

Serving Two Flags Neo-Cons, Israel and the Bush Administration

Richard Perle, Paul Wolfowitz, Douglas Feith... a network whose members have been repeatedly investigated by US intelligence agencies, only to have these investigations quashed by higher-ups.

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- Stephen Green

About Stephen Green

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Stephen Green Expert on US-Israeli Relations

Since 9-11, a small group of “neo-conservatives” in the Administration have effectively gutted—they would say reformed—traditional American foreign and security policy. Notable features of the new Bush doctrine include the pre-emptive use of unilateral force, and the undermining of the United Nations and the principle instruments and institutions of international law...all in the cause of fighting terrorism and promoting homeland security.

Some skeptics, noting the neo-cons’ past academic and professional associations, writings and public utterances, have suggested that their underlying agenda is the alignment of U.S. foreign and security policies with those of Ariel Sharon and the Israeli right wing. The administration’s new hard line on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict certainly suggests that, as perhaps does the destruction, with U.S. soldiers and funds, of the military capacity of Iraq, and the current belligerent neo-con campaign against the other two countries which constitute a remaining counterforce to Israeli military hegemony in the region—Iran and Syria.

Have the neo-conservatives—many of whom are senior officials in the Defense Department, National Security Council and Office of the Vice President—had dual agendas, while professing to work for the internal security of the United States against its terrorist enemies?

A review of the internal security backgrounds of some of the best known among them strongly suggests the answer.

DR. STEPHEN BRYEN AND COLLEAGUES

In April of 1979, Deputy Assistant Attorney General Robert Keuch recommended in writing that Bryen, then a staff member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, undergo a grand jury hearing to establish the basis for a prosecution for espionage. John Davitt, then Chief of the Justice Department's Internal Security Division, concurred.

The evidence was strong. Bryen had been overheard in the Madison Hotel Coffee Shop, offering classified documents to an official of the Israeli Embassy in the presence of the director of AIPAC, the American-Israel Public Affairs Committee. It was later determined that the Embassy official was Zvi Rafiah, the Mossad station chief in Washington. Bryen refused to be poly-graphed by the FBI on the purpose and details of the meeting; whereas the person who'd witnessed it agreed to be poly-graphed and passed the test.

The Bureau also had testimony from a second person, a staff member of the Foreign Relations Committee, that she had witnessed Bryen in his Senate office with Rafiah, discussing classified documents that were spread out on a table in front of an open safe in which the documents were supposed to be secured. Not long after this second witness came forward, Bryen's fingerprints were found on classified documents he'd stated in writing to the FBI he'd never had in his possession....the ones he'd allegedly offered to Rafiah.

Nevertheless, following the refusal of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee to grant access by Justice Department officials to files which were key to the investigation, Keuch's recommendation for a grand jury hearing, and ultimately the investigation itself, were shut down. This decision, taken by Philip Heymann, Chief of Justice's Criminal Division, was a bitter disappointment to Davitt and to Joel Lisker, the lead investigator on the case, as expressed to this writer. A complicating factor in the outcome was that

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to justify the attack on Iraq, to miss-plan the post-war reconstruction there, and then to point an accusing finger at Iran and Syria.....all to the absolute delight of Prime Minister Ariel Sharon.

REASON FOR CONCERN

Many individuals with strong attachments to foreign countries have served the U.S. Government with honor and distinction, and will certainly do so in the future. The highest officials in our executive and legislative branches should, however, take great care when appointments are made to posts involving sensitive national security matters. Appointees should be rejected who have demonstrated, in their previous government service, a willingness to sacrifice U.S. national security interests for those of another country, or an inability to distinguish one from the other.

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Heymann was a former schoolmate and fellow U.S. Supreme Court Clerk of Bryen's attorney, Nathan Lewin.

Bryen was asked to resign from his Foreign Relations Committee post shortly before the investigation was concluded in late 1979. For the following year and a half, he served as Executive Director of the Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs (JINSA), and provided consulting services to AIPAC.

