

Franklin, Ledeen, and The Pollard II Case

by Michele Steinberg

On Oct. 5, 2005, in Alexandria, Virginia, U.S. Attorney Paul McNulty announced that Defense Department official Larry Franklin had pled guilty to crimes under Federal espionage laws, and that his office would continue to “press forward in the prosecution of the remaining defendants,” Steven J. Rosen and Keith Weissman, the two spies for the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), who are identified as Franklin’s co-conspirators.

It took only two months after Rosen and Weissman were indicted on Aug. 4, for Franklin to plead guilty. As *EIR* reported on Aug. 12, the AIPAC indictments unveiled “an Israeli espionage network that has been functioning since at least April 1999, involving a number of Pentagon officials beyond Franklin, and a former senior Mossad officer, Uzi Arad, who now heads Israel’s premier national security think-tank. . . .”

Franklin may also be thinking of the fate of Jonathan Jay Pollard, the long-unacknowledged American spy for Israel, who has been sitting in Federal prison since 1985, when he was arrested by the FBI while trying to force his way into the Israeli Embassy in Washington, D.C., to escape from Federal prosecution. Pollard was “hung out to dry” by his Israeli controllers—a semi-rookie intelligence operation that was loyal to the ultra-right wing of the Israeli establishment, particularly Ariel Sharon, and the Jabotinskyite Benjamin Netanyahu.

An Intersection of Investigations

Perhaps Franklin was also mindful that the entire neo-conservative rogue intelligence operation to which he was allied, and which was run out of Vice President Dick Cheney’s office, was about to be shut down in the Valerie Plame investigation. Indeed, Franklin intersects several of the criminal investigations that haunt the Bush Administration—not the least of which is the forgery of documents in the Niger yellowcake uranium story, which began in Italy, and intersected Franklin in December 2001, when he secretly met Iranian Manucher Ghorbanifar in the company of Michael Ledeen and Harold Rhode. (See article, p. 4.)

One thing is clear. Franklin signed his life away to the Department of Justice—at least for the next several years—in a plea agreement over charges that he passed classified information to people whom he knew to be “agents” of Israel,

and who could do injury to the national security of the United States.

The charges were read aloud on Oct. 5, by Federal District Judge T.S. Ellis, who asked Franklin if he understood both the charges against him, and the consequences of his pleading guilty. Franklin, who had spent more than 30 years, first in the U.S. military, and then as a civilian working in both the Defense Intelligence Agency and the Pentagon, said that he understood. But then, Franklin told the judge that he “never intended” to harm the United States—even though the charges, to which he pled guilty, explicitly state that he threatened the security of the United States.

For many observers in the courtroom, the severity of the sentence which Franklin faces was a bit of a surprise: a maximum of 25 years in prison, more than \$600,000 in fines, and up to nine years of supervised release after he serves his prison sentence. In addition, Franklin forfeits his U.S. government pension, except for a “survivor’s benefit,” which will go to his wife, provided that she continues to cooperate with Federal authorities in their continuing investigation of unspecified matters about which Franklin and she were knowledgeable. Franklin will be sentenced in January 2006.

Unrestricted ‘Cooperation’

Franklin’s superiors at the Pentagon, and the Israeli conduits to whom he gave information, have much to be nervous about. Ellis told Franklin, “You have agreed to cooperate on any criminal conduct you know about,” and that this cooperation is *not restricted* to the specific charges filed against him. This “cooperation” includes that Franklin agrees to testify at any grand jury investigation, or trial, in which the Federal prosecutors require his testimony; agrees to make himself available for debriefings on any subjects of criminal investigation about which the Justice Department wants to question him; agrees to provide all documents or “any other materials” that he has possession of, that might assist the DoJ in its investigations; agrees to submit to a government-selected polygraphy test; understands that he has no protection from being prosecuted by state or local authorities for matters relating to the indictments against him; agrees that he will cooperate with other Federal prosecutors, in any other cases that may concern his activities or knowledge; agrees that his wife will continue to “fully cooperate.”

If either Franklin or his wife is determined to have given anything less than full cooperation, her pension will be forfeited. Franklin also agreed to renew all “non-disclosure agreements,” as to classified and other materials that he had with the government, and he is forbidden to speak to, or give interviews to any author of a book, film, documentary, article, or memoir; or write, or participate in the writing of any book, film, etc. for as long as his sentence and supervised release continue, without submitting all statements, etc., to the DoD for approval. Violations of these agreements, or any false

statement that Franklin were to make to the government debriefers or lawyers, would mean that all his statements, on any subject in the debriefings, could be used against him, in prosecuting the cases to which he pled guilty.

AIPAC also has much to worry about. The lobby “fired” Rosen and Weissman, apparently on advice of their attorneys, in 2004, so it could tell its contributors and the press that “no current employee” of AIPