq, and Franklin believed AIPAC could get his theories a hearing at the White House's National Security Council. He also leaked information to Naor Gilon, the former chief political officer at the Israeli Embassy.

By the summer of 2004, government agents co-opted Franklin into setting up Rosen and Weissman. He allegedly leaked classified information to Weissman about purported Iranian plans to kill Israeli and American agents in northern Iraq.

Weissman and Rosen allegedly relayed that information to AIPAC colleagues, the media and Gilon. AIPAC fired the two men in March 2005. In sentencing Franklin, Ellis described the former Pentagon analyst's motives as "laudable," but said his motives were beside the point.

"It doesn't matter that you think you were really helping," Ellis said. "That arrogates to yourself the decision whether to adhere to a statute passed by Congress, and we can't have that in this country."

Those views could be bad news for Rosen and Weissman, who hoped to rest part of their defense on an altruistic desire to save lives.

More to the point, it suggests Ellis believes government statutes are sacrosanct, however little they have been used. That's what concerns free-speech advocates.

"These provisions of the Espionage Act are widely recognized in the legal literature as incoherent," said Steven Aftergood, who heads the government secrecy project for the Federation of American Scientists, a nuclear watchdog that relies heavily on leaks for its information.

"We do not arrest and charge every reporter who comes into possession of classified information. We do not arrest people who receive leaks of classified information, we never have," he said. "For the judge to suggest otherwise is quite shocking."

Lucy Dalglish, the Reporters Committee executive director, described the case as "terribly important."

"If we had a situation where journalists can be punished for receiving information, hello police state," she said.

At the Herzliya Conference in Israel — an annual gathering for top Western security officials that Franklin once attended — participants said the case was a central behind-the-scenes topic of discussion, and they girded themselves for the consequences of the Rosen and Weissman trial.

Malcolm Hoenlein, executive vice chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, told the Jerusalem Post that the climate in Washington was "unacceptable."

That "two patriotic American citizens who are working for Jewish organizations who did nothing to violate American security should have to stand trial and be subject to the public scrutiny and public humiliation, frankly I find very disturbing, and a matter that we all have to look at in a much more

serious way," Hoenlein said.

Franklin's sentence seemed exceptionally tough, given the prosecution's tentative agreement to recommend a three-year sentence if Franklin cooperated in the case against Rosen and Weissman.

Ellis' sentence — abiding by strict government sentencing guidelines — was mainly a technicality, since Franklin is not going to go to jail until his cooperation with the prosecution is complete. Prosecutors said they would exercise their prerogative to consider freeing Ellis from applying government sentencing guidelines.

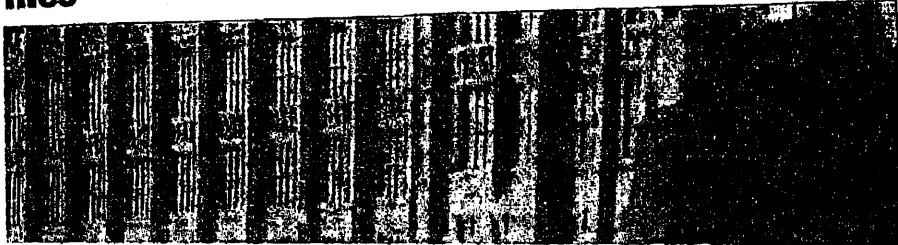
In that case, Ellis is likely to apply the three-year deal prosecutors worked out with Plato Cacheris, Franklin's lawyer.

Washington Post

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SATURDAY, JANUARY 21, 2006

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Va. Leaders Push Increase In Taxes, Fees To Aid Roads

NATIONAL NEWS

THE WASHINGTON POST

s for Passing Government Secrets

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Court documents said Franklin provided
classified data — including information
about a Middle Eastern country's activities
in Iraq and weapons tests conducted by a
foreign country — to the lobbyists and to
an unnamed "foreign official."

The Middle Eastern country was not
named, but Franklin disclosed at his plea
hearing that some of the material related
to Iran. He also said in court that the for-
eign official was Naor Gilon, who was the
political officer at the Israeli Embassy be-
fore being recalled last summer. Israeli of-
ficials have said they are cooperating in the
investigation, and they denied any wrong-
doing.

Franklin is expected to testify against
the two former AIPAC lobbyists, Steven J.
Rosen and Keith Weissman, at their trial,

which is scheduled for April.

Rosen, of Silver Spring, is charged with
two counts related to unlawful disclosure
of national defense information obtained
from Franklin and other unidentified gov-
ernment officials on topics including Iran,
Saudi Arabia and al Qaeda. Rosen was AI-
PAC's director of foreign policy issues and
was instrumental in making the committee
a formidable political force.

Weissman, of Bethesda, faces one count
of conspiracy to illegally communicate na-
tional defense information.

The FBI monitored a series of meetings
between Franklin and the former AIPAC
officials dating back to early 2003, multiple
sources familiar with the investigation
have said. At one of those meetings, a ses-
sion at the Pentagon City mall in Arlington
in July 2004, Franklin warned Weissman
that Iranian agents were planning attacks
against U.S. soldiers and Israeli agents in
Iraq, sources said.



BY KEVIN WOLF — ASSOCIATED PRESS

Lawrence A. Franklin has said he was
frustrated with the direction of U.S. policy
and thought he could influence it.

Franklin had faced a maximum sentence
of 25 years in prison. Ellis said Franklin
would not have to go to jail until he fin-
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Pentagon Analyst
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In Prison Case

a delight of visitors and Londoners thronging the riverbank. Experts said the last time a whale d that efforts to direct the 17-foot mammal toward the safety of the ocean would fail. Story, A13.

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BY MICHAEL ROBINSON CHWALZ — THE WASHINGTON POST

Lead plaintiffs in the lawsuit, Rita Deane, left, and Lisa Polyak of Baltimore, are savoring their victory but acknowledge that challenges lie ahead.

, a \$100 Million Question

May End Support for U.S.-Funded Coca Eradication

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"We're not doing anything these days," one soldier said, ignoring the mosquitoes alighting on his exposed forearms. "We're just waiting to hear what's going to happen next."

It's the \$100 million question in Bolivia: What will become of the U.S.-financed program to eradicate coca, the plant used to make cocaine, now that the longtime head of the coca growers' union, Evo Morales, is about to become the country's president?

Morales, 46, who will be inaugurated Sunday, said during his campaign that

he might withdraw Bolivia's support for the eradication program, a keystone of the U.S.-backed anti-drug and alternative crop development campaign here. He has hinted at decriminalizing the cultivation of coca, which is legally chewed as a stimulant and used in traditional medicines, and he has criticized regional U.S. anti-drug programs as false pretexts for establishing a military presence.

But Morales has toned down his

See BOLIVIA, A14, Col. 1

new governor said, he will seek to increase highway construction by 90 percent and revive stalled road projects.

The money would help build a connected network of carpool or express toll lanes on all of Northern Virginia's major highways, buy rail cars for Virginia Railway Express and Metro, widen Interstates 95 and 66, and fix traffic bottlenecks.

"We don't need any more studies. We don't need an extended session," Kaine told reporters Friday after-

See VIRGINIA, A10, Col. 3

Pentagon Analyst Given 12½ Years In Secrets Case

By JERRY MARKON
Washington Post Staff Writer

A former Defense Department analyst was sentenced to more than 12 years in prison yesterday for passing government secrets to two employees of a pro-Israel lobbying group and to an Israeli government official in Washington.

U.S. District Judge T.S. Ellis III said Lawrence A. Franklin did not intend to harm the United States when he gave the classified data to the employees of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, or AIPAC, one of Washington's most influential lobbying organizations. When he pleaded guilty, Franklin, an Iran specialist, said he was frustrated with the direction of U.S. policy and thought he could influence it through "back channels."

"I believe, I accept, your explanation that you didn't want to hurt the United States, that you are a loyal American," said Ellis, who added that Franklin was "concerned about certain threats to the United States" and thought he had to hand information about the threats to others to bring it to the attention of the National Security Council.

But Franklin still must be punished, Ellis said, because he violated important laws governing the non-disclosure of secret information.

"It doesn't matter that you think you were really helping," Ellis said as he sentenced Franklin to 151 months — 12½ years — in prison. "That arrogates to

See SECRETS, A6, Col. 1

INSIDE



BY LOS RAMONDO — THE WASHINGTON POST

The 'Rogue' Writer

Osama bin Laden invited the world to read his book. For Washington's William Blum, it's

Cuba Can Play Ball

The 16-nation World Baseball Classic gets the help it needs to bring Fidel Castro's team to the tournament. SPORTS, E1

House vs. House

Six bedrooms or just one with four bunks? Two distinct views of the house of the future. Also, a big increase in first-time buyers putting no money down.

Lessons Learned in Iraq Show Up in Army Classes

Culture Shifts to Counterinsurgency

By THOMAS E. RICKS
Washington Post Staff Writer

FORT LEAVENWORTH, Kan. — A fundamental change overtaking the Army is on display in classrooms across this base above the Missouri River. After decades of

Iraqi Election Results

An alliance of Shiite religious parties won the most seats in Iraq's parliament but not enough to rule without coalition partners, the election commission said yesterday. WORLD, A12

275 total seats

Shiite religious coalition	Kurdish secular coalition	Sunni religious coalition	Shiite/Sunni secular coalition

Analyst Gets 12½ Years for Passing Government Secrets

SECRETS, From A1

journalist the decision whether to adhere to a statute passed by Congress, and we can't have that in this country."

The sentence fell at the low end of the federal sentencing guidelines, which called for a term as long as 180 months. "It could have been tougher," said Michael Greenberger, a former Justice Department official who heads the Center for Health and Homeland Security at the University of Maryland.

The sentencing in U.S. District Court in Alexandria closed one chapter of a long-running investigation into an alleged conspiracy to obtain and illegally pass classified information to foreign officials and reporters. But with the case still shrouded in secrecy, yesterday's hearing cast no new light on the information Franklin provided, whether its transmission harmed the United States and whether anyone will be

charged other than the two lobbyists, who have been fired by AIPAC and are awaiting trial.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Kevin V. Di Gregory told Ellis that Franklin had reason to believe that the information could be used against the United States. "When you disclose national defense information to people not entitled to receive it," he said, "the U.S. government loses control of that information and there is no way to know in whose hands it might fall."

Peter Cecheris, Franklin's attorney, emphasized that Franklin is "a longtime dedicated public servant" who has had "a long and distinguished career." Cecheris said that Franklin has been cooperating extensively with investigators and that he expects the government to file a motion later to reduce Franklin's sentence.

Franklin pleaded guilty in October to three crimes: conspiracy to communicate national defense information, conspiracy

to communicate classified information to an agent of a foreign government, and unlawful retention of national defense information.

Court documents said Franklin provided classified data — including information about a Middle Eastern country's activities in Iraq and weapons tests conducted by a foreign country — to the lobbyists and to an unnamed "foreign official."

The Middle Eastern country was not named, but Franklin disclosed at his plea hearing that some of the material related to Iran. He also said in court that the Iranian official was Naeem Gilan, who was the political officer at the Israeli Embassy before being recalled last summer. Israeli officials have said they are cooperating in the investigation, and they denied any wrongdoing.

Franklin is expected to testify against the two former AIPAC lobbyists, Steven J. Rosen and Keith Weisman, at their trial,

which is scheduled for April.

Rosen, of Silver Spring, is charged with two counts related to unlawful disclosure of national defense information obtained from Franklin and other unidentified government officials on topics including Iran, Saudi Arabia and al Qaeda. Rosen was AIPAC's director of foreign policy issues and was instrumental in making the committee a formidable political force.

Weisman, of Bethesda, faces one count of conspiracy to illegally communicate national defense information.

The FBI scrutinized a series of meetings between Franklin and the former AIPAC officials dating back to early 2003, multiple sources familiar with the investigation have said. At one of those meetings, a session at the Pentagon City mall in Arlington in July 2004, Franklin warned Weisman that Iranian agents were planning attacks against U.S. soldiers and Israeli agents in Iraq, sources said.



Lawrence A. Franklin has said he was frustrated with the direction of U.S. policy and thought he could influence it.

Franklin had faced a maximum sentence of 25 years in prison. Ellis said Franklin would not have to go to jail until he finished his cooperation with the government.

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Hoenlein: Franklin sentence 'disturbing'

Hilary Leila Krieger, THE JERUSALEM POST Jan. 23, 2006

American Jewish leader Malcolm Hoenlein on Sunday blasted the sentence handed down two days earlier to the Pentagon analyst who admitted passing on classified information to Israeli diplomats and pro-Israel lobbyists.

Hoenlein, executive vice chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, labeled the ruling "disturbing," a comment greeted by applause from the audience to whom he spoke about US-Israel relations at the Interdisciplinary Center's Herzliya Conference.

The former analyst, Larry Franklin, was sentenced to 12 years and seven months in prison for three counts of conspiring to communicate national defense information unlawfully. The sentence was part of a plea bargain between Franklin and the prosecution in which he agreed to testify against two staffers of the pro-Israel lobby American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), Steve Rosen and Keith Weissman, whose trial begins in late April.

"The very fact that this kind of climate can exist in the capital of the United States is unacceptable," Hoenlein said of the sentencing as well as subtle anti-Semitism heard in the corridors of power.

He added, "[That] two patriotic American citizens who are working for Jewish organizations who did nothing to violate American security, should have to stand trial and be subject to the public scrutiny and public humiliation, frankly I find very disturbing and a matter that we all have to look at in a much more serious way."

Hoenlein also cautioned Israel about its attitude toward the Diaspora.

"There are more Jews in Tel Aviv than in New York and the majority of Jews will live here," he noted. "So there's no need to diminish the importance or the achievements of the Diaspora in order to emphasize the centrality and singular significance of Israel in all of our lives."

Hoenlein was preceded by Rabbi Yechiel Eckstein, who also had some words of criticism - of Diaspora Jewry.

He slammed Jewish leaders for making a "major strategic mistake" by criticizing growing ties between evangelical Christians and the State of Israel, arguing that evangelicals pose one of American Jewry's largest threats since their values are so different from that of American Jews.

"You don't need to accept their vision of America. But you don't need to make them the enemy," said Eckstein, president of the International Fellowship of Christians and Jews. "It is the height of irresponsibility for American Jewish leaders to jeopardize the critical support for Israel and the fight against radical Islam and growing anti-Semitism that evangelicals bring to the table." Eckstein warned Israel not to take the support of evangelicals for granted.

He did, however, praise Acting Prime Minister Ehud Olmert and former Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu for understanding the importance of this constituency.

Another speaker at the same session, American pollster Frank Luntz, also heaped accolades on Olmert. Concluding a lecture on how to use language effectively to get Israel's message across - "it is not what you say that matters in communication; it's what people hear" - he said that the former Jerusalem mayor had mastered his

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advice.

He played a short video clip of Olmert defending Israeli policies in heavily accented English on international TV.

"This is absolutely perfect communication to Americans," said Luntz, who is a consultant to the Israeli advocacy organization, The Israel Project. He described the clip as "some of the best communication of any Israeli spokesperson. Thank God he is where he is right now."

haaretz article.txt

www.haaretz.com

Last update - 10:59 23/01/2006
U.S. Jewish leaders concerned by Franklin conviction
By Shlomo Shamir and Amiram Barkat

Two days after former Pentagon analyst Larry A. Franklin was sentenced to 12 years and seven months in jail for sharing classified information with pro-Israel lobbyists, several American Jewish community leaders echoed a single refrain: There's reason to worry, but no need to feel like this is a crisis.