In April, 1981, the FBI received an application by the Defense Department for a Top Secret security clearance for Dr. Bryen. Richard Perle, who had just been nominated as Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Policy, was proposing Bryen as his Deputy Assistant Secretary! Within six months, with Perle pushing hard, Bryen received both Top Secret-SCI (sensitive compartmented information) and Top Secret-"NATO/COSMIC" clearances.

LOYALTY, PATRIOTISM AND CHARACTER

The Bryen investigation became in fact the most contentious issue in Perle's own confirmation hearings in July, 1981. Under aggressive questioning from Sen. Jeremiah Denton, Perle held his ground: "I consider Dr. Bryen to be an individual impeccable integrity....I have the highest confidence in [his] loyalty, patriotism and character."

Several years later in early 1988, Israel was in the final stages of development of a prototype of its ground based "Arrow" anti-ballistic missile. One element the program lacked was "klystrons", small microwave amplifiers which are critical components in the missile's high frequency, radar-based target acquisition system which locks on to in-coming missiles. In 1988, klystrons were among the most advanced developments in American weapons research, and their export was of course strictly proscribed.

The DOD office involved in control of defense technology exports was the Defense Technology Security Administration (DTSA) within Richard Perle's ISP office. The Director (and founder) of DTSA was Perle's Deputy, Dr. Stephen Bryen. In May of 1988, Bryen sent a standard form to Richard Levine, a Navy tech transfer official, informing him of intent to approve a license for Varian Associates, Inc. of Beverly, Massachusetts to export to

Israel four klystrons. This was done without the usual consultations with the tech transfer officials of the Army and Air Force, or ISA (International Security Affairs) or DSAA (Defense Security Assistance Agency).

The answer from Levine was “no”. He opposed granting the license, and asked for a meeting on the matter of the appropriate (above listed) offices. At the meeting, all of the officials present opposed the license. Bryen responded by suggesting that he go back to the Israelis to ask why these particular items were needed for their defense. Later, after the Israeli Government came back with what one DOD staffer described as “a little bullshit answer”, Bryen simply notified the meeting attendees that an acceptable answer had been received, the license granted, and the klystrons released.

By now, however, the dogs were awake. Then Assistant Secretary of Defense for ISA, (and now Deputy Secretary of State) Richard Armitage sent Dr. Bryen a letter stating that the State Department (which issues the export licenses) should be informed of DOD’s “uniformly negative” reaction to the export of klystrons to Israel. Bryen did as instructed, and the license was withdrawn.

In July, Varian Associates became the first U.S. corporation formally precluded from contracting with the Defense Department. Two senior colleague in DOD who wish to remain anonymous have confirmed that this attempt by Bryen to obtain klystrons for his friends was not unusual, and was in fact “standard operating procedure” for him, recalling numerous instances when U.S. companies were denied licenses to export sensitive technology, only to learn later that Israeli companies subsequently exported similar (U.S. derived) weapons and technology to the intended customers/governments.

In late 1988, Bryen resigned from his DOD post, and for a period worked in the private sector with a variety of defense technology consulting firms.

BRYEN AND THE CHINA COMMISSION

In 1997, “Defense Week” reported (05/27/97) that,“ the U.S. Office of Naval Intelligence reaffirmed that U.S.- derived technology from the cancelled [Israeli] Lavi fighter project is being used on China’s new F-10 fighter.” The following year, “Jane’s Intelligence Review” reported (11/01/98) the transfer by Israel to China of the Phalcon airborne early warning and control

Nuclear Forces Treaty (in 1988), the Chemical Weapons Convention (in 1997), the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty (in 2000), and all of the various Middle East Peace agreements, including Oslo (in 2000).

Even more revealing perhaps, had the transition team known of it, was Feith’s view of “technology cooperation,” as expressed in a 1992 Commentary article: “It is in the interest of U.S. and Israel to remove needless impediments to technological cooperation between them. Technologies in the hands of responsible, friendly countries facing military threats, countries like Israel, serve to deter aggression, enhance regional stability and promote peace thereby.”

What Douglas Feith had neglected to say, in this last article, was that he thought that individuals could decide on their own whether the sharing of classified information was “technical cooperation,” an unauthorized disclosure, or a violation of U.S. Code 794c, the “Espionage Act.”

Ten years prior to writing the Commentary piece, Feith had made such a decision on his own. At the time, March of 1972, Feith was a Middle East analyst in the Near East and South Asian Affairs section of the National Security Council. Two months before, in January, Judge William Clark had replaced Richard Allen as National Security Advisor, with the intention to clean house. A total of nine NSC staff members were fired, including Feith, who’d only been with the NSC for a year. But Feith was fired because he’d been the object of an inquiry into whether he’d provided classified material to an official of the Israeli Embassy in Washington. The FBI had opened the inquiry. And Clark, who had served in U.S. Army counterintelligence in the 1950’s, took such matters very seriously....more seriously, apparently, than had Richard Allen.

Feith did not remain unemployed for long, however. Richard Perle, who was in 1982 serving in the Pentagon as Assistant secretary for International Security Policy, hired him on the spot as his “Special Counsel,” and then as his Deputy. Feith worked at ISP until 1986, when he left government service to form a small but influential law firm, then based in Israel.

In 2001, Douglas Feith returned to DoD as Donald Rumsfeld’s Undersecretary for Policy, and it was in his office that “OSP”, the Office of Special Plans, was created. It was OSP that originated—some say from whole cloth—much of the intelligence that Bush, Cheney and Rumsfeld have used

advanced AIM-9M air-to-air missiles.

In this instance, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, aware that Israel had already been caught selling the earlier AIM 9-L version of the missile to China in violation of a written agreement with the U.S. on arms re-sales, intervened to cancel the proposed AIM (-M deal. The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs at the time was General Colin Powell, currently Secretary of State.

Wolfowitz continued to serve as DoD Undersecretary for Policy until 1993, well into the Clinton Administration. After that, however, like most of the other prominent neo-conservatives, he was relegated to trying to assist Israel from the sidelines for the remainder of Clinton's two terms. In 1998, Wolfowitz was a co-signer of a public letter to the President organized by the "Project for the New American Century." The letter, citing Saddam Hussein's continued possession of "weapons of mass destruction," argued for military action to achieve regime change and demilitarization of Iraq. Clinton wasn't impressed, but a more gullible fellow would soon come along.

And indeed, when George W. Bush assumed the Presidency in early 2001, Wolfowitz got his opportunity. Picked as Donald Rumsfeld's Deputy Secretary at DoD, he prevailed upon his boss to appoint Douglas Feith as Undersecretary for Policy. On the day after the destruction of the World Trade Center, September 12, Rumsfeld and Wolfowitz raised the possibility of an immediate attack on Iraq during an emergency NSC meeting. The following day, Wolfowitz conducted the Pentagon press briefing, and interpreted the President's statement on "ending states who sponsor terrorism" as a call for regime change in Iraq. Israel wasn't mentioned.

DOUGLAS FEITH: HARDLINER, SECURITY RISK

Bush's appointment of Douglas Feith as DoD Undersecretary for Policy in early 2001 must have come as a surprise, and a harbinger, even to conservative veterans of the Reagan and George H.W. Bush Administration. Like Michael Ledeen, Feith is a prolific writer and well-known radical conservative. Moreover, he was not being hired as a DoD consultant, like Ledeen, but as the third most senior United States Defense Department official. Feith was certainly the first, and probably the last high Pentagon official to have publicly opposed the Biological Weapons Convention (in 1986), the Intermediate

system, the Python air-combat missile, and the F-10 fighter aircraft, containing "state-of-the-art U.S. electronics."

Concern about the continuing transfer of advanced U.S. arms technology to the burgeoning Chinese military program led, in the last months of the Clinton Administration, to the creation of a Congressional consultative body called the United States-China Economic and Security Review Commission. The charter for the "The China Commission", as it is commonly known, states that its purpose is to...."monitor, investigate, and report to the Congress on the national security implications of the bilateral trade and economic relationship between the United States and the Peoples Republic of China." The charter also reflects an awareness of the problem of "back door" technology leaks: "The Commission shall also take into account patterns of trade and transfers through third countries to the extent practicable."

