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Pollard Case Reveals U.S.-Israeli Tension

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Tension between the U.S. and Israel has been eased publicly in the wake of Israel's promises of complete cooperation in the case of Jonathan Pollard, the civilian U.S. Navy counter-terrorist analyst who is accused of selling U.S. military secrets to Israel. After some hesitation, Israel has apologized and Secretary of State George Shultz said that the U.S. welcomed this apology and "we are satisfied by it." This quick response appeared to be part of an American effort to prevent the Pollard incident from causing permanent damage to the relationship between the countries.

Nevertheless, beneath the surface, strains between the U.S. and Israel continue. The case of Jonathan Pollard is "the tip of the iceberg" of covert Israeli operations in the U.S., Reagan Administration officials declare. One official said that both the Justice Department and the CIA are working on evidence that Pollard was not the only one giving the Israelis secret U.S. information.

Such actions violate not only U.S. law but a 1981 written agreement between the two governments in which they promised to exchange intelligence and not conduct secret operations against the other. A Justice Department source said it would be "premat-ure" to say that there will be other agents arrested, but State Department officials said it is clear that Pollard was not the only Israeli intelligence asset operating secretly in the U.S.

The Pollard case has raised the memory of other cases that have ruffled the relationship between the U.S. and Israel. Among them:

- In 1955, Israeli agents bombed a U.S. Information Agency library in Cairo in an attempt to disrupt Egypt-U.S. relations.

- In June 1967, Israeli boats and planes attacked the *U.S.S. Liberty*, an intelligence ship, in the Mediterranean; 34 Americans were killed and scores were injured. Israel claimed it was an accident, but investigators concluded that the ship was attacked because it heard radio traffic revealing Israeli battle plans.

- In March 1978, Stephen Bryen, a U.S. Senate aide, allegedly was over-

heard offering Israeli military officers classified documents. The Justice Department said Bryen might have been disclosing information to Israel over a period of years, but he was never charged. He is now deputy assistant secretary of defense.

- In May 1985, Richard Smith was indicted for selling Israel high-tech micro-switches that are used to explode atomic weapons and are banned for export. Smith skipped his trial and is missing.

U.S. officials say that the belief that agents other than Pollard and his wife were involved is based on the reaction so far from the Israeli government and from Pollard, as well as the documents that were recovered. U.S. officials say that an indication of further Israeli spy operations is evident in the recent offer to close down the offices of Israeli science attaches in Washington, New York, Boston and Los Angeles. Two science attaches have already been recalled to Israel.

Diplomatic observers in Washington are not surprised by the recent disclosure of Israeli intelligence-gathering in the U.S., only the fact that Israel has allegedly paid for getting such intelligence.

The general perception is that Israel has long engaged in intelligence activities in the U.S., relying on a network of "friendly" U.S. officials to pass along even classified information. "My surprise is that they needed a spy, since the machinery is honeycombed with friends that inform for them," said Robert Neumann, a former U.S. ambassador in the Middle East. "It's called 'leaks,' not espionage, but the difference gets to be very fine."

Part of Israel's espionage activity, informed sources declare, relates to the U.S. relationship with friendly Arab states such as Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia and the sheikhdoms along the Gulf. It is particularly disturbing that some friends of Israel in the U.S. have made light of this espionage activity.

Thus, Kenneth J. Bialkin, head of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, said that while spying should not be condoned we should "keep in mind that

the nature of the secrets obtained does not go to elements of U.S. defense and U.S. preparedness. They touch primarily on elements primarily of Israel's interest to defend itself—that is, information about the deployment of Arab forces and the nature of American strength."

Does Bialkin really think that potential damage to U.S. relations with pro-Western Arab states has nothing to do with our "national security"? If so, his analysis is far different from that of experts in the intelligence community.

There are some who have said that the matter of the Pollard case is "now closed." This, however, may be wishful thinking. The Pollard case, in fact, is causing a re-examination of U.S.-Israeli relations in many quarters. *The Christian Science Monitor* noted that the case "could awaken Americans to question why the U.S. maintains such a close relationship with Israel when Israel often acts against the U.S. national interest.

"Others question Israeli actions over the years, including the use of American weapons to conduct raids—in Iraq, Lebanon, Tunisia; the surreptitious acquisition of American material and technology to develop atomic weapons; and the Israeli resistance to peace negotiations on the West Bank."

Israel receives more economic aid and military assistance from the U.S.—\$3.75 billion this year—than any other country. Contrary to general practice, the money is dispersed early in the year and is all in grants, not loans. The economic portion goes directly to the state treasury and is not assigned to specific purposes. Israel is also the only country to have an across-the-board free trade agreement with the U.S. And Israeli government bond sales get special American tax treatment.

In light of all this, Israel certainly has some obligations to the U.S. One of these, surely, is to take American interests into consideration before it acts militarily—as in the case of using U.S. weapons to bomb pro-Western Tunisia. Another is to encourage U.S. peace efforts which involve a trade of conquered territory Israel now controls for a lasting settlement with its Arab neighbors. Instead, Israel, using U.S. funds, continues to settle the West Bank and speak of its annexation. For American taxpayers to have their funds spent in a way which harms our long-term interests hardly serves any legitimate purpose. ■