Franklin pleaded guilty in October to sharing the information with AIPAC lobbyists and Israeli diplomat Naor Gilon. Steve Rosen and Keith Weissman, who were fired from AIPAC in 2004, are facing charges of disclosing confidential information to Israel, apparently about Iran.

Some American Jewish leaders are concerned by the influence the trial could have on the relations between Jewish groups and the administration.

Anti-Defamation League director Abe Foxman said the Franklin affair could potentially pose a threat to all Jewish lobbyists.

Foxman said it is not clear what exactly is allowed in terms of the relationships between the administration and the media and between nongovernmental organizations and foreign governments. The lack of clarity, he said, could have a destructive influence on the activities of all U.S. Jewish groups.

Malcolm Hoenlein, executive vice chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major Jewish Organizations, said yesterday that he found Franklin's sentence "disturbing."

"The very fact that this kind of climate can exist in the capital of the U.S. is unacceptable," he said at the Herzliya Conference.

Rosen and Weissman, he said, "are two patriotic American citizens working for a Jewish organization, who did nothing to violate the American security."

[REDACTED] (WF) (FBI)

From:
Sent:
To:
Subject:

[REDACTED] (WF) (FBI)
Tuesday, February 14, 2006 9:30 AM
[REDACTED] (WF) (FBI)
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Former Official Backs Lobbyists In Leak Case

The Washington Post

By Walter Pincus

February 14, 2006

WASHINGTON, DC -- The former head of the Justice Department's Office of Legal Policy helped write a memorandum of law calling for dismissal of Espionage Act charges against two pro-Israel lobbyists, arguing that, in receiving leaked classified information and relaying it to others, they were doing what reporters, think-tank experts and congressional staffers "do perhaps hundreds of times every day."

Viet D. Dinh, who helped draft the USA Patriot Act after the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks, has joined with lawyers defending Steven J. Rosen and Keith Weissman, former employees of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), who last year became the first non-U.S. government employees to be indicted for allegedly violating provisions of the Espionage Act. "Never has a lobbyist, reporter, or any other non-government employee been charged . . . for receiving oral information the government alleges to be national defense material as part of that person's normal First Amendment protected activities," the defense memorandum states.

In addition, since no classified documents are involved, the two lobbyists are being accused of receiving oral classified information during conversations with government officials, one of whom warned Weissman that "the information he was about to receive was highly-classified 'Agency stuff,' " according to the indictment. That government official in this instance was Lawrence A. Franklin, who at the time worked in the policy office at the Pentagon. He recently pleaded guilty to violations of the Espionage Act and was provisionally sentenced to 12 years in prison, with the sentence to be reviewed depending on his cooperation with the government in the Rosen-Weissman trial and any other related investigations.

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The defense memorandum was filed under seal in U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia on Jan. 19 and, according to Rosen's attorney, Abbe D. Lowell, was unsealed last Thursday at the request of the defense. In the 90 years since the act was originally drafted, according to the Dinh memorandum, "there have been no reported prosecutions of persons outside government for repeating information that they obtained verbally, and were thus unable to know conclusively whether or to what extent that information could be repeated." Dinh, who has returned to teaching at Georgetown University Law Center after leaving the Bush administration, said in an interview yesterday that the espionage statute is very broad and vague in its language and normally requires "bad faith" on the part of those in violation.

The memorandum quotes Patrick J. Fitzgerald, special counsel in the CIA leak case, who said in a news conference that the espionage law is "a difficult statute to interpret" and "a statute you ought to carefully apply." "Prosecuting the leakee for an oral presentation . . . presents a novel case because the listener has no evident indicia for knowing what relates to national defense," Dinh said. He noted that he could find only one case in which the disclosed information may have been made only orally. In that case, an Army intelligence officer leaked defense information and only he was charged. He was acquitted, "indicating that the government should have thought twice before now trying to stretch the statute even further."

The memorandum notes that the statute contemplates the passing of physical evidence, such as documents with classification stamped not just on each page but also alongside each paragraph. One section of the law says that a person who has improperly received a classified leak commits a crime if "he willfully retains the same and fails to deliver it to the officer or employee entitled to receive it." The memorandum says that the provision cannot cover orally received information since recipients "retain" it in memory and it is physically impossible to 'deliver' it back to the United States."

Another reason for dismissing the case, according to the memorandum, is that "if the instant indictment and theory of prosecution are allowed to stand, lobbyists who seek information prior to its official publication date and reporters publishing what they learn can be charged with violating section 793" of the espionage statute. The memorandum also points out that "on many occasions, the media boldly state that they have classified material," which they publish after soliciting and receiving leaks.

Lowell said that his client and Weissman "have been indicted as felons for doing far less than for what reporters have been awarded Pulitzer Prizes." In the memorandum, reference is made to Washington Post reporter Dana Priest's articles on CIA secret prisons for alleged terrorists, for which a leak investigation is underway. FBI agents are also investigating the leak to the New York Times about the National Security Agency's domestic surveillance program.

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[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, February 15, 2006 8:16 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Fw: NY Sun article - [REDACTED] interviewed

Sent from my BlackBerry Wireless Handheld

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-----Original Message-----

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Sent: Wed Feb 15 18:45:50 2006
Subject: NY Sun article - [REDACTED] interviewed

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Big Impact Seen In Israel Spy Case

BY JOSH GERSTEIN - Staff Reporter of the Sun February 13, 2006
URL: <http://www.nysun.com/article/27429>

Lawyers for two former pro-Israel lobbyists under indictment for leaking classified information have denounced the prosecution as an assault on the First Amendment and warned that a vast array of policy advocates and journalists could be in jeopardy if the case goes forward. (X) BMK

The two lobbyists, Steven Rosen and Keith Weissman, were fired from their jobs at the American Israel Public Affairs Committee last year as the probe unfolded. A former Pentagon official charged with providing classified information to the pair, Lawrence Franklin, is cooperating with prosecutors after pleading guilty. He was sentenced last month to more than 12 years in prison.

In a brief filed in January and released last week, the lawyers for Messrs. Rosen and Weissman argue that the statute barring unauthorized release of classified material has never been applied to private citizens.

"The breathtaking application of that law to this set of facts breaks new legal ground," the defense team wrote. "There has never been a successful prosecution of an alleged leak by persons outside government persons with no contractual or legal obligation to preserve classified information."

Messrs. Rosen and Weissman are scheduled to go on trial in federal court in Alexandria, Va., on April 25. The indictment charges that they received classified information from Franklin and other officials, and passed that data on to members of the press and agents of a foreign government.

Prosecutors have not offered a public description of the information that was allegedly relayed, nor have they disclosed which reporters or foreign agents were allegedly involved. However, Franklin was the Iran desk officer at the Defense Department and some of the data he has admitted to passing on appear to have pertained to Iranian influence in

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Iraq. The foreign diplomats who received classified information in the alleged scheme appear to have been Israelis.

In court papers asking that the charges be dismissed, the defense lawyers argue that the prosecution is attempting to criminalize the traditional give and take of information between lobbyists, journalists, and government officials. "This is what members of the media, members of the Washington policy community, lobbyists and members of congressional staffs do perhaps hundreds of times every day," the lawyers wrote. "The exchange of information between members of the government and non-governmental organizations is precisely what policy lobbying (as well as everyday news reporting) is all about."

The prosecution's response to the motion was filed late last month, but has not yet been made public. In an unusual arrangement, most papers filed in the case remain secret for a time while they are reviewed for classified information.

In an interview yesterday, Mr. Weissman's attorney, John Nassikas III, said the prosecution should be of concern to all those who play a role in Washington policy debates. "Hopefully, there will be some resonance out in the community over this," the lawyer said. "We think that the government prosecution is off-base and we're challenging in every way, legally and factually."

However, Mr. Nassikas acknowledged that the defense may face an uphill battle in trying to convince Judge Thomas Ellis III, who is presiding over the case, that the prosecution would inhibit the free exchange of ideas and information vital to American democracy. At Franklin's sentencing last month, the judge expressed no qualms about punishing journalists or others who wind up with classified information and pass it on. "Persons who have unauthorized possession, who come into unauthorized possession of classified information, must abide by the law," Judge Ellis said in remarks first reported by the Jewish Telegraphic Agency. "That applies to academics, lawyers, journalists, professors, whatever."

The brief filed on behalf of Messrs. Rosen and Weissman was co-authored by a conservative Georgetown University law professor and former Justice Department official, Viet Dinh. Mr. Dinh's opposition to the department's stance in this case is notable because he has generally supported aggressive prosecution tactics and was an architect of the 2001 law that broadened the government's anti-terrorism powers, the USA-PATRIOT Act.

"He's obviously an expert on constitutional law issues, and there have been a lot of constitutional law flaws in the government's application of this statute," Mr. Nassikas said. He said Mr. Dinh was enlisted by Mr. Rosen's attorney, Abbe Lowell. Messrs. Lowell and Dinh did not return calls yesterday seeking comment for this story.

The case has drawn criticism from some Jewish activists as well as a journalists' group, the Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press, which has sought to file an amicus brief on behalf of the two ex-lobbyists.

Legal analysts often distinguish the American legal system's approach toward breaches of classified information from the tack taken in Britain, where the country's Official Secrets Act can be used to prosecute and silence journalists and ordinary citizens who come into possession of sensitive information. In America, there have been repeated, but unsuccessful, efforts to pass a similar statute that would criminalize all leaks of classified information regardless of the harm caused or the intent or identity of the leaker.

In 2000, President Clinton vetoed legislation that would have made the release of any classified information a crime.

"It would be fundamentally unfair for the Justice Department to usurp the province of Congress and create some type of Official Secrets Act through the prosecution of a test case," the defense team argued in their brief.

The brief also quotes a prominent federal prosecutor, Patrick Fitzgerald, about the perils of bringing criminal charges in connection with leaks of classified information. "You should be very careful in applying that law because there are a lot of interests that could be implicated," Mr. Fitzgerald said at a press conference last year discussing his

decision not to charge a White House aide, I. Lewis Libby, with leaking a CIA officer's identity. Mr. Libby, who has pleaded not guilty, was charged with perjury and obstruction of justice in the probe.

Details of the defense filing were first reported by an online newsletter, Secrecy News, which is published by the Federation of American Scientists.

Mr. Nassikas declined to say yesterday whether he plans to call journalists as witnesses, an effort which could prompt further legal confrontations. "Neither side has indicated what witnesses will be called at this point. It's clear there are reporters involved in the facts of the case," the attorney said.

In recent months, Messrs. Rosen and Weissman have been at odds with their former employer, Aipac, over payment of legal fees in the case. "That is not resolved," Mr. Nassikas said. He said Mr. Weissman plans to launch a legal defense fund this week to cover costs that Aipac has declined to pick up.

Efforts to reach an Aipac spokesman last night were unsuccessful.

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, February 15, 2006 6:12 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: FW: JTA article

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Sent from my BlackBerry Wireless Handheld

-----Original Message-----

[REDACTED]
Sent: Wed Feb 15 18:03:42 2006
Subject: JTA article

Pre-trial strategies suggest unwanted
exposure of AIPAC's lobbying practices

By Ron Kampeas and Matthew E. Berger

WASHINGTON, Feb. 14 (JTA) — Federal investigators are asking questions about ties between lay leaders of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee and two former staffers charged in a classified-information case.

The renewed investigation comes as Viet Dinh, a former assistant U.S. attorney general and principal architect of the Patriot Act, argued in a brief on behalf of Steve Rosen and Keith Weissman, the former AIPAC staffers, that the case against them lacks merit because it violates their First Amendment rights.

Taken together, the defense and government actions suggest the shape of the trial to start April 25: The defense will argue that culling and distributing inside government information was a routine lobbying activity.

It also anticipates the media event AIPAC insiders have said they fear: One that picks apart, in a public forum, exactly how AIPAC goes about its business.

No one suggests that AIPAC's activities are in any way illegal, and the prosecutor in the case already has made clear that the organization is not suspected of wrongdoing. But AIPAC closely guards its lobbying practices, and is loath to reveal them to the general Washington community.

In his brief, Dinh, now a law professor and attorney in private practice, argues that the First Amendment protects the practice of seeking information from executive branch officials.

"This is what members of the media, members of the Washington policy community, lobbyists and members of congressional staffs do perhaps hundreds of times a day," Dinh argues, describing the acts alleged in the indictment against Rosen, the former AIPAC foreign policy director, and Weissman, a former Iran specialist.

FBI agents' questions to other former AIPAC staffers interviewed in recent weeks suggest that the government is trying to assess whether receiving and disseminating classified information was routine at AIPAC.

The former staffers told JTA that the FBI agents asked questions about Rosen's

relationship with three past AIPAC presidents — Robert Asher of Chicago, Larry Weinberg of Beverly Hills, Calif., and Edward Levy of Detroit, as well as Newton Becker, an influential AIPAC donor from Los Angeles.

The former employees all spoke on condition of anonymity, because the FBI has told them not to speak with the media.

The office of U.S. Attorney Paul McNulty, who is trying the case, would not comment.

Weinberg, reached Tuesday, refused to comment. Levy was on vacation and could not be reached, and Asher and Becker did not respond to messages.

The new round of FBI questions is important because the indictment, based on a World War I-era espionage statute, rests not simply on receipt of the allegedly classified information but on its further dissemination.

The indictment, handed down last August, alleges that Rosen and Weissman relayed the information — on Iran and on Al-Qaida — to fellow AIPAC staffers, journalists and diplomats at the Israeli Embassy in Washington.

Establishing whether Rosen also briefed board members on the allegedly classified information would bolster the defense claim that the acts described in the indictment are routine. Board members are regularly briefed, often in lengthy one-on-one phone calls, on meetings between the most senior AIPAC staffers and top administration officials.

Rosen routinely made such phone calls, a former staffer said.

"He made sure board members knew he was responsible and he was the one doing the work," the staffer said.

Proving that such briefings are routine, however, will not necessarily deter the government from going ahead with the case: Judge T.S. Ellis, who is hearing the case, has suggested that the routine nature of such exchanges does not preclude prosecution.

"Persons who have unauthorized possession, who come into unauthorized possession of classified information, must abide by the law," Ellis said last month in sentencing Larry Franklin, the former Pentagon analyst who pleaded guilty to leaking information to Rosen, Franklin and others. "That applies to academics, lawyers, journalists, professors, whatever."

A defense source said the defendants could not recall board member briefings about the central charge in the indictment, involving allegedly classified information on supposed Iranian plans to kill American and Israeli agents in northern Iraq.

However, other alleged leaks in the indictment might have been relayed to board members, JTA has learned. One in 2002 involved David Satterfield, then a deputy assistant secretary of state and now deputy ambassador to Iraq. Satterfield relayed information to Rosen on Al-Qaida, the indictment says.

McNulty's office would not comment on whether it planned to bring charges against Satterfield. Satterfield did not respond to previous JTA requests for comment.

The defense will maintain that Satterfield would have been authorized to release the information. The administration routinely used AIPAC as a conduit to influence Israel on matters where there were differences between Israel and the United States, for instance on Israeli arms sales to China. In those cases, the information might have been classified.