It was almost predictable that in the new Bush Administration, Dr. Stephen Bryen would find his way to the China Commission. In April 2001, with the support of Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz and Senator Richard Shelby (R-Alabama) Bryen was appointed a Member of the Commission by Speaker of the House Dennis Hastert. Last August, his appointment was extended through December of 2005.

Informed that Bryen had been appointed to the Commission, the reaction of one former senior FBI counter-intelligence official was: "My God, that must mean he has a "Q clearance!" (A "Q" clearance, which must be approved by the Department of Energy, is the designation for a Top Secret codeword clearance to access nuclear technology.)

MICHAEL LEDEEN, CONSULTANT ON CHAOS

If Stephen Bryen is the military technology guru in the neo-con pantheon, Michael Ledeen is currently its leading theorist, historian, scholar and writer. It states in the website of his consulting firm, Benador Associates, that he is "...one of the world's leading authorities on intelligence, contemporary history and international affairs" and that...."As Ted Koppel puts it, 'Michael Ledeen is a Renaissance man....in the tradition of Machiavelli.'" Perhaps the following will add some color and texture to this description.

In 1983, on the recommendation of Richard Perle, Ledeen was hired at

the Department of Defense as a consultant on terrorism. His immediate supervisor was the Principle Assistant Secretary for International Security Affairs, Noel Koch. Early in their work together, Koch noticed with concern Ledeen's habit of stopping by in his (Koch's) outer office to read classified materials. When the two of them took a trip to Italy, Koch learned from the CIA station there that when Ledeen had lived in Rome previously, as correspondent for *The New Republic*, he'd been carried in Agency files as an agent of influence of a foreign government: Israel.

Some time after their return from the trip, Ledeen approached his boss with a request for his assistance in obtaining two highly classified CIA reports which he said were held by the FBI. He'd hand written on a piece of paper the identifying "alpha numeric designators". These identifiers were as highly classified as the reports themselves....which raised in Koch's mind the question of who had provided them to Ledeen if he hadn't the clearances to obtain them himself. Koch immediately told his executive assistant that Ledeen was to have no further access to classified materials in the office, and Ledeen just ceased coming to "work".

In early 1986, however, Koch learned that Ledeen had joined NSC as a consultant, and sufficiently concerned about the internal security implications of the behavior of his former aide, arranged to be interviewed by two FBI agents on the matter. After a two hour debriefing, Koch was told that it was only Soviet military intelligence penetration that interested the Bureau. The follow-on interviews that were promised by the agents just never occurred.

Koch thought this strange, coming as it did just months after the arrest of Naval intelligence analyst Jonathan Pollard on charges of espionage for Israel. Frustrated, Koch wrote up in detail the entire saga of Ledeen's DOD consultancy, and sent it to the Office of Senator Charles Grassley, then a member of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, which had oversight responsibility for, inter alia, the FBI.

A former senior FBI counter-intelligence official was surprised and somewhat skeptical, when told of Koch's unsuccessful attempts to interest the Bureau in an investigation of Ledeen, noting that in early 1986, the Justice Department was in fact already engaged in several on-going, concurrent investigations of Israeli espionage and theft of American military technology.

Research, for suspected unauthorized transmission to an Israeli Government official of a classified document concerning the commencement of the 1967 war in the Middle East.

In 1981, shortly before being appointed Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Policy (ISP)—with responsibility, inter alia, for monitoring of U.S. defense technology exports, Richard Perle was paid a substantial consulting fee by arms manufacturer Tamares, Ltd. of Israel. Shortly after assuming that post, Perle wrote a letter to the Secretary of the Army urging evaluation and purchase of 155 mm. shells manufactured by Soltam, Ltd. After leaving the ISP job in 1987, he worked for Soltam.

PAUL WOLFOWITZ: A WELL PLACED FRIEND

In 1973, in the dying days of the Nixon Administration, Wolfowitz was recruited to work for the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency (ACDA). There was a certain irony in the appointment, for in the late 1960's, as a graduate student at the University of Chicago, Wolfowitz had been a student and protégé of Albert Wohlstetter, an influential, vehement opponent of any form of arms control or disarmament, vis-à-vis the Soviets. Wolfowitz also brought to ACDA a strong attachment to Israel's security, and a certain confusion about his obligation to U.S. national security.

