

# Washington's latest spy scandal

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THE latest Israeli spy scandal has hit Washington, and it's not a pretty sight. Last week, a two-year FBI investigation of alleged Israeli efforts to have American supporters of PM Ariel Sharon manipulate US Mideast policy leaked to the media.

The story is potentially a huge scandal, and dramatic evidence of a furious power struggle between neoconservative supporters of Israel's far right Likud Party who dominated the Pentagon and National Security Council, and their opponents in CIA and the state department.

The FBI is focusing on the Pentagon's policy department, a mini state department within Defence that plays a key role in US Mideast and South Asian policy. It is headed by neocon

activist, Defence Under Secretary, Douglas Feith, who has long-time links to Israel's extremist Likud and is an ardent Zionist.

The Pentagon's chief Iran analyst, Larry Franklin, who works for Feith's neocon deputy, William Luti, is under FBI investigation for passing top secret presidential policy papers on Iran to two senior members of the American-Israel public affairs committee (AIPAC), one of Washington's most powerful and feared lobbies. AIPAC officials allegedly passed the top secret papers to Israel's spy service, Mossad.

Israel is obsessed with Iran's nuclear developments and is likely planning to attack the Islamic republic. After Iran, the next nation on Israel's nuclear target list is Pakistan.

AIPAC and Israel deny spying. Israel insists it ceased espionage in the US after its agent,

Jonathan Pollard, was jailed in 1987. Pollard's controller in the US government, known to FBI as 'Mr X,' has never been caught. This may be so, at least semantically. Thanks to a host of joint intelligence agreements, and highly placed friends at all levels of government, Israeli has access to most secret US intelligence data. Sympathizers often informally provide the rest.

Meanwhile, other prominent neocons, including Deputy Defence Secretary Paul Wolfowitz, Richard Perle, and Harold Rhode, reportedly have also been targets of FBI inquiry.

The current investigations show growing concern that US national security and foreign policy have been gravely compromised, or even hijacked, by a small but powerful group of Bush administration neocons who seized power after 9/11 with the help of Vice-President Dick

Cheney, and engineered the Iraq war to destroy an enemy of Israel. These neocons' confused loyalties convinced them what's good for Sharon's Greater Israel is good for America, and are ardent champions of a worldwide crusade against Islamic resistance.

Connect the dots: Franklin works for Feith. Feith reports to Wolfowitz. Cheney and Wolfowitz were the prime architects of the Iraq war.

In 1996, Feith and Perle wrote a policy plan, 'A Clean Break,' for Israel's then Likud prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, calling for Greater Israel, destruction of Iraq and Syria, bitter opposition to political Islam, and ending peace talks with Palestinians.

Feith ran the Pentagon's notorious Office for Special Plans (OSP) that was set up by Wolfowitz. Its sole function: channel false information about Iraq concocted by Ahmad Chalabi

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and PM Sharon's office to the White House and US media.

Feith, Wolfowitz and Perle were key backers and financiers of Chalabi, a convicted swindler with links to Mossad. The neocons planned to make Chalabi the new ruler of Iraq. Chalabi's carefully crafted lies about Iraq provided the White House with pretext for war. Excited neocons talked about a pipeline from Mosul to Haifa to supply Iraq's oil to Israel.

The rock just turned over by FBI also reveals other familiar denizens. Welcome back Iranian con-man, arms dealer and old Mossad asset, Manucher Ghorbanifar, a key figure in the 1980's Iran-Contra scandal that nearly brought down the Reagan administration.

And neocon stalwart, Michael Ledeen. According to a 'Washington Monthly,' investigation, he and/or fellow neocon Harold Rhode met secretly in Europe

with Ghorbanifar, the chief of Italy's military intelligence service, SISMI, and Lebanese rightists, to plan overthrowing the governments of Syria and Iran. SISMI and Ledeen were also involved in the Iraq-Niger uranium hoax that so embarrassed President George Bush.

Neocon attempts to blame the disaster they created in Iraq on CIA, to blame 9/11 on the FBI, and simmering anger over three decades of Israeli spying investigations that were squelched for political reasons, caused the security agencies to go after what a CIA veteran terms 'Washington's fifth column.'

Furious attempts are under way by Israel's supporters to sweep this scandal under the carpet or downplay it as a 'low-level' misunderstanding. Just discussing such matters in the US media or politics is a certain one-way ticket to unemployment, but even so, this scandal may be too big to be contained, particularly in an election year.—*Copyright Eric S. Margolis, 2004*