The information Satterfield allegedly relayed to Rosen apparently related to Iran's ties to a wanted Lebanese terrorist.

Dinh's brief was filed last month, but was made public only last week. JTA reported on the brief last month, and has been researching for several months interactions between Rosen, Weissman and government officials.

Patrick Dorton, an AIPAC spokesman, previously has said that Rosen and Weissman were fired

last March because information arising out of the FBI investigation uncovered "conduct that was not part of their job and was beneath the standards of what AIPAC expects of their employees."

A December 2000 AIPAC staff handbook does not say how to handle classified information. A 1985 internal memo by Rosen, recently obtained by JTA, outlines his plans to shift AIPAC's lobbying emphasis from Congress to the executive branch. He explicitly calls for the cultivation of mid-level, non-elected officials — a description that would include Franklin.

Outlining the advantages of such lobbying, Rosen wrote: "They work for secretive rather than open institutions and agencies. And, perhaps most important of all for effective communications, they are in many cases experts in our subject themselves, as opposed to the 'generalist' in Congress who might be convinced by a few general 'talking points' explained by a layman."

Former staffers say Rosen's memo profoundly influenced AIPAC's mission. AIPAC has never repudiated the document, though last year the organization said it had changed some lobbying practices — without specifying which ones.

"AIPAC continues to discuss perfectly appropriate and legal information with people on Capitol Hill and in all levels of the administration every single day," Dorton said Tuesday.

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DISCLOSURE
ONE
TAB B

Copyright 1997 Times Newspapers Limited
The Times

November 13, 1997, Thursday

SECTION: Overseas news**LENGTH:** 677 words**HEADLINE:** Americans shot dead after guilty verdict on Pakistani**BYLINE:** Christopher Thomas, South Asia Correspondent, and James Bone in New York**BODY:**

FOUR Americans and a Pakistani were shot dead yesterday in the centre of Karachi, probably by Islamic extremists, in an apparent reprisal attack after the conviction of a Pakistani in America for the killing of two CIA employees. The Pakistani Government has ordered an inquiry, but there is little chance of catching the killers.

Further attacks on Americans were feared after the conviction in New York last night of the Pakistani mastermind of the 1993 World Trade Centre bombing.

Ramzi Yousef, a former engineering student at Swansea Institute in Wales, faces life imprisonment for plotting to kill up to a quarter of a million people by toppling one of the 110-storey twin towers of the centre onto the other.

Six people died and more than 1,000 were injured in the attack on the lower Manhattan landmark, which left Americans feeling vulnerable to international terrorism for the first time. Eyad Ismoil, a Jordanian accused of driving the truck bomb into the underground car park, was also convicted of conspiracy and faces a life term.

Yousef, a Baluchi of Palestinian descent who was raised in Kuwait, was arrested in Pakistan two years ago when a fellow Muslim radical turned him in, in the hope of the \$ 2 million reward.

Earlier this year he was sentenced to life imprisonment for plotting the bombing of 12 American airliners over Asia. The plan was never carried out because Philippines police chanced on his bomb factory, but Yousef tested his technique by bombing a Philippines Airlines plane, killing a Japanese business man. The American authorities believe he is linked to a shadowy Islamic underground connecting groups as far afield as Afghanistan, Egypt and the Philippines.

Sheikh Omar Abdel Rahman, a blind Muslim cleric, has already been jailed in the United States with ten associates on charges related to the World Trade Centre bombing and other planned attacks.

The Americans killed in Karachi, Pakistan's most lawless city, were singled out as the car in which they were travelling passed over a bridge in heavy morning traffic. The gunmen used Kalashnikovs, which are freely available at knockdown prices throughout the country, and escaped in the confusion.

All five victims of yesterday's attack were employees of Union Texas, the US oil company. They were on their way to work, a journey of only a few minutes, and died instantly. The Americans were auditors who had just arrived in Pakistan.

A witness said that the killers had on khaki jackets and the traditional baggy shirts and trousers worn by most Pakistanis. They stepped out of their vehicle, sprayed bullets into the victims at point-blank range, checked the bodies closely to ensure they were dead, and then drove off. The stolen vehicle was abandoned in the city.

The attack was similar to the killing of two American government employees in Karachi in 1995, also targeted as they drove to work. No one has been arrested for those killings, probably a reprisal for the deportation to America of Yousef. Yesterday's murders were probably designed to avenge the guilty verdict passed by an American court on Mir Aimal Kasi, a Pakistan national who killed two CIA employees outside the agency's headquarters in Langley, near Washington, more than four years ago. He could face the death penalty.

Kasi's lawyers are pleading with a jury to spare his life and sentence him to life in prison without parole. The defence produced family members, teachers, friends and former employers to show that Kasi had lived a non-violent life before the killings. The US State Department had given a warning on Tuesday that Americans could be targets after the Kasi verdict. Mike McCurry, President Clinton's spokesman, said there was no immediate direct evidence to link the Karachi murders with the Kasi conviction, but officials were watching for any connection that developed.

Condemning yesterday's Karachi attack as barbarous and outrageous, Mr McCurry said that it would not affect Mr Clinton's visit to Pakistan next year.

LOAD-DATE: November 14, 1997

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BRIEF ON IRAN
No. 798
Tuesday, December 9, 1997
Representative Office of
The National Council of Resistance of Iran
Washington, DC

DISCLOSURE
ONE
TABC

Spying on Foreign Reporters in Tehran, *Iran Zamin News Agency*, December 8

The regime's Ministry of Intelligence is doing its utmost to prevent foreign reporters from gaining access to the realities of the Iranian society.

According to reports from Iran, the regime has instructed the majority of foreign reporters to leave Tehran immediately after the summit of the Organization of Islamic Conference.

The reporters have reportedly asked to go to Qom and meet with dissident clergymen. Meanwhile, the regime has imposed more restrictions on Montazeri, former successor to Khomeini. Montazeri's comments against Khamenei in recent weeks escalated the power struggle within the regime.

Protest Gathering of Mojahedin Families in Tehran, *Iran Zamin News Agency*, December 8

According to reports from Iran, simultaneous with the Organization of Islamic Conference's meeting in Tehran, large groups of families of Mojahedin martyrs and political prisoners gathered today in the Iranian capital's Behesht-e Zahra cemetery to protest the clerical regime's repressive policies.

The families gathered despite security measures by the regime and chanted slogans against the regime's leaders, and in support of the National Liberation Army and the Resistance's leaders.

The protesters condemned the regime's efforts to take advantage of the OIC summit to legitimize their atrocities in the name of Islam.

The Revolutionary Guards attacked the gathering of Mojahedin families and arrested and took away dozens of people, including elderly mothers, the reports say.

Iran Denies Its Involvement in Killing of Four Americans, *Agence France Presse*, December 8

ISLAMABAD - Iran Monday denied its nationals were involved in the killing of four US business executives in the Pakistani city of Karachi last month.

X Police in Karachi said Sunday security agencies had detained eight Iranian nationals in connection with the murder of the Americans.

The detainees included two people suspected of involvement in the theft of the car the assailants used in the November 12 slaying, the police said.

A police official said that investigators were working on a number of theories including suspicions of an Iranian connection in the slaying.



Police were questioning the Iranians but none of them had confessed to involvement in the crime, said Saud Mirza, a senior superintendent of Karachi police.

Trail Heats Up in '94 Argentina Bombing, *The Los Angeles Times*, December 6

BUENOS AIRES--The hunt for terrorists who slaughtered 86 people in the bombing of a Jewish community center here in 1994 has picked up unexpected momentum....

Investigators believe that the attack also involved Iranian terrorists and members of Modin, a rightist political party of former military officers known for coup attempts and anti-Semitic violence.

The latest and most politically prominent investigative target is congressional Deputy Emilio Morello, a former army captain and Modin member. Under questioning by the commission last week, Morello denied allegations that he met with Iranian diplomats and traveled secretly to the Middle East....

Meanwhile, Judge Juan Jose Galeano sought another piece of the puzzle: the suspected Iranian connection. After gathering information in France and Germany on Iranian terrorism, Galeano flew to Los Angeles to re-interview witness Manouchehr Moatamer, an Iranian defector who lives in California.

Moatamer, who fled Iran in 1994, describes himself as a former well-placed Iranian operative with powerful family connections. He says he had access to meetings where intelligence officials plotted the Buenos Aires bombing. During his testimony last week in the Argentine Consulate in Los Angeles, he provided purportedly official Iranian documents on the plot to back his claims...

Iranian officials, who deny any role in the bombing, call Moatamer a con man. But investigators believe that he can help them. During his 1994 testimony in Venezuela, he predicted a bombing at the Israeli Embassy in London that occurred days later during a worldwide terror offensive.

19th Dissident Assassinated Abroad During Khatami's Tenure, *Iran Zamin News Agency*, December 5

Wednesday, December 3, terrorists dispatched by the Iranian mullahs' regime assassinated Seyyed Jamal Nikjouyan, a member of the Kurdistan Democratic Party of Iran, in Kouysenjaq, Iraqi Kurdistan.

He was the 19th dissident assassinated on Iraqi territory since Khatami has taken office.



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DISCLOSED
BRIEF ON IRAN
No. 806
Friday, December 19, 1997
Representative Office of
The National Council of Resistance of Iran
Washington, DC

Karachi
MURDERS
OF
US CITIZENS

Religious-Civil Tension Mounts in Iran, *The Wall Street Journal*, December 17

TEHRAN—...Dr. Ibrahim Yazdi, leader of the Iran Freedom Movement, was summoned to the Islamic Court Sunday evening, associated said....Dr. Yazdi hasn't communicated with associates since phoning them that night....

The court that brought in Dr. Yazdi is closely aligned with Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. The arrest may deepen the divisions between Ayatollah Khamenei and the country's elected leader, President Mohammad Khatami....

President Khatami has sought to play down his differences with Ayatollah Khamenei. But others, including student activists and a few religious figures, have been pushing him toward a confrontation. Last month, Ayatollah Hossein Ali Montazeri, an Iranian religious figure who once was in line to be supreme leader, gave a lecture painting Iran's presidential election as a repudiation of Ayatollah Khamenei....

In reaction, a mob pillaged Ayatollah Montazeri's home and office in Qom, Iran's theological center. Street demonstrations were held throughout Iran in support of Ayatollah Khamenei, who said critics of the country's theocratic system were guilty of "acts of treason."...

Dr. Yazdi's detainment could be a warning by Ayatollah Khamenei that he won't hesitate to move against critics now that most of the international press corps has left Tehran after the OIC meeting....

Ayatollah Montazeri isn't the only cleric critical of Ayatollah Khamenei, though....some mullahs have long doubted Ayatollah Khamenei's religious credentials, and suggest a committee be set up to replace the single leader....

In particular, the top cleric in Isfahan is reported to have given a stern warning Friday to the officially tolerated vigilantes who have ransacked newspaper offices in that city, which is a stronghold of President Khatami....

Putting Ayatollah Montazeri on trial would be a risky move, though. As one of seven top religious authorities in Iran, he has silent adherents throughout the country....

Mr. Khatami and Ayatollah Khamenei may face more conflicts next year....

Police Probe Iranian Link In US Murders, *United Press International*, December 18

X ISLAMABAD—Pakistani and U.S. investigators probing the murders of four Americans in Karachi last month are looking at a possible Iranian link.

Officials at the U.S. embassy in Islamabad have confirmed local reports Thursday that investigators are interrogating Iranians for their possible involvement in the deaths.

Reports say police in Karachi arrested more than a dozen Iranians last week. Some have since been released but police are still holding six as possible suspects. Police traced telephone calls to the apartment where the Iranians lived.

terrorist attack last month in Karachi, a southern port city, left four Houston oil company employees dead....

Women Resist Raw Deal in Islamic Iran, *Reuter*, December 15

TEHRAN (Reuters) - Women were in the vanguard of the Iranian revolution that ousted the Shah 18 years ago, but they have had a raw deal in the Islamic republic and are increasingly demanding greater rights.

Few of the countless thousands of women who poured into the streets, defying the Shah's soldiers to demonstrate for change, can have imagined that the revolution would turn the clock back more than half a century for their sex.

Yet that, according to feminist lawyer Mehrangiz Kar, is exactly what happened.

"The family protection law enacted in the last four years of the Shah's regime, which improved many things for women, was abolished and they returned to the previous law approved 66 years earlier," she told Reuters in an interview....

In the name of Islam, the ruling Shi'ite Muslim clergy reinstated laws that give men an absolute right to divorce their wives without having to produce any justification and, in the vast majority of cases, custody over the children.

Women are entitled to keep boys only up to the age of two and girls until seven. After that the father has the right to custody....

"Although the mother has a very lofty place in Iranian literature and religious tradition, legally she is next to nothing," Kar said.

Women are barred from serving as judges, although there were many on the bench before the revolution. They face explicit discrimination in the criminal law and an unwritten "glass ceiling" in employment.

A woman's evidence in court is worth only half a man's, Kar said, and for some offenses, women's evidence is not admissible at all....

Blood money for a murdered woman is only half that for a man. Moreover, in an Islamic version of Catch 22, if a murdered woman's family insists on her male killer's execution, her relatives have to pay his family the full blood money in compensation, Kar said.

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ARMED CONFLICTS REPORT 2004

DISCLOSURE
ONE

TAB

A

Pakistan (1992 - first combat deaths)
Update: February 2005

Summary:

2004 Sectarian fighting continued in 2004 as attacks on civilians and security forces, bombing of mosques, and drive-by shootings of politicians killed between 100 and 170 people. Most casualties were civilians who died in the year in two most serious attacks, both bombings of Sunni mosques. President Musharraf was entrenched as head of the government and army until at least 2007 by a bill approved by Pakistan's lower house. Pakistan was declared a major ally by US President Bush in recognition of Pakistan's contribution to the fight against al-Qaeda.

2003 Sectarian violence claimed approximately 100 lives this year, with Shia Muslim civilians accounting for most of the casualties. President Musharraf continued a crackdown on militant groups, to which may be linked an attempt on his life in December.

2002 Sectarian violence claimed dozens of lives this year with Islamic militants stepping up attacks against Pakistani Christians and foreigners.

2001 Sectarian violence continued in 2001 with targeted killings of prominent members of the community. In August, the Sindh provincial government initiated a crackdown on Islamic militants. According to one Pakistani media source, more than 50 people were killed in the violence during the year.

2000 Although violence has declined since the military coup of October 1999, sectarian tensions persisted between the majority Sunni and the minority Shi'ite Muslim groups in Karachi. The killing of prominent religious leaders and political activists resulted in violent protests. At least 25 people were killed in the violence.

1999 Despite the central government's imposition of Governor's Rule in late 1998 in response to Sindh violence, political and sectarian killings persisted in Karachi, albeit at a much reduced level. At least 75 were killed during the year, down from the estimated 1,000 conflict deaths in 1998.

1998 In 1998 reprisal killings between militants of the Muttahida Qami Movement (MQM) and a break-away faction increased violence in the city of Karachi.

Type of Conflict:

State formation/ Failed state.

Parties to the Conflict:

1) Government:

As of October 1999, led by Chief Executive General Pervez Musharraf following the overthrow of the government of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif in a military coup. Under the previous Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, the government engaged the Pakistani Police Force, Paramilitary Rangers and troops from the Frontier Corps (Constabulary) in the conflict.

