

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](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 Newline, 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/021103jacoby.html](http://www.fas.org/irp/congress/2003_hr/021103jacoby.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 Newslite, 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

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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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# Nation World

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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 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.&rdquo

*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.&rdquo

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.&rdquo

*Four of the leading neoconservatives have been accused in the past of illegally providing classified information to Israel.*

Phillip 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.&rdquo

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.&hellip;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.&rdquo

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.&rdquo

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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## 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 Israeli 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 Deutch, who had taken classified material to his home. In both these cases, Messrs. Berger and Deutch 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)

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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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Advertisement

# 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."

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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.

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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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