In 1978, he was investigated for providing a classified document on the proposed sale of U.S. weapons to an Arab government, to an Israel Government official, through an AIPAC intermediary. An inquiry was launched and dropped, however, and Wolfowitz continued to work at ACDA until 1980.

In 1990, after a decade of work with the State Department in Washington and abroad, Wolfowitz was brought into DoD as Undersecretary for Policy by then Secretary of Defense Richard Cheney. Two years later, in 1992, the first Bush Administration launched a broad inter-departmental investigation into the export of classified technology to China. Of particular concern at the time was the transfer to China by Israel of U.S. Patriot missiles and/or technology. During that investigation, in a situation very reminiscent of the Bryen/Varian Associates/klystrons affair two years earlier, the Pentagon discovered that Wolfowitz's office was promoting the export to Israel of

the FBI were required. When the level of the clearance is not above generic Top Secret, however, the results of that background check are only seen by the hiring authority. And in the event, if the appointee were Bryen or Ledeen and the hiring authority were Perle, Wolfowitz or Feith, the appointee(s) need not have worried about the findings of the background check. In the case of Perle hiring Bryen as his deputy in 1981, for instance, documents released in 1983 under the Freedom of Information Act indicate that the Department provided extraordinarily high clearances for Bryen without having reviewed more than a small portion of his 1978-79 FBI investigation file.

RICHARD PERLE: A HABIT OF LEAKING

Perle came to Washington for the first time in early 1969, at the age of 28, to work for a neo-con think tank called the “Committee to Maintain a Prudent Defense Policy.” Within months, Senator Henry “Scoop” Jackson offered Perle a position on his staff, working with the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. And within months after that—less than a year—Perle was embroiled in an affair involving the leaking of a classified CIA report on alleged past Soviet treaty violations.

The leaker (and author of the report) was CIA analyst David Sullivan, and the leakee was Richard Perle. CIA Director Stansfield Turner was incensed at the unauthorized disclosure, but before he could fire Sullivan, the latter quit. Turner urged Sen. Jackson to fire Perle, but he was let off with a reprimand. Jackson then added insult to injury by immediately hiring Sullivan to his staff. Sullivan and Perle became close friends and co-conspirators, and together established an informal right-wing network which they called “the Madison Group,” after their usual meeting place in—you might have guessed—the Madison Hotel Coffee Shop.

Perle’s second brush with the law occurred a year later in 1970. An FBI wiretap authorized for the Israeli Embassy picked up Perle discussing with an Embassy official classified information which he said had been supplied to by a staff member on the National Security Council. An NSC/FBI investigation was launched to identify the staff member, and quickly focused upon Helmut Sonnenfeldt. The latter had been previously investigated in 1967 while a staff member of the State Department’s Bureau of Intelligence and

MACHIAVELLI IN TEL AVIV

Koch’s belated attempts to draw official attention to his former assistant were too late, in any event, for within a very few weeks of leaving his DOD consultancy in late 1984, Ledeen had found gainful (classified) employment at the National Security Council (NSC). In fact, according to a now declassified chronology prepared for the Senate/House Iran-Contra investigation, within calendar 1984 Ledeen was already suggesting to Oliver North, his new boss at NSC...“ that Israeli contacts might be useful in obtaining release of the U.S. hostages in Lebanon.” Perhaps significantly, that is the first entry in the “Chronology of Events: U.S.- Iran Dialogue”, dated November 18, 1986, prepared for the Joint House-Senate Hearings in the Iran-Contra Investigations.

What is so striking about the Ledeen-related documents which are part of the Iran-Contra Collection of the National Security Archive, is how thoroughly the judgments of Ledeen’s colleagues at NSC mirrored, and validated, Noel Koch’s internal security concerns about his consultant.

- on April 9, 1985, NSC Middle East analyst Donald Fortier wrote to National Security Advisor Robert McFarlane that NSC staffers were agreed that Ledeen’s role in the scheme should be limited to carrying messages to Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres regarding plans to cooperate with Israel on the crisis within Iran, and specifically that he should not be entrusted to ask Peres for detailed operational information;
- on June 6, 1985, Secretary of State George Shultz wrote to McFarlane that, “Israel’s record of dealings with Iran since the fall of the Shah and during the hostage crisis [show] that Israel’s agenda is not the same as ours. Consequently doubt whether an intelligence relationship such as what Ledeen has in mind would be one which we could fully rely upon and it could seriously skew our own perception and analysis of the Iranian scene.”