2) Armed groups:

Several parties opposed to the government (and each other) are involved in the violence. These are seen to be primarily ethnic or religious groups.

(a) Jeay Sindh (Qadir Magsi Group) representing Sindh nationalists;

(b) Mohajir-Qaumi-Movement (M-Q-M) led by Altaf Hussain (in exile in London since 1992) representing Mohajirs (migrants) who moved to Pakistan in 1947 when India was partitioned. Name changed to Muttahida Qami Movement in 1998;

(c) M-Q-M (Haqiqi), a breakaway faction led by Afaq Ahmed;

Millat-e Islami-ye Pakistan (MIP), previously known as Sipah-Sahaba-Pakistan, which represents Sunni Moslems with support from fundamentalist groups in Saudi Arabia and Libya;

Islami Tahrik-e Pakistan (ITP), previously known as Tehrik-I-Jaffaria-Pakistan, which represents Shi'ite Moslems with some financial support from Iran. Led by Mohammad Baqar Najfi;

(d) Lashkar-e-Jhangvi, suspected of having links with Osama Bin Laden and al-Qaeda.

In addition, criminal elements, some working through the above groups, also contribute to the violence, a legacy of Pakistan involvement in the war in Afghanistan and the related drug trade.

In January 2002, President Musharraf banned five Islamic militant groups including, Sipah-Sahaba-Pakistan and Tehrik-I-Jaffaria. This ban was extended in 2003 following the renaming of several of the groups.

The ban imposed on three Islamic organizations by the Pakistani government over the weekend, in a move that saw dozens of Islamic activists rounded up across the country, was the continuation of a ban imposed last year, according to a senior government official. This is a continuation of the old ban on groups that had become active under new names. Information Minister Sheikh Rashid Ahmad told IRIN...

Among the outlawed groups were the Sunni organisation, Sipah-e-Sahab-ye Pakistan, which later re-emerged as Millat-e Islami-ye Pakistan (MIP); and its rival, the Shi'ah group, Yahrik-e Jaffari-ye Pakistan, which, thereafter, renamed itself Islami Tahrik-e Pakistan (ITP). Both the new organisations have been banned... [IRIN, November 17, 2003]

Status of Fighting:

2004 Armed violence continued in the form of attacks on civilians, bombing of mosques, drive-by shootings of politicians and attacks on security forces. The most serious incidents of the year were March and October bombings of Sunni mosques that killed over 80 people and wounded hundreds more.

Extremist strikes and sectarian attacks across the country together with mini-insurgencies in two of Pakistan's four provinces have increased public insecurity and criticism of President Pervez Musharraf. [BBC News, July 1, 2004]

Police in the Pakistani city of Karachi have fired tear gas at thousands of angry mourners after an attack on a Shia mosque killed at least 20. Trouble erupted after funeral prayers for 14 of those killed in Monday's attack, which officials believe was a sectarian suicide

bombing. The funerals follow overnight unrest in which three people died in clashes with the police. **[BBC News, June 1, 2004]**

Pakistan police say a bomb has wounded 13 police and soldiers in the south-western city of Quetta. Those injured were travelling in a truck when the blast occurred. Police have yet to identify the attackers. One report said a bomb on a bicycle had been detonated by remote control; another said a grenade was thrown from a motorcycle. Quetta has been a target for Islamic militants - in March over 40 people died in an attack on Shia Muslims. **[BBC News, May 24, 2004]**

A car bomb that exploded on Thursday outside a bible society office in the southern port city of Karachi, injuring at least 12 people and damaging the wall of a church close by, was actually an attack against law-enforcement agencies, according to a government official. **[IRIN, January 16, 2004]**

2003 Fighting between Sunni and Shia communities spread to the southwestern region of the country. In most instances of violence, Shia civilians were indiscriminately attacked, allegedly by extremist Sunni militant groups. The worst such case was the July bombing of a Shia mosque in Quetta, which resulted in 60 deaths. Militants employed guerrilla tactics, such as bombings and drive-by shootings. Extremist sectarian groups opposed to President Musharraf's policies, including his administration's alliance with the US in the war on terror, sustained attacks on government security forces and narrowly failed to assassinate Musharraf in December.

Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf narrowly escaped an assassination attempt when a bomb exploded just after his motorcade had passed by... Officials said it was too early to say who was behind the attack, but the most likely suspects are radical hardliners opposed to Musharraf's policy on Afghanistan, his crackdown on extremism and his efforts to reform Islamic schools. The Associated Press reported. **[CNN.com, December 14, 2003]**

Angry crowds rampaged through Pakistan's capital on Tuesday, a day after a prominent Sunni leader was shot dead near Islamabad... Maulana Azam Tariq, the leader of the Milat-e Islamiya, was gunned down by unknown assailants on Monday... **[IRIN, October 7, 2003]**

Hazara Shia community leaders have called for increased security, despite life returning to normal following a Sunni militant attack on a mosque in the southwestern Pakistani city of Quetta on 4 July. The Lashkar-e-Jhangvi organisation claimed responsibility for the attack in which 60 people died...

Thousands of Sunni and Shia Muslims have been killed in Pakistan over the past two decades in sectarian violence... [which has been] mostly limited to the eastern Punjab and the southern Sindh provinces. However, in recent months, Hazaras living in Quetta, capital of the mostly tribal southwestern Balochistan Province, have become a target. **[IRIN, July 17, 2003]**

Unknown snipers gunned down nine Shiite Muslims at their place of worship in Karachi, a southern port city in Pakistan, a police officer told AFP (Agence France Presse)... Two men came on a motorcycle and one of them took out a gun looking like a Kalashnikov and sprayed bullets on the people going inside the Imambargah for evening prayer, Anwer Hussain, an eyewitness and survivor told AFP. **[The Age, February 23, 2003]**

2002 Fighting continued between Sunni and Shia communities. In addition, government officials, Pakistani Christians and foreigners were targeted by militant Muslim groups.

Masked gunmen have shot dead three Shia Muslims and injured two others outside a mosque in Pakistan... It was not clear who was behind the shooting, but violence between opposing militants from the majority Sunni and minority Shia communities has claimed hundred of lives in Pakistan in recent years. **[BBC News, June 18, 2002]**

A total of 10 parcel bombs were sent to officials in Karachi on 16 and 17 October. Three of them exploded, injuring nine people, while the others were defused... The parcel bombs appeared to be aimed at the Pakistani establishment, officials say. **[BBC News, October 31, 2002]**

The Christian community in Pakistan has been the worst hit by extremist attacks over the past year - more Christians have died in these incidents than from any other community. The targeting of the hospital and school, and now the Karachi charity, are the latest in a series of attacks against specifically Christian missions or places of worship. **[BBC News, September 25, 2002]**

Karachi witnessed an attack on the US consulate in June and a suicide bombing against French naval engineers in May. **[BBC News, September 25, 2002]**

2001 Sectarian violence persisted in 2001 with attacks by extremists from all sides.

Sunni extremists changed their strategy to targeting prominent community members such as doctors, lawyers and businessmen.

Police in Pakistan's largest city Karachi are under intense pressure to end an upsurge in sectarian murders of doctors and other professionals in the city. Extremists from the majority Sunni community have been blamed for the killing of four Shia doctors since April, as well as the high profile murder of the head of Pakistan State Oil, Shaukat Mirza. Fanatics from both sides have carried out many deadly attacks in Karachi over the years, but the new tactic is to target prominent personalities in the community. (BBC, September 3, 2001)

2000 Although violence has declined since the military coup of October 1999, sectarian tensions persisted between the majority Sunni and the minority Shi'ite Muslim groups in Karachi. The killing of prominent religious leaders and political activists resulted in violent protests. In September, Pakistani police arrested 250 members of the hardline Sunni Muslim group, Sipah-e-Sahaaba. Other police and army operations targeted the two leading ethnically-based parties in Sindh, the Jeay Sindh Qaumi Mahaz (JSQM) and Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM).

[Sources: BBC News, 13 September 2000, 21 September 2000]

Armed gunmen ambushed a school van, killing five Sunni Muslims and wounding three others in the latest round of religious violence in Karachi, Pakistan, police said. The attack led to violent protests, with hundreds of Sunni Muslim students pelting police with stones, setting cars on fire and vandalizing billboards. (Reuters and Associated Press, 28 January 2001)

A prominent Pakistani religious leader has been shot dead in Karachi ... Dr Qureshi, is a former leader of Jamaat-e Islami (Party of Islam) and a former member of the Sindh provincial assembly. In recent years, Dr Qureshi had supported calls for Islamic law to be introduced in Pakistan. (BBC News, 18 December 2000)

A leader of a small Pakistani Shi'ite Muslim group has been shot dead in the southern city of Karachi. Police say Sardar Hussain Jafri, who headed the little-known group called the Voice of Shia, died on the spot. A person who identified himself as Riaz Basra, leader of the extremist anti-Shi'ite group, Lashkar-e-Jhangvi, phoned the BBC shortly after the attack to claim responsibility. (BBC News, 15 May 2000)

Paramilitary rangers and police in Sindh province launched a crackdown against activists and leaders of the JSQM and the MQM on February 19, 2000 after the two parties jointly called for a strike against the government's dismissal of 400 Pakistan Steel Mills workers. Paramilitary troops and rangers responded with search and siege operations in the cities and a search for JSQM activists in rural areas of Sindh, resulting in the arrest of about forty activists. (Human Rights Watch 2001 World Report)

1999 Despite the central government's imposition of Governor's Rule in late 1998 in response to Sindh violence, political and sectarian killings persisted in Karachi, albeit at a much reduced level. The intensity of the violence dropped even further after the military assumed federal powers in an October coup.

Politically motivated violence and sectarian violence continued to be a problem, although in the weeks following the October 12 coup there were few if any reported cases of such violence. Governor's Rule, imposed to correct a serious law and order problem created in part by political tensions in the province, continued in Sindh until the coup. (Pakistan Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 1999, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, US Department of State, February, 2000)

1998 In 1998 tit-for-tat killings between the Muttahida Qami Movement (MQM) and a break-away faction increased the level of violence in Karachi.

The MQM, which changed its name to Muttahida Qami Movement from the Mohajir Qami Movement, is locked in a bloody conflict with a dissident faction called the MQM Haqiqi. Hundreds of people have died in recent months in tit-for-tat killings by the militants of the two factions. (The Associated Press, November 20, 1998)

Since the early summer more than 100 people in the city have died in gun battles between rival political factions each month. In recent days the violence has gathered pace. (The Guardian Weekly, October 18, 1998, p5)

Number of Deaths:

Total: Estimates range upwards from 5,000.

Thousands of Sunni and Shia Muslims have been killed in Pakistan over the past two decades in sectarian violence fuelled by

extremist outfits of the two Muslim sects. • [IRIN, July 17, 2003]

The MQM launched an armed uprising in 1993 after the city government was dismissed, and brought Karachi to its knees, leaving more than 5,000 people dead and crippling the economy of Pakistan's main commercial centre. Karachi's descent reached its nadir last year when more than 2,000 people, including 242 police officers, died in nightly street battles. • [City was on Karachi pays high price for peace, John Stackhouse, *Globe and Mail*, October 26, 1998]

2004 Between 100 and 170 people, primarily civilians, were reported killed in sporadic intercommunal violence.

troops have been called in to maintain order in the Pakistani city of Multan after a car bomb killed at least 40 people at a meeting of Sunni Muslims. • [BBC News, October 7, 2004]

At least 11 people have died in a gun attack on the motorcade of the army commander in Pakistan's southern city of Karachi, the authorities say. [BBC News, June 10, 2004]

Police in the Pakistani city of Karachi have fired tear gas at thousands of angry mourners after an attack on a Shia mosque killed at least 20. • [BBC News, June 1, 2004]

A bomb attack on a packed Shia mosque in the southern Pakistani city of Karachi has left at least 15 people dead, officials say. • [BBC News, May 7, 2004]

At least 42 people have been killed and over 100 wounded in an attack on Shia Muslims in the Pakistani city of Quetta, hospital officials say. • [BBC News, March 2, 2004]

2003 Independent media reports indicate that approximately 100 hundred people, the majority of them Shia Muslim civilians, were killed in 2003.

Sectarian violence and tensions continued to be a serious problem throughout the country... At least 100 persons were killed in sectarian violence during the year, most carried out by unidentified gunmen. • [US State Department of State, Country Reports on Human Rights Practices - 2003, February 25, 2004]

2002 A number of media reports estimate that dozens of people were killed in sectarian violence and attacks on government officials.

There have been several attacks on foreign targets in Sindh including:...

\$ A suicide attack on a navy bus in Karachi in May which killed 14 people....

\$ A car bomb at the US consulate in Karachi in June, which killed 12 people. • [BBC News, September 24, 2002]

At least 36 people have been killed and about 100 injured in several violent attacks this year against Christian and western targets... Police in Karachi have arrested dozens of alleged Muslim extremists in connection with the recent attacks on Christian targets. • [BBC News, September 29, 2002]

2001 According to at least one Pakistani media source, more than 50 people were killed in sectarian violence in Karachi.

The highest number of terrorist attacks was recorded in Karachi where in 33 incidents, 54 persons were killed. The second [highest] remained FATA, where 61 persons were killed in seven incidents of sectarian violence. Dera Ismail Khan remained [third highest] where 10 people were killed and 19 injured in 6 terrorist attacks. 14 people were killed and 8 injured in 5 attacks in Lahore, 4 killed and 3 injured in 3 incidents in Multan, 4 killed in 2 at Malawi. • [PakNews, August 21, 2001]

2000 At least 25 people were killed in Karachi, mostly due to sectarian violence.

Earlier, gunmen riding in two cars intercepted a van belonging to the Wafaq-ul Madris Sunni Muslim school on a congested road and opened fire with automatic assault rifles, witnesses said. Three clerics, a teenage student and the driver were killed immediately, while three other people, including a policeman guarding the van, were wounded, police said. • [Reuters and Associated Press, 28 January 2001]

Pakistani lawyer and Shiite leader has been shot dead by unidentified gunmen in Karachi. Waqar Naqvi, a senior member of the Shiite group, Tehrik-e-Jaffria, was killed along with his teenage son and his driver as he was taking his children to school. No group has said it carried out the killings, but a spokesman for Tehrik-e-Jaffria Hasan Turabi blamed a militant Sunni Muslim group - Sipah Sahaba Pakistan. • [BBC News, 7 April 2000]

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There has been widespread disruption in the Pakistani city of Karachi, following the killing of a prominent Sunni Muslim scholar Mullah Yusuf Ludhianvi. Mr Ludhianvi's driver was also killed and his son seriously wounded. *[BBC News, 18 May 2000]*

1999 At least 75 people were killed in Karachi due to political violence.

Despite improved security conditions under Governor's Rule, there were 75 deaths that were presumed to be the result of political violence in Karachi. *[Pakistan Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 1999, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, US Department of State, February, 2000]*

1998 More than 1,000 people died in violence.

[Associated Press, November 20, 1998]

At least 750 people have been killed in Karachi this year, mainly, says the MQM, as a result of attacks on itself by a breakaway faction. *[The Economist, November 7, 1998]*

Political Developments:

2004 President Pervez Musharraf will remain head of the army and government until at least 2007, after a bill passed in Pakistan's lower house extended his tenure in both roles. Musharraf also named Shaukat Aziz, a political novice, as Prime Minister in August. Although the government ordered an inquiry into a March attack on civilians, several strikes were called (mainly in Sindh province) to protest government handling of the conflict. The Sindh provincial government failed to form a coalition of national unity with the seven opposition parties in an attempt to stem the tide of conflict and the minister of the Sindh province resigned after violence escalated in June. US President Bush declared Pakistan a major ally in recognition of its contribution to the fight against al-Qaeda allowing Pakistan access to special benefits including expanded foreign aid and priority delivery of military equipment.

Pakistan's lower house of parliament has passed a bill allowing Gen Pervez Musharraf to remain as both president and head of the army. The bill will allow the president to keep both posts until 2007. *[BBC News, October 14, 2004]*

The reins of power have once again been handed over in Pakistan. And once again, it's a man hand-picked by the country's military ruler, Gen Pervez Musharraf. And though it has all been done constitutionally, the question being asked is whether a political novice like Shaukat Aziz has the competence and capability to deal with the country's complex political and law and order situation, or even bigger issues like combating al-Qaeda-backed terrorism. *[BBC News, August 28, 2004]*

In Pakistan the chief minister of the southern province of Sindh has resigned after a series of violent incidents over the last few weeks. The provincial governor told reporters that chief minister Ali Mohammed Mehr had resigned for personal reasons. *[BBC News, June 7, 2004]*

A strike called by Pakistan's hardline Islamic parties in response to a week of sectarian violence has been almost fully observed in Karachi. There were sporadic reports of unrest as worshippers attended Friday prayers in the tense southern city. *[BBC News, June 4, 2004]*

The governing Pakistan Muslim League party (PML) in the southern province of Sindh has offered to form a coalition with seven opposition parties. It wants to form a government of national unity in Sindh to tackle the law and order crisis there. The move comes after three days of violence between Shias and Sunnis left over 23 people dead in the provincial capital, Karachi. But there is disagreement as to who should be the chief minister. *[BBC News, June 3, 2004]*

Authorities in Pakistan have ordered an inquiry into an attack on Shia Muslims which left at least 43 people dead as they marked the holy day of Ashura. A curfew is in place in the city of Quetta where the attack took place, with soldiers patrolling its streets. *[BBC News, March 3, 2004]*

2003 The leader of the militant Sunni organization Millat-e Islami-ye Pakistan (MIP) was assassinated in October, leading to rioting in Islamabad. The government sustained a crackdown on banned Sunni and Shia militant groups and arrested their leaders. President Musharraf continued to support US initiatives in the war on terror in neighbouring Afghanistan, a position not welcomed by many Pakistani citizens.

The ITP (Islami Tahrir-e Pakistan) leader, Sajid Naqvi, was arrested in a late-night raid in Islamabad, but it was not clear whether his arrest was in his capacity as the leader of the sectarian outfit, or because he is alleged to have been involved in the murder of his chief rival, Azam Tariq, of the MIP, who was gunned down in a hail of bullets by unknown assailants early last month near the Pakistani capital. - [RIN, November 17, 2003]

2002 In January, the government banned five militant Islamic groups, including the Sipah-Sahaba-Pakistan and Tehrik-i-Jaffaria. A number of groups reacted to the ban and to Pakistan's support of the US-led war on terror by attacking foreigners and Pakistani Christians, prompting the Christian community to demand protection from the government and the international community. The government responded by introducing new security measures around non-Muslim places of worship. Fighting continued between the Sunni and Shia communities in Sindh despite government efforts to increase security in the province.

A suicide bomber blew up a bus yesterday in Pakistan's port city of Karachi, killing 14 people - most of them French nationals - including himself... Many experts say it is pointed retaliation at Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf's crackdown on Islamic militant groups and for allowing US troops to cross the Pakistani border to hunt down Al Qaeda fighters... Some experts are pointing to Muttahida Quami Movement... - [The Christian Science Monitor, May 9, 2002]

2001 In August the government of the Province of Sindh initiated a crackdown on Islamic militants, arresting more than 200 people in raids.

Police in Pakistan have detained more than 200 people in raids on militant Islamic homes and offices in Karachi and the southern Sindh province. The crackdown was launched after the Sindh provincial governor imposed a ban on fundraising in the name of jihad, or holy war. - [CNN, August 22, 2001]

2000 Facing increasing pressure from the international community to restore democracy, military leader General Pervez Musharraf ruled out the possibility of holding general elections or reviving the suspended Pakistan parliament within the next two years.

[Sources: BBC News, 12 October 2000; BBC News, 13 October 2000]

1999 On October 12, Prime Minister Mian Nawaz Sharif was ousted from power in a bloodless military coup led by Army Chief of Staff General Pervez Musharraf.

On October 12, the elected civilian government of Prime Minister Mian Nawaz Sharif was overthrown in a bloodless coup led by Army Chief of Staff General Pervez Musharraf. - [Pakistan Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 1999, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, US Department of State, February, 2000]

1998 A month after the MQM walked out of the provincial government coalition, the federal prime minister, Nawaz Sharif, declared Governor's Rule (a state of emergency) in Karachi, called out the army to quell the violence, and announced the establishment of military courts for the city.

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif today declared a state of emergency and called out the army to quell violence that has killed more than 1,000 people in the port city of Karachi. Sharif also announced the establishment of military courts in Karachi. - [Associated Press, November 20, 1998]

The MQM has since walked out of the Sindh coalition, and on October 30th the federal prime minister, Nawaz Sharif, placed the province under direct rule from Islamabad. - [The Economist, November 7, 1998, p41]

Last week Mr. Sharif bolstered his position even further. The lower house of the National Assembly passed a Bill imposing Islamic law on the country despite stiff resistance from a coalition of opposition parties. - [The Guardian Weekly, October 18, 1998, p5]

Background:

The migration of Indian Muslims (mohajirs) into Sindh province following the 1947 India-Pakistan partition, combined with a more recent influx of large numbers of Pashtuns and Punjabis, created economic tensions with the indigenous, generally poorer, Muslim population. These have fed a

complexity of conflict. Sindhis are calling for a Sindhi state; the mohajirs, led by the MQM, are seeking a separate state around the provincial capital, Karachi; and there are sectarian differences between the majority Sunni and minority Shi'ite Muslims. The proximity of the Afghanistan war has fed the violence by providing weapons, criminal elements, including drug traffickers, and reported foreign support for Muslim extremism. From June 1992 to November 1994 the Pakistan Army was deployed in a major, and ultimately unsuccessful, operation to control Karachi and after the army withdrawal, police and paramilitary troops contributed to a rising toll of shooting deaths in the city. Following early 1997 elections, the MQM joined the majority Muslim League in the national and Sindh provincial governments. A month after the MQM walked out of the provincial government coalition in late 1998, the then federal prime minister, Nawaz Sharif, declared Governor's Rule (a state of emergency) in Karachi, called out the army to quell the violence, and announced the establishment of military courts for the city. Since a coup in October 1999, the Pakistan government has been controlled by the military under General Pervez Musharraf and sectarian violence has declined. The Pakistani government intensified its crackdown on militant sectarian groups following the 2001 US invasion and occupation of Afghanistan, fueling further resentment between the extremist groups and the government. Several attempts have been made in recent years on President Musharraf's life.

In Sindh, open gun battles between the Muhajir Qaumi Movement (MQM), which represents Urdu-speaking migrants from India, Sindh landlord *jashkars* (private militias) and the army are daily occurrences. The MQM has begun to press for the separation of Karachi from the rest of the province. Violence threatens to paralyze the capital, even though the army has had direct responsibility for its administration since June, 1992. A plan announced recently to replace the military presence with police and rangers is unlikely to ease tensions. [City Watch on Karachi killings point to deeper strife, Oxford Analytica, *Globe and Mail*, December 5, 1994]

In Karachi Drug trafficking started to increase significantly after 1979, and the profits were reportedly used to fund the procurement and supply of weapons to the [Afghani] Mujahideen. The port city of Karachi was an obvious exit point for drugs. By 1983, violence had started to be a daily feature of the city life. But it was the closure of the Punjab route into India by 1982 that started to escalate armed violence, indiscriminate use of automatic weapons, and drug trafficking. The Army had to be deployed to control the armed conflict which had a multifarious dimension, not the least being the easy availability of lethal man-portable weapons. [Light Weapons and Conflict in Southern Asia, by Jasjit Singh, *Light Weapons and International Security*, BASIC et al, December 1995, pp 60]

Arms Sources:

The Pakistani government recently imported weapons from the United States, Netherlands, Italy, France, China, Belarus, and Ukraine. The alliance formed between Pakistan and the US in the war on terror has led to an increase in US military assistance to Islamabad. The government also depends on domestic supplies. The rebel movements have been supplied by the "Afghan Pipeline" - US weapons during the 1980s, and Eastern European arms since.

[Sources: *World Military Expenditures and Arms Transfers 1999-2000*, *The Military Balance 2000-2001*; SIPRI Yearbook, 2002]

Country-region watch Pakistan and the United States are slated to begin talks this week on arms sales, with Washington now ready to loosen its long-standing ban on sales of important military equipment to Pakistan ... [in the 1990s] Washington started an arms embargo... to protest Pakistan's nuclear program... But Pakistan's alliance with the United States in its war against terrorism has radically changed the situation. After meeting with Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf in June, President Bush promised Pakistan up to \$1.5 billion in military aid. [Voice of America, September 18, 2003]

Pakistani security forces have recovered a cache of arms... that were being smuggled from the country's tribal areas, police said Wednesday... Five Russian missiles, five rocket launchers with shells, 12 kalashnikov rifles, several other guns and thousands of rounds of ammunition... were coming from the tribal area of Bara near the Afghan border, said senior secret police officer Ashraf Khan. These are all modern, foreign-made arms. The large quantity indicates that they were meant for some subversive activity or for use in sectarian violence in Punjab province. Khan told AFP. [Agence France Presse, January 1, 2003]

A major defence exhibition is opening today Tuesday in Pakistan's largest city, Karachi. The show is intended to focus Pakistan's attempts to launch into the arms export market; more than forty foreign delegations are due to attend... Most of the armaments factories in Pakistan are state-run and produce weapons for the armed forces, but the BBC Islamabad correspondent says they're seen as under-utilized and a drain on public spending. [BBC News, 14 November 2000]

Subin [former Director of the Fulbright Foundation] observes that often officials of the party military committee (who received the weapons) would sign a false receipt for more arms than had actually been received. The difference was then sold to private arms dealers by ISI officers, the profit being shared by both parties. A great deal of money appeared to have been made in this manner and was invested largely in the drug trade. [Southern Asia: The Narcotics and Weapons Linkage, Tara Kartha, *Light Weapons and International Security*, BASIC et al, December 1995, p.73].

The influx of arms into Pakistan as a consequence of the war in Afghanistan in the 1980s has provided weapons to militant groups on all sides: Sindhis, Mohajirs and Pashtuns. ["South Asian Security in the 1990s", Raju G.C. Thomas, Adelphi Paper 278, July 1993, p.28.]

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TIME

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Exclusive: Feds Probe a Top Democrat's Relationship with AIPAC

The Department of Justice is investigating whether Rep. Jane Harman and the pro-Israel group worked together to get her reappointed as the top Democrat on the House Intelligence Committee

By TIMOTHY J. BURGER/WASHINGTON

Did a Democratic member of Congress improperly enlist the support of a major pro-Israel lobbying group to try to win a top committee assignment? That's the question at the heart of an ongoing investigation by the FBI and Justice Department prosecutors, who are examining whether Rep. Jane Harman of California and the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) may have violated the law in a scheme to get Harman reappointed as the top Democrat on the House intelligence committee, according to knowledgeable sources in and out of the U.S. government.

The sources tell TIME that the investigation by Justice and the Federal Bureau of Investigation, which has simmered out of sight since about the middle of last year, is examining whether Harman and AIPAC arranged for wealthy supporters to lobby House Democratic leader Nancy Pelosi on Harman's behalf. Harman said Thursday in a voicemail message that any investigation of — or allegation of improper conduct by — her would be "irresponsible, laughable and scurrilous." On Friday, Washington GOP super lawyer Ted Olson left voicemail messages underscoring that Harman has no knowledge of any investigation. "Congresswoman Harman has asked me to follow up on calls you've had," Olson said. "She is not aware of any such investigation, does not believe that it is occurring, and wanted to make sure that you and your editors knew that as far as she knows, that's not true... No one from the Justice Department has contacted her." It is not, however, a given that Harman would know that she is under investigation. In a follow-up phone call from California, Olson said Harman hired him this morning because she takes seriously the possibility of a media report about an investigation of her, even though she does not believe it herself.

A spokesman for AIPAC, a powerful Washington-based organization with more than 100,000 members across the U.S., denied any wrongdoing by the group and stressed that it is not taking sides in regards to the committee assignment. Spokespersons for Justice and the FBI declined to comment. The case is a spin-off of a probe that has already led to charges under the Espionage Act against two AIPAC lobbyists, whose case is still pending, and to a 12-and-a-half-year prison sentence for former Defense Intelligence Agency official Lawrence A. Franklin. Franklin pleaded guilty a year ago

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to three felony counts involving improper disclosure and handling of classified information about the Middle East and terrorism to the two lobbyists, who in turn are accused of passing it on to a journalist and a foreign government, widely believed to be Israel. The two lobbyists, who have denied any wrongdoing but were dismissed by AIPAC in April of 2005, were indicted on felony counts of conspiring with government officials to receive classified information they were not authorized to have access to and providing national defense information to people not entitled to receive it.

Around mid-2005, the investigation expanded to cover aspects of Harman's quiet but aggressive campaign to persuade House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi to reappoint her to the prestigious position on the House intel panel. The alleged campaign to support Harman for the leadership post came amid media reports that Pelosi had soured on her California colleague and might name Rep. Alcee Hastings of Florida, himself a major supporter of Israel, to succeed Harman.

The sources say the probe also involves whether, in exchange for the help from AIPAC, Harman agreed to help try to persuade the Administration to go lighter on the AIPAC officials caught up in the ongoing investigation. If that happened, it might be construed as an illegal quid pro quo, depending on the context of the situation. But the sources caution that there has been no decision to charge anyone and that it is unclear whether Harman and AIPAC acted on the idea.

AIPAC spokesman Patrick Dorton denies that the organization has engaged in any improper conduct. "Both Congressman Hastings and Congresswoman Harman are strong leaders on issues of importance to the pro-Israel community and would be exemplary Democratic leaders for the House intelligence committee," Dorton said. "AIPAC would never engage in a quid pro quo in relation to a federal investigation or any federal matter and the notion that it would do so is preposterous. AIPAC is not aware that the Justice Department is looking into issues involving the intelligence committee, and has not been asked any questions or contacted by the government on this matter, but certainly would cooperate with any inquiry." Dorton added that AIPAC has previously been assured that the organization and its current employees are not being investigated. In this same investigation, the Justice Department has previously suggested that AIPAC had questionable motives in trying to help a valued government contact remain in a sensitive national security post. The Justice Department alleges in its indictment of Franklin that he asked one of the two AIPAC lobbyists to "put in a good word" for him in seeking assignment to the National Security Council. The document says the AIPAC official noted that such a job would put Franklin "by the elbow of the President" and said he would "do what I can."