- on 20 August, 1985, the Office of the Undersecretary of Defense informed Ledeen by memorandum that his security clearance had been downgraded from Top Secret-SCI to Secret.
- on 16 January, 1986, Oliver North recommended to John Poindexter “for [the] security of the Iran initiative” that Ledeen be asked to take periodic polygraph examinations.
- later in January, on the 24th, North wrote to Poindexter of his suspicion that Ledeen, along with Adolph Schwimmer and Manucher Ghorbanifar, might be making money personally on the sale of arms to Iran, through Israel.

During the June 23-25, 1987 joint hearings of the House and Senate select committees’ investigation of Iran-Contra, Noel Koch testified that he became suspicious when he learned that the price which Ledeen had negotiated for the sale to the Israeli Government of basic TOW missiles was \$2,500 each.

Upon inquiring with his DOD colleagues, he learned the lowest price the U.S. had ever received for the sale of TOWs to a foreign government had been a previous sale to Israel for \$6,800 per copy. Koch, professing in his testimony that he and his colleagues at DOD were not in favor of the sale to begin with, determined that he—Koch—should renegotiate the \$2,500 price so that it could be defended by the “defense management system.” In a clandestine meeting on a Sunday in the first class lounge of the TWA section of National Airport, Koch met over a cup of coffee with an official from the Israeli purchasing mission in New York, and agreed on a price of \$4,500 per missile, nearly twice what Ledeen had “negotiated” in Israel.

There are two possibilities here—one would be a kickback, as suspected by his NSC colleagues, and the other would be that Michael Ledeen was effectively negotiating for Israel, not the U.S. Like his friend Stephen Bryen (they’ve long served together on the JINSA Board of Advisors) Ledeen has been out of government service since the late 1980s....until the present Bush Administration. He, like Bryen, is presently a serving member on the China Commission and, with the support of DOD Undersecretary for Policy Douglas Feith, he has since 2001 been employed as a consultant for the Office

of Special Plans OSP). Both involve the handling of classified materials and require high-level security clearances.

THE PRINCIPALS: PERLE, WOLFOWITZ AND FEITH

One might wonder how, with security histories like these, Messrs. Bryen and Ledeen have managed to get second and third chances to return to government in highly classified positions.

And the explanation is that they, along with other like-minded neo-conservatives, have in the current Bush Administration friends in very high places. In particular, Bryen and Ledeen have been repeatedly boosted into defense/security posts by former Defense Policy Council member and chairman Richard Perle (he just quietly resigned his position), Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz, and Under Secretary of Defense for Policy Douglas Feith.

As previously mentioned, Perle in 1981 as DOD Assistant Secretary for International Security Policy (ISP) hired Bryen as his Deputy. That same year, Wolfowitz as head of the State Department Policy Planning Staff hired Ledeen as a Special Advisor. In 2001 Douglas Feith as DOD Under Secretary for Policy hired, or approved the hiring of Ledeen as a consultant for the Office of Special Plans.

The principals have also assisted each other down through the years. Frequently. In 1973 Richard Perle used his (and Senator Henry “Scoop” Jackson’s) influence as a senior staff member of the Senate Armed Services Committee to help Wolfowitz obtain a job with the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency. In 1982, Perle hired Feith in ISP as his Special Counsel, and then as Deputy Assistant Secretary for Negotiations Policy. In 2001, DOD Deputy Secretary Wolfowitz helped Feith obtain his appointment as Undersecretary for Policy. Feith then appointed Perle as Chairman of the Defense Policy Board. In some cases, this mutual assistance carries risks, as for instance when Perle’s hiring of Bryen as his Deputy in ISP became an extremely contentious issue in Perle’s own Senate appointment hearings as Assistant Secretary.

Every appointment/hiring listed above involved classified work for which high-level security clearances and associated background checks by