AIPAC lists praise from Pelosi among a series of quotes from world leaders on its website: "The special relationship between the United States and Israel is as strong as it is because of your [AIPAC's] fidelity to that partnership..." But congressional sources say Pelosi has been infuriated by

pressure from some major donors lobbying on behalf of Harman. In a story touching on tensions between Pelosi and Harman, an alternative California publication, *LA Weekly*, reported in May that Harman "had some major contributors call Pelosi to impress upon her the importance of keeping Jane in place. According to these members, this tactic, too, hasn't endeared Harman to Pelosi."

A congressional source tells *TIME* that the lobbying for Harman has included a phone call several months ago from entertainment industry billionaire and major Democratic party contributor Haim Saban. A Saban spokeswoman said he could not be reached for comment. A phone call pushing for a particular member's committee assignment might be unwelcome, but it would not normally be illegal on its own. And it is unclear whether Saban — who made much of his fortune with the Mighty Morphin Power Rangers children's franchise — knew that lobbying Pelosi might be viewed by others as part of a larger alleged plan.

Saban has donated at least \$3,000 to Harman's campaign, according to Federal Election Commission records, and the Saban Center for Middle East Policy, which he sponsors at the prestigious Brookings Institution, boasts Harman among its biggest fans. "When the Saban Center talks, I listen," Harman said at a Saban Center briefing in February on U.S. strategy in Iraq. Harman quipped that, in order to attend the session at Brookings, she had to "blow off" a senior intelligence official's appearance before a House committee.

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FBI

Keith Weissman and Steven Rosen Are PhDs and Middle East Experts Who Did Some Lobbying.

Thomas O'Donnell didn't reveal his job when he phoned Keith Weissman in 2004 and got the policy analyst's wife. He says he didn't want to scare her. When Weissman returned the call and found out O'Donnell was an FBI agent, his first reaction was to attempt a joke: "What did I do?" "I'm sure you didn't do anything," O'Donnell told him. He wanted to meet that day, for five or ten minutes, and get Weissman's help on something "that I can't talk about on the telephone."

Weissman was calling from his cell phone, standing outside a New Balance shoe store near Boston. He turned down the invitation to meet with O'Donnell: "That's a little too cryptic for me. I'm on vacation with my family."

O'Donnell was in Boston, and he offered an explanation for why he was there. He said he had been sent for the Democratic National Convention "and some other matters." The political convention, where the FBI kept watch for violent demonstrators, had wrapped up a few days earlier at Boston's Fleet Center.

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Weissman agreed to meet O'Donnell in Washington six days later and "have a cup of coffee and [find] a quiet place and we can talk."

When Weissman pressed O'Donnell, seeking to find out what the FBI was after, he was told, according to an FBI transcript, that the bureau wanted to tap "your expertise with some different countries . . . that you've studied and written on and done some research. It's that kind of stuff."

That was plausible. Weissman, then 52, was a senior analyst for the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), Washington's most influential pro-Israel lobby group, where he had worked since 1993. His job combined research and efforts to influence US government policy. He had a good grasp of the political and cultural currents of the Middle East, having studied in Iran and Egypt and earned a PhD in Middle East history at the University of Chicago.



■ Steven Rosen, former director of foreign-policy issues for the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, is charged with receiving and sharing secret defense information.

Weissman's wife, Deborah, a lawyer and former investigator with the Securities and Exchange Commission, became anxious when told of the FBI meeting. She urged her husband to take someone with him to the appointment, such as AIPAC general counsel Philip Friedman. Her instincts were sound. O'Donnell's assurance to Weissman that "I'm sure you didn't do anything" was a feint.

O'Donnell worked at the FBI's Washington Field Office at Fourth and F streets, Northwest. The city-block-size WFO, as it's known, serves as the nerve center of the government's low-key but expansive efforts to track leaks of secrets to foreign countries. Its targets aren't just America's enemies; allies and friends hunger after each other's closely held information.

Russian espionage continues unabated after the collapse of the Soviet Union. An American agent in Paris was caught trying to steal French trade secrets. Despite

Photograph of Rosen by Matthew Worden/Weissman by Kevin Wolf/AP Photo

They Thought They Were Doing What Washington Insiders Always Do. BY MARK MATTHEWS

disclaimers, Israel is reported to be on a lookout for any information that will help preserve a military edge over regional enemies and expand its exports of weaponry and technology. The United States, in turn, is alert for signs that Israel is selling military hardware to China.

"There has been, for some time, serious concern about Israeli espionage in the U.S.," says Vincent Cannistraro, a former CIA veteran who also held intelligence posts at the White House and Pentagon. At the FBI, he adds, "puts Israel up alongside China as espionage threats."

In 2000, CBS's *60 Minutes* broadcast the disguised voice of an unnamed CIA official saying, "We believe that there have been numerous documented instances in which the Israelis have successfully recruited US persons to spy for them."

O'Donnell's call prompted Weissman to try to reach his boss, Steven Rosen, AIPAC's director of foreign-policy issues. Rosen, then 62, was a former academic. A political scientist with a PhD from Syracuse, he had taught at Brandeis, the University of Pittsburgh, and Australian National University and cowrote a textbook, *The Logic of International Relations*. He joined AIPAC in 1982 after four years with the Rand Corporation, where he held top-secret security clearance to work on

projects for the CIA. While at Rand, he became acquainted with a promising young graduate student, Condoleezza Rice, who was working there temporarily.

Weissman didn't want to call Steven Rosen's cell phone; he thought his boss should be sitting down when he heard about the FBI call. As it turned out, Rosen also had gotten a message from an FBI agent who wanted to talk to him about a "field investigation."

When the two AIPAC officials speculated over the phone about what the FBI was after, they turned up one possibility: The

investigators' interest had been piqued by information the lobbyists had supplied to the *Washington Post* two weeks earlier. Still, Rosen was reluctant to act defensive, which would suggest that their organization was involved in "nefarious things."

Rosen returned the FBI's call and spoke with agent Catherine Hanna. "Is this a criminal matter?" he asked.

"No," she replied.

That afternoon, Hanna and partner Robert Porath went to Rosen's AIPAC office on First Street near Union Station. The agents told Rosen that the FBI was updating the security clearance of Pentagon analyst Lawrence Franklin and was interviewing his contacts as part of a background investigation. Franklin was the Pentagon desk officer for Iran, a subject of deep interest to Rosen. The FBI had turned up some possible security issues, the agents said, including the fact that Franklin may have stored classified documents at his house.

According to the agents' notes, Rosen said he had met with Franklin about three times, but the two had never discussed classified information, nor had Franklin shared any with him. Asking for classified information, Rosen told the agents, was "a quick way to ruin relationships."

Weissman kept his appointment the



■ Former AIPAC analyst Keith Weissman was also charged in the secrecy investigation. Convictions could mean ten years in prison for Weissman and up to 20 years for Rosen.

next week with O'Donnell and another agent, William McDermott, at the Sun Spot Cafe, adjacent to the lobby of AIPAC's office building. Over a beverage and cigarette, Weissman described having met with Franklin four or five times over the previous two years to talk about non-Arab Middle East countries, primarily Iran, according to a court document. The agents asked him if Franklin had ever disclosed classified information to him or anyone else he knew, and they noted his answer: "No."

The two AIPAC officials' hunch that a phone call to the *Post* had found its way onto the FBI's radar was correct. They had shared what law-enforcement officials considered "national-defense information" with *Post* reporter Glenn Kessler about stepped-up Iranian activity in Iraq. The government would later charge that Rosen described it to Kessler as "agency information" from an "American intelligence source."

But that call to the *Post* was a small piece of the story. And contrary to what agent Hanna told Rosen, this *was* "a criminal matter." By the time the agents approached Rosen and Weissman, they were nearing the final stages of an investigation into leaks of classified information that would wreck the two men's careers and throw one of Washington's most powerful lobby groups on the defensive.

The FBI probe included hours of wiretaps approved by the secret Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court in Washington and surveillance of meetings at Washington-area restaurants. It also included a

search of AIPAC's offices in 2002 that appears to have been surreptitiously conducted, because the offices' entrance is monitored 24 hours a day and no one appeared with a search warrant around that time.

Federal prosecutors theorized that Rosen and Weissman had engaged in a five-year conspiracy to cultivate government sources with the aim of obtaining sensitive "national-defense information," which they would pass on to colleagues at AIPAC, Israeli officials, and journalists. By August 2005, prosecutors persuaded a federal grand jury in Alexandria that the two AIPAC officials were not only assiduous in collecting classified information but almost flamboyant in sharing it with others.

"When it comes to classified infor-

mation, there is a clear line in the law," then-US attorney Paul McNulty said when the indictments were announced in August 2005. "Today's charges are about crossing that line."

Rosen, Weissman, and Franklin were accused under a rarely used section of the World War I-era Espionage Act.

A conviction could land Weissman, a father of three, in prison for up to ten years and Rosen, also a father of three who faces an additional charge, for up to 20. But the potential impact extends beyond these two men and AIPAC. It could also send a chill through the ranks of Washington lobbyists and consultants for foreign governments.

To influence the US government or even react knowledgeably to US actions, many countries think an embassy staffed with diplomats isn't enough. They're willing to pay large fees to hire Americans with contacts at high levels and an understanding of how policymakers



■ Former Pentagon analyst Lawrence Franklin, middle, pleaded guilty to conspiracy and helped the FBI set up a sting. Lawyer Plato Cacheris, left, hopes his client's cooperation will mean a lighter sentence.

think. Often these are ex-government officials. While barred from lobbying former colleagues immediately upon leaving office, they nonetheless bring valuable experience and eventually get inside for meetings and to open doors for foreign visitors.

For instance, when India was negotiating its 2006 civilian nuclear agreement with the Bush administration—fraught with strategic implications for both countries—it enlisted the lobbying firm Barbour Griffith & Rogers for advice. The firm had previously signed on the former US ambassador to New Delhi, Robert Blackwill. Although Blackwill wasn't involved in getting the firm's India contract, he has since been a prominent advocate for a new US/India partnership.

Robert Litt, a defense lawyer who has represented people caught up in leak investigations, sees the indictment of Rosen and Weissman as part of a broad crackdown on leaks by the Bush administration: "People formerly in the intelligence community are looking at [the AIPAC case] and the leak investigations with great trepidation."

But a conviction is by no means a sure thing, due in part to an aggressive three-year fight by the defense team, led by Abbe Lowell for Rosen and by John Nassikas III for Weissman. The lawyers' no-stone-unturned litigation fills a foot-thick file of motions and rebuttals in US District Court in Alexandria. A series of rulings by the resolutely even-handed presiding judge, T.S. Ellis III, has knocked some of the stuffing out of the government's case and required the Bush administration to put some of its top officials on the witness stand.

In fact, what the US attorney called the "clear line in the law" isn't clear at all, particularly where the question of intent comes into play. When the case comes to trial in late April, assistant US attorneys Kevin DiGregory and William N. Hammerstrom Jr. will have to meet a big burden of proof. Showing that Rosen and Weissman obtained, talked about, and relayed sensitive national-defense information won't be enough. Prosecutors will have to prove that the two men did so knowing that if the information were revealed, it would damage US national security and also knowing that disclosing it was illegal.

Convincing a jury that Rosen and Weissman possessed this criminal state of mind won't be easy. To counter the charge, defense lawyers intend to lay bare the largely hidden world of back-channel Washington diplomacy. They will try to show that senior officials regularly gave AIPAC officials sensitive information with the full expectation that it would be passed along to Israelis and others. In that way, they will contend that AIPAC played a role in developing US foreign policy.

Over prosecutors' objections, defendants won court approval to subpoena 15 current and former top administration officials. Their names read like the lineup for a crisis meeting in the White House Situation Room during President Bush's first term: national-security adviser Condoleezza Rice (now secre-

tary of State); current national-security adviser Stephen Hadley; Richard Armitage, former deputy secretary of State; William Burns, US ambassador to Russia; Marc Grossman, former undersecretary of State for political affairs; David Satterfield, now the State Department's coordinator for Iraq; Elliott Abrams, deputy national-security adviser; Paul Wolfowitz, former deputy secretary of Defense; and Douglas Feith, former undersecretary of Defense.

Judge Ellis didn't okay these subpoenas lightly. He did so after being persuaded that each of these officials would be able to testify about specific meetings or conversations—either with the two defendants or with others at AIPAC—that dealt with information comparable in sensitivity to the kind Rosen and Weissman allegedly obtained and passed on.

Ellis also knew that the subpoenas might derail the case. If the administration balks at allowing sworn testimony by senior officials about sensitive conversations, the case against Rosen and Weissman could be dismissed.

The line between information that can and can't get passed is blurred by the amount of officially sanctioned daily intelligence sharing between the United States and its allies. Such exchanges are particularly intense between the United States and Israel, which regularly trade information and assessments on terrorism and other perceived threats.

"It's absurd for anyone to think that the Israelis have to enlist people to spy," says Sandra Charles, a former Pentagon and National Security Council official who consults in Washington for Persian Gulf Arab governments. "They can go to the highest levels of the administration if they want to find out what the thinking is on US policy."

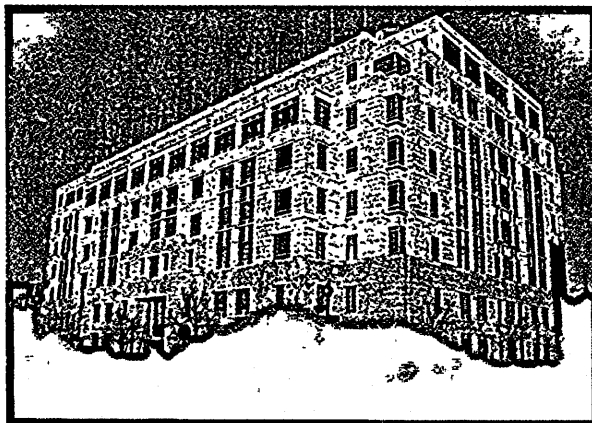
To James Zogby, president of the Arab American Institute, the case casts a shadow not only over AIPAC but also over other groups, such as his, that engage in what he calls "ethnic lobbying." But he says he doesn't have any sympathy for Rosen and Weissman. Like AIPAC lobbyists, Zogby has met with senior American policymakers and been asked to convey signals to and from foreign officials—in his case, Arab leaders. "[US officials] would say to me, 'You're going to the Gulf—ask this,' or 'If we say this to

[Yasser] Arafat, what will he say?'"

"Everybody in this business knows the difference" between that kind of discreet communication and what Rosen and Weissman are charged with, Zogby claims. "Their choice was to pass on information they knew was sensitive to Israel."

Just how sensitive will be disputed at the trial. Rosen and Weissman were accused of transferring not classified documents, only information they had been given orally. The trial itself will include a mass of classified material that the government has reluctantly decided to divulge. Ellis ordered that it be stripped of markings such as "top secret" or "no for" (no foreign nationals), which could give the jury an impression that the information was closely held when in fact it might not have been.

If civilian lobbyists such as Rosen and Weissman can be punished for obtaining and discussing classified information, what about journalists and researchers who uncover data the government pre-



■ The FBI's Washington Field Office—known as the WFO—is the nerve center of the government's effort to track leaks of secret information to foreign countries.

fers to keep hidden? McNulty contended in 2005 that "those not authorized to receive classified information must resist the temptation to acquire it."

Press-freedom advocates view the case as a potential blow to newsgathering, coming on top of court and prosecutorial pressure on reporters to divulge confidential sources. Think tanks and interest groups that specialize in collecting and analyzing information on national security are worried as well.

John Pike, who directs GlobalSecurity.org, an organization skilled at unearthing national-security data from open sources, says the indictment raises this question: "How many degrees of separation can remove you from the obligation to protect information that was originally classified?"

Just when the FBI opened its AIPAC probe isn't clear.

"It started a long time before I got there," says David Szady, a veteran counterespionage officer and leak investigator who in 2001 was named to the new FBI post of national counterintelligence executive. He declines to comment further.

Why the probe began remains a mystery. A Justice Department spokesman declined to comment on the case. Speculation centers on 1990s suspicion of an Israeli "mole" in the national-security apparatus, ongoing surveillance of Israelis that turned up contacts with AIPAC, or a general law-enforcement search for leakers. The question of why AIPAC lobbyists were singled out prompted darker theories, summed up in a headline on a *Wall Street Journal* opinion piece by Dorothy Rabinowitz: FIRST THEY CAME FOR THE JEWS.

Justice Department lawyers knew that a probe of AIPAC would be controversial. A senior participant at the time says:

"It was obvious to me and to many others that an investigation of this nature was going to receive a lot of attention because of the significance of the organization involved."

Regularly ranked as one of the most effective lobbying organizations in Washington, AIPAC strives to forge closer political, strategic, and military ties between the United States and Israel. The group combines grassroots organizing, fundraisers capable of pulling in tens of millions of dollars a year, and a skilled Washington staff that finds willing legislative sponsors among friends in both parties.

When preparing a major arms sale to Arab allies, the Pentagon will often brief AIPAC specialists before the deal is put before Congress.

"For anyone who deals with the Middle East," consultant Sandra Charles says, "AIPAC is one of those realities you learn to work with."

Each year, AIPAC draws thousands from across the country to its Washington convention to hear speeches by the President, Cabinet secretaries, top congressional leaders, and Israeli politicians. Then AIPAC members move on to Capitol Hill to lobby members of Congress. AIPAC has consistently lined up a large congressional majority in support of military and economic aid for Israel and cooperation between the two

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 166)

"This Is the FBI."

continued from page 79

countries in a variety of spheres from missile defense to homeland security. The aid package for Israel tends to be the engine that gets the whole US foreign-aid budget through Congress.

While nonpartisan and not directly involved in political campaigns, AIPAC keeps its membership of more than 100,000 apprised of congressional votes important to Israel. This kind of scrutiny can have an intimidating effect on lawmakers because it has the potential to influence where AIPAC members send their campaign contributions. Critics have contended that AIPAC should be required to register as a political-action committee. But neither the courts nor the Federal Election Commission has forced the issue.

Other detractors contend that because it lobbies for aid and policies that benefit Israel, AIPAC ought to register with the Justice Department as a foreign agent. But unlike organizations and firms that represent foreign interests and governments, AIPAC doesn't get money from and is not contractually linked to Israel.

Crucial to AIPAC's influence on US policy is its ability to keep Congress and executive-branch policymakers informed of actual or potential threats to Israel and alerted to dangerous political trends in surrounding Middle East countries. This is where Rosen and Weissman came in.

Rosen played a big role in expanding the organization's influence beyond Congress into the executive branch, meeting behind the scenes with well-placed officials and the journalists who cover them. Generally hawkish but nonideological, Rosen specialized in hard-nosed, sometimes prescient analysis of the major actors in the Middle East and Washington. A father of two sons, ages 25 and 8, and a 22-year-old daughter, Rosen has been married and divorced six times. Five years ago, he reunited with his first wife after 39 years apart.

The indictment shows that investigators recorded conversations among Rosen, Weissman, and Israeli officials starting in April 1999, when Rosen allegedly disclosed to an Israeli diplomat that he had "picked up an extremely sensitive piece of intelligence." He described the information as code-word protected, meaning that access to it was highly restricted. Two months later, Weissman allegedly told the same diplomat that he knew of a "secret classified FBI report" on the 1996 Khobar Towers bombing in Saudi Arabia.

In December 2000, both men met over lunch with Kenneth Pollack, then a Persian Gulf specialist on the National Security

Council staff under President Bill Clinton. Afterward, Rosen allegedly talked to a reporter about then-classified US strategy options against Iraq. In January 2002, Rosen met with David Satterfield, a senior State Department Middle East official, about the sharing of intelligence between the United States and Israel following the Karine A episode, in which the Israelis seized a large Palestinian arms shipment. The episode damaged the US relationship with Yasser Arafat. The government alleges that, in a memo to other AIPAC staffers, Rosen included classified information he had picked up.

The lobbyists' contacts with Lawrence Franklin developed in 2002 when the defense analyst joined the Pentagon's newly formed Office of Special Plans under Douglas Feith.

Rosen had been watching with growing alarm the signs that Tehran's cleric-dominated regime was seeking to develop a nuclear weapon, compounding the danger posed by Iran's support for terrorist and

Franklin requested an urgent meeting with Weissman, telling him lives were in danger.

guerrilla movements in Lebanon, the West Bank, and the Gaza Strip and its export of an extremist ideology. He shared some of the frustration of Israeli leaders, who, from former prime minister Yitzhak Rabin onward, saw Iran as a threat to the Jewish state's existence and pressed for greater attention from Washington. As confrontation loomed between the United States and Iraq, Rosen worried that the United States would be pulled into a quagmire, unable to respond to what he considered a graver threat from Iran.

From his midlevel perch at the Pentagon, Franklin chafed at what he saw as a failure by the Bush administration to come to grips with the Iranian danger. He reached out to Rosen and Weissman, hoping they would bring their influence to bear on the NSC and, if possible, help him secure a job at the White House. This would put him, in Rosen's words, "by the elbow of the President." Rosen, according to the indictment, promised to "do what I can."

At the time that the AIPAC men and Franklin were first in touch with each other, getting tough on Iran was not a White House priority. Administration policy was fixated on ousting Saddam Hussein from power in Iraq. As Bush worked to build domestic and international support for regime change in Iraq, the administration expected to enlist help from Iraqi Shiites,

conditionists of the Iranian regime.

Days after Rosen called the Pentagon seeking to make contact with an Iran expert and got Franklin's name, the Bush administration hosted a get-together of Iraqi exiles in Washington. It included a representative of the Tehran-based Supreme Council of the Islamic Revolution. Ahmad Chalabi, who led the Iraqi National Congress and was the Pentagon's chief ally among Iraqi exiles, would later take up residence in the Iranian capital in the weeks before the US-led invasion of Iraq.

According to letters in the case file, in September 2002, the month after Rosen and Franklin first spoke, the FBI conducted a search at AIPAC headquarters. What it produced, if anything, remains under seal. An AIPAC spokesman says the organization wasn't aware of any search at that time. To cultivate Franklin, Weissman at one point took him to an Orioles game in Baltimore. Franklin, who was also an Air Force Reserve officer, held not only a top-secret security clearance but also one entitling him to SCI, "sensitive compartmented information," the kind kept at a secure site and granted on a need-to-know basis to a limited number of individuals.

During a series of meetings in 2003, Franklin spilled several pieces of allegedly classified information, from policy options against Iran to specific intelligence about attacks on US forces in Iraq. On a couple of occasions, Rosen or Weissman allegedly passed along what he'd learned to Israeli diplomats or journalists.

Franklin, likewise, relayed sensitive information to an Israeli diplomat and to the media. On May 21, 2004, he disclosed what prosecutors described as "top secret/SCI" information to journalists from CBS about what prosecutors would later cryptically claim concerned "meetings involving two Middle East officials."

That evening, CBS correspondent Lesley Stahl reported on evidence that onetime Pentagon favorite Ahmad Chalabi "personally gave Iranian intelligence officers information so sensitive that if revealed it could, quote, 'get Americans killed.'" Later in the broadcast, she reported that the information Chalabi had allegedly passed was so sensitive that US officials "at the highest levels" had prevailed on CBS not to broadcast it.

Five weeks later, the FBI closed in on Franklin. Armed with a warrant, agents searched his workspace and turned up a June 25, 2003, classified document. Franklin admitted he had given information derived from the document to Rosen and Weissman. Agents then searched his house in Kearneysville, West Virginia, and found more than 80 classified documents he had

brought home illegally over three decades. Franklin was vulnerable. He had a record of security breaches for taking documents home. Lacking substantial assets and with a wife afflicted with crippling rheumatoid arthritis, Franklin did not hire a lawyer; instead, he agreed to cooperate with the FBI.

Authorities enlisted Franklin in a sting: In July 2004, he attempted to arrange meetings with Rosen and Weissman, armed with the kind of information that clearly would be of interest to Israel. At one point, he requested an urgent meeting with Weissman, telling him lives were in danger. When the two met, Franklin, who was wired, warned him that Iran had discovered the presence of Israeli agents in northern Iraq. The information was highly classified "agency stuff," and Weissman could get in trouble for having it, Franklin told him.

Weissman in turn told that to Rosen, and the two contacted Naor Gilon, a political officer at the Israeli Embassy. Rosen and Weissman also called Glenn Kessler at the *Post* to report an increased threat to US soldiers in Iraq from Iranian-backed militias.

Franklin also helped the FBI with a counterintelligence probe of Chalabi, who has denied divulging any US secrets. Among those he called was Francis Brooke, a Chalabi aide in Washington. According to Brooke, Franklin also called active members of the Iraqi National Congress, Chalabi's political party.

"He was asking questions about Ahmad Chalabi and my dealings with Iranian officials," Brooke says. He recalls that Franklin said, "There's a lot of stuff going on. You should tell me the straight story. I'm in contact with journalists, and I could spin it for you."

Says Brooke: "I thought he was off his rocker."

The Chalabi probe foundered, but the AIPAC investigation gained momentum. The calls to Naor Gilon and Kessler provided what prosecutors considered new evidence that Rosen and Weissman had violated a section of the 1917 Espionage Act, barring the possession and transfer of "national-defense information" by anyone not authorized to have it.

Three weeks after their meeting with Weissman at the Sun Spot Cafe, FBI agents knocked on Rosen's door in Silver Spring shortly before 8 AM. They told Rosen they knew Franklin had provided classified information to an Israeli official. What would Rosen say, they asked him, if the Israeli official told Franklin that the information had already been supplied to him by Rosen? According to the agents' report, "Rosen said he had done nothing wrong."

Law agents confronted Weissman outside his home in Bethesda. They played him a recording of the July conversation between Weissman and Franklin. "Look," Weissman told them, "I was told by people at the office not to talk to you."

That afternoon, the FBI searched Rosen's office at AIPAC headquarters, this time presenting a search warrant. CNN cameras filmed the agents entering the building. Apparently tipped off before the raid, CBS called AIPAC with questions.

Initially, AIPAC circled the wagons around its two officials, defending them in public statements, assigning them legal counsel, and paying the legal fees. Rosen and Weissman both received bonuses at the end of 2004. But the investigation continued. Although AIPAC was assured in December that it was not a target, four senior AIPAC staffers were called to testify before a federal grand jury in Alexandria.

According to defense documents, in February 2005, US attorney Paul McNulty—who later became deputy attorney general—met with AIPAC's executive di-

Weissman and Rosen were fired. AIPAC also halted payment of their legal fees.

rector and AIPAC lawyers and urged them to cooperate. AIPAC's counsel called lawyers for Rosen and Weissman the next day, telling them that McNulty "would like to end it with minimal damage to AIPAC. He is fighting with the FBI to limit the investigation to Steve Rosen and Keith Weissman and to avoid expanding it." Prosecutors disclosed to AIPAC lawyers some evidence they had obtained under a secret warrant.

Rosen and Weissman were fired. AIPAC also halted payment of their legal fees. At the time, the Justice Department viewed an organization's payment of legal fees for employees under investigation as a sign of a lack of cooperation with the probe. An AIPAC spokesman, Patrick Dorton, denied that the organization had acted under government pressure: "Any suggestion that AIPAC acted at the government's behest is completely false. Our decisions on dismissal and legal fees were made independently, based on the facts and our commitment to doing the right thing in a very difficult situation."

One source close to AIPAC noted that Weissman and Rosen had refused to waive their rights to sue the organization. Recently, Dorton repeated a statement he had made at the time of the indictment: "Rosen and Weissman were dismissed because they engaged in conduct that was not part of their jobs and because this conduct did not

comport with the standards that AIPAC expects and requires of its employees."

Franklin, despite helping with the sting, was indicted along with the two AIPAC lobbyists. He pleaded guilty to two conspiracy counts in October 2005 and drew a 12-year prison sentence. Judge Ellis held the sentence in abeyance until the AIPAC case is over. The attorney Franklin acquired late in the probe, Plato Cacheris, expects his client to be called as a witness. He hopes, as a result of Franklin's cooperation with the prosecution, that his sentence will be reduced to a "minimal" term.

The FBI's investigation didn't end with the conspiracy indictments of Rosen and Weissman in August 2005, a year after Weissman got that initial phone call in Boston. One reason may have been a gap in the government's case. The two men were charged with oral receipt and transmission of national-defense information. There is no evidence that classified documents ever exchanged hands.

The next year, the FBI and one of the prosecutors approached the family of the late muckraking columnist Jack Anderson, seeking access to his archive. Anderson's son Kevin told a congressional panel that he was told they "wanted access to Dad's documents to see if either Rosen's or Weissman's fingerprints were on any government documents." Anderson's widow initially consented to the request, but the family collectively decided to refuse.

When the trial gets under way, parts of it will be closed to the public. Judge Ellis has allowed the introduction of some classified evidence that only the jurors will see or hear in full. He also has allowed the defense to probe potential jurors for indications of anti-Jewish bias.

AIPAC has regained its place as one of Washington's premier lobbying groups and is building a new headquarters. Within the last few months, AIPAC agreed to pay Rosen's and Weissman's legal fees, which have climbed into the millions of dollars. No explanation was given, although the decision came after Ellis ruled that any government pressure on AIPAC was "inappropriate and fraught with the risk of constitutional harm."

Franklin, Rosen, and Weissman have all failed to find permanent employment while the case is pending. Franklin works at odd jobs, his lawyer says. Rosen received financial help from friends and has done part-time consulting. Weissman spends a good deal of time with his children—his daughter is studying Arabic at college; one son is a high-school senior, and another is in middle school—walking his two golden retrievers and pondering book projects, including one on rock 'n' roll. *W*

Defense For AIPAC Spy Suspects: Data At Core Of Case Was Not Really 'Top Secret'

Haaretz.com

05:33

By Josh Gerstein

November 3, 2008

RICHMOND, VA -- The defense of two pro-Israel lobbyists accused of illegally obtaining and disclosing American national security secrets will argue that some of the data the men allegedly conspired to reveal came directly from the Israeli government and was not truly secret, defense lawyers told a federal appeals court last week.

Three judges from the U.S. Court of Appeals spent more than 90 minutes Wednesday wrestling with the issue of how much classified information the defense should be permitted to introduce in the case of Steven Rosen and Keith Weissman, former employees of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC). The beginning of the unusual court session was held in public, but the lawyers and the judges retreated behind closed doors in a specially-cleared and guarded courtroom to discuss the most sensitive aspects of the case about halfway through the hearing. As they waited for the arguments to begin, defense lawyers leafed through fat binders marked in orange with the words, "TOP SECRET."

Rosen and Weissman were indicted in 2005 on charges that they gathered secrets from U.S. officials and passed the confidential information to journalists, Israeli diplomats and others in violation of the United States Espionage Act. Rosen and Weissman are not charged with receiving or distributing any classified documents, but solely with relaying information orally. Some free speech advocates have argued that what the two men allegedly did is not much different from what journalists do every day. Prosecutors have indicated that covert wiretaps captured the men acknowledging they knew the data was classified.

Trial dates for the pair, who were fired from AIPAC, have been repeatedly canceled as wrangling dragged on over what classified information could be revealed at trial, which could take place as soon as February. A parade of prominent witnesses are expected, including Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, former U.S. Army General Anthony Zinni and leaders of U.S.-based pro-Israel groups. Rosen and Weissman, who have pled not guilty, face the possibility of lengthy prison terms if convicted. A Pentagon analyst who admitted leaking information to the duo, Lawrence Franklin, was sentenced to more than 12 years in prison and is cooperating with prosecutors.

The government filed the appeal last week, arguing that the trial judge, T.S. Ellis III, erred when he ruled the defense was entitled to use a classified State Department document and another from the Federal Bureau of Investigation. "That information is not actually relevant to the crime that was charged," an attorney in the Justice Department's counterespionage section, Thomas Reilly, told the judges. Rosen's attorney, Abbe Lowell, said the State Department document shows that Israel was circulating the intelligence reports Rosen is accused of disclosing to other AIPAC employees and a foreigner not named in the indictment. "You have to be able to prove what the Israelis knew," Lowell said. "In our defense, it is important that this information, discussed down the line by our client, is Israel-based."

Lowell did not detail the Israeli information in the open session, but declassified court records indicate the document describes intelligence about the Karine A, a ship seized by Israel in 2002 in the Red Sea. Israel said the vessel was loaded with rifles, anti-tank missiles, rockets, mortars and other weapons destined for the Gaza Strip. Sources close to the case said the State Department memo relates to a briefing Israeli Gen. Yossi Kuperwasser gave American diplomats about the Karine A during a trip to Washington in January, 2002. Rosen got a similar briefing from Kuperwasser the same day.

Lowell suggested that the State Department memo was nearly identical to a note Rosen sent to fellow AIPAC employees. "You'd be able to draw a line between the allegation and the assertion and where it's

from," Lowell said. Lowell also said a former State Department official, Carl Ford Jr., was prepared to testify that the bulk of the memo was actually unclassified. "Who gets to define what's classified is the Executive Branch," Reilly insisted. The nature of the FBI document was less clear, but a lawyer for Weissman, Baruch Weiss, said prosecutors want to prevent the defense from disputing which portion of the report made it so sensitive. "The government wants to use the part of the document that is helpful to them and they don't want us to use the part of the document that is helpful to us," Weiss said.

The appeals judges, Robert King, Roger Gregory and Dennis Shedd, issued no immediate decision, but Shedd said he was reluctant to disturb the rulings Ellis arrived at after protracted hearings. "You have a very high hill to climb, especially with the time the judge spent in this case," he told Reilly. All three appeals jurists expressed skepticism about the government's claim that the ruling on classified information opened up Judge Ellis' other decisions for immediate appeal. "That would be a change to what we normally apply," Shedd said. Generally, federal prosecutors in America cannot appeal pre-trial rulings on legal and evidentiary issues and defendants can do so only if they are convicted. Weiss said those basic rules should be kept despite the classified information issue. "I was a prosecutor myself. Many times, I lost things I'd have loved to appeal," Weiss said. "I was stuck."

Reilly argued a law passed in 1980 to govern the use of classified information in criminal cases made clear that Congress wanted court proceedings involving national secrets handled differently. "The point is to get it right before classified information is disclosed," he said. Through his attorney, Rosen asked to be admitted to the secret portion of the argument but was never allowed in. The three-judge panel assigned to the case is fairly diverse politically, with Shedd appointed to the bench by the elder Bush, King named by President Clinton, and Gregory on the panel via an unusual recess appointment from Clinton and a subsequent nod from the current President Bush. Either the defense or prosecution could ask for reconsideration of the appeals judges' ruling by the full 11-judge bench of the 4th Circuit or review by the Supreme Court, but such requests are rarely granted.

[REDACTED] (WF) (FBI)

From: [REDACTED] (FBI)
Sent: Tuesday, March 17, 2009 9:11 AM
To: [REDACTED] (FBI)
Subject: RE: Uzi

UNCLASSIFIED
NON-RECORD

b6
b7C

You should see the actual paper today. It is not only on the front page, it is the top story all the way across the front page.

From: [REDACTED] (FBI)
Sent: Tuesday, March 17, 2009 8:51 AM
To: [REDACTED] (FBI)
Subject: Uzi

UNCLASSIFIED
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Note the author

Israel's National Security Aide Barred From U.S.

The Washington Times
By Eli Lake
March 17, 2009

TEL AVIV, ISRAEL -- Uzi Arad, who is expected to serve as national security adviser in the next Israeli government, has been barred from entering the United States for nearly two years on the grounds that he is an intelligence risk.

Mr. Arad, a former member and director of intelligence for the Mossad, Israel's spy service, is mentioned in the indictment of Lawrence Franklin, a former Pentagon analyst who pleaded guilty in 2005 to providing classified information about Iran in a conversation with two employees of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC). Beyond Mr. Arad's status, Prime Minister-designate Benjamin Netanyahu is likely to face difficulties abroad because of his choice, announced Monday, of Avigdor Lieberman to serve as foreign minister in a narrow new rightist government.

Mr. Lieberman, head of the Israel Is Our Home party, has advocated requiring Israel's 1.46 million Arabs to take a loyalty test or risk expulsion. The choice of Mr. Arad for national security adviser has been reported in the Israeli press and was confirmed by sources close to Mr. Netanyahu, who has been tasked with forming the next government. Mr. Arad acknowledged to The Washington Times that he has not been able to obtain a visa to come to the United States but said the Israeli government is trying to change that. "The director general of the Israel Foreign Ministry did tell his American counterparts that there has been no cause to deny me a visa," Mr. Arad told The Times.

Israeli and U.S. officials said Mr. Arad has been denied a U.S. visa since June 2007 under section 212 3(a) of the Immigration and Nationality Act. This gives consular officers and the Justice Department authority to bar people who may seek "to violate any law of the United States relating to espionage or sabotage" from entering the country. Mr. Arad was a member of the Mossad spy service from 1975 to 1997. After retiring, he became Mr. Netanyahu's foreign policy adviser. While in the Mossad, Mr. Arad worked mainly on analysis, but he also served as a liaison for intelligence operations with allied services such as the CIA.

In the past 21 months, prominent Israelis and Americans have quietly but unsuccessfully pressed U.S. officials to grant Mr. Arad a visa. "Overtures were made, and, by and large, there was not a satisfactory answer," said Herb London, president of the Hudson Institute, where Mr. Arad worked from 1972 to 1975 after obtaining a doctorate from Princeton University. "He has invited luminaries from around the world to talk about foreign policy at the annual Herzliya conference," Mr. London said. "There are people from the left and the right who recognize that he has extraordinary insight into the foreign policy issues of our time."

In a June 18, 2007, letter to U.S. officials, the president of the Interdisciplinary Center at Herzliya, Uriel Reichman, wrote, "I very much hope that such visa will indeed be granted as expeditiously as possible since professor Arad's travels to the United States are essential for his work at the Interdisciplinary Center." One mystery about Mr. Arad's difficulties in obtaining a visa is that Mr. Franklin did not plead guilty to spying. Indeed, the U.S. attorney handling the case against Mr. Franklin and two former AIPAC employees, Steven J. Rosen and Keith Weissman, charged all three men with mishandling national defense information, a count listed in the U.S. code under the Espionage Act but less serious than being an agent of a foreign power.

Mr. Rosen and Mr. Weissman are fighting the charges, which are controversial because they are the first private citizens to be accused of leaking classified information. The indictment against Mr. Franklin makes two references to "a person previously associated with an intelligence agency of [foreign official's] country." Two former U.S. officials and a former Israeli official have confirmed that Mr. Arad is the "person." The passage refers to a meeting between Mr. Franklin and Mr. Arad on Feb. 20, 2004, at the Pentagon cafeteria and an earlier recommendation by an Israeli diplomat that Mr. Franklin meet with Mr. Arad.

In his letter, Mr. Reichman referenced the section of the Immigration and Nationality Act that deals with espionage issues, saying, "it being absolutely certain to me and to all who know him, that none of the causes specified ... apply to him." A Washington immigration lawyer, Glen Wasserstein, said Mr. Arad was being barred under the section of law that "allows the government to deny entry to those foreign nationals it deems as spies or saboteurs, and those who help or assist in such spying or sabotage." Mr. Wasserstein said the president or attorney general could waive the restriction on the visa.

Buck Revell, a former associate director of the FBI who oversaw counterintelligence investigations at the bureau, added that as national security adviser, Mr. Arad would not be in a position to engage in espionage or intelligence activities. Nonetheless, Mr. Revell said, the suspicion surrounding Mr. Arad could hamper U.S.-Israel relations. "The [Israeli] national security council chairman has access to all of Israel's intelligence and all the intelligence we share with them, normally," Mr. Revell said.

"Whether or not our agencies would restrict any type of intelligence from going to him would be very problematic. That is something they will have to deal with." A senior official of the incoming Netanyahu administration, who spoke on the condition that he not be named because of the sensitivity of the issue, told The Times that he expects Mr. Arad to be able to travel to the United States for official business. "This is an issue that the new government of Israel trusts can be resolved," the official said.

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Leniency For AIPAC Leaker

Politico.com
10:48 PM EST
By Josh Gerstein
June 11, 2009

ALEXANDRIA, VA -- A federal judge has virtually wiped out the prison sentence of more than 12 years he first imposed on a Pentagon analyst who pled guilty to leaking classified information to two pro-Israel lobbyists.

At a hearing Thursday evening in Alexandria, Va., Judge T.S. Ellis reduced the sentence for the former defense official, Larry Franklin, to probation plus 10 months in "community confinement," likely a halfway house. Prosecutors had asked the judge to drop the sentence to 8 years in light of Franklin's cooperation, while a defense lawyer for Franklin, Plato Cacheris, asked for "no sentence at all." In explaining his decision to dramatically reduce Franklin's sentence, Ellis cited the lack of punishment and light punishments imposed on other leakers, as well as Franklin's cooperation in the prosecution of the two lobbyists later fired from the American Israel Public Affairs committee, Steven Rosen and Keith Weissman.

Last month, days before the case against the pair was set to go to trial, the government dropped the prosecution. The Justice Department said legal rulings in the case and the threat of new disclosures of classified information made a trial unadvisable. "It's a very difficult and unusual situation," Ellis said. "This one is unique." The judge said he did not quibble with the government's decision to drop the Rosen and Weissman prosecutions, but that the move was "significant" and had "some relevance" to what punishment Franklin should receive. He said it was "very disputable" whether some of the information at the heart of the case was actually the kind of "national defense information" it is illegal to relay outside the government.

Ellis railed Thursday against people who leak classified information, including those who leaked national intelligence estimates about Iran and revealed the existence of the warrantless wiretapping program maintained by the National Security Agency. However, he also said he had no problem with people who disclosed such information as an act of civil disobedience and accepted what followed. "Disclosing it was okay, if a person is willing to stand up and say, 'I did it. Give me the consequences,'" the judge said. Ellis said he wanted Franklin's punishment to serve as a "beacon" to other officials that they would face serious consequences if they committed similar breaches.

"Secrets are important to a nation. If we couldn't keep our secrets, we would be at great risk," the judge said. Franklin pled guilty in 2005 to three felony counts involving illegal distribution and possession of classified information. He had been free pending the trial for the two ex-Aipac officials. His attorney, Plato Cacheris, said the former policy analyst had trouble finding good work. "He's been digging ditches. He's been cleaning cesspools," the attorney said. The information that Franklin gave to the two AIPAC lobbyists has never been officially detailed, but it related to the threat Iran posed to U.S. forces in the region. He also acknowledged numerous meetings with an Israeli diplomat, Naor Gilon.

In a plea for leniency Thursday, Franklin said he was motivated solely by "love of our republic and by the safety of our military personnel that were about to go into Iraq." He insisted he wasn't trying to leak anything, but simply to use a back channel to alert "a particular NSC source" to the dangers in Iraq. The ex-Pentagon analyst didn't know at the time that Rosen and Weissman worked for the pro-Israel lobbying group. Franklin said he wanted to spend time instructing young people "about the threat that civilization faces from those who would replace us," who he indicated were the forces of "radical Islam." "One object of our adversaries is to force us to change internally. What I did was playing into that objective," Franklin said.

Franklin said he was "grateful to be in a country where the rule of law and a respect for human rights is

vibrant." Ellis quickly interrupted. "You believe rule of law is important?.....I've lived in countries where there isn't rule of law. I was born in one," the Colombian-born jurist said. "And what really [matters] is whether government officials obey the law." Franklin said he did believe in the rule of law and he acknowledged "serious errors in judgment." That triggered another salvo from the judge. "An error is putting on the wrong color tie," Ellis said. "We're talking about crimes."

Earlier, Cacheris argued that the government's request of eight years imprisonment for Franklin "smacks of vengeance" stemming from the decision to abandon the prosecution against Rosen and Weissman. "It's just not justified," the defense attorney said. He insisted the decision to drop the case against the two ex-lobbyists "was not because of anything Mr. Franklin did." Cacheris's description of Franklin's cooperation also produced some intriguing news. "He's given them other cases involving people who cannot come into this country," the defense lawyer said cryptically. Cacheris also suggested that Franklin was the target of witness tampering in the Aipac case.

"Someone came to approach Franklin to have him, in effect, disappear," the defense attorney said. He said Franklin immediately reported the incident to authorities. Cacheris did not elaborate on the episode, but it could help explain why the FBI sought to interview Jewish leaders several years ago about attempts to provide financial assistance or employment to Rosen and Weissman. Prosecutor Neil Hammerstrom suggested Franklin deserved more severe punishment than Rosen and Weissman, had they been convicted.

"In many ways, he was a more significant violator than Rosen and Weissman ever were alleged to be," the prosecutor said. "If you don't have people like Mr. Franklin in government doing that, you don't have people [outside] passing classified information." Hammerstrom also noted that Franklin took top-secret information to his home even after being disciplined for such activity. "You have before you an individual that just can't seem to follow the law when it comes to classified information," the prosecutor said. He said Franklin deserved credit for cooperating, but that his assistance had not been "ideal."

In response to a question from Ellis Thursday, Franklin confirmed speculation that his rendezvous with Rosen and Weissman was arranged by Michael Makovsky, a former energy analyst for the Pentagon. Makovsky, who has left the government, was not charged in the case and was expected to be a witness at the trial of Rosen and Weissman. Before the main hearing Thursday, lawyers spent nearly half an hour arguing behind closed doors about whether the re-sentencing should be open to the public.

The judge eventually allowed the press and public into the courtroom, though he said portions of court filings about Franklin's sentence will remain under seal. As the hearing concluded in the case, which has been the subject of hard-fought legal battles for nearly four years, the judge struggled to maintain his composure. He praised prosecutors and defense lawyers. "You all did a very good job," said Ellis, who is now semi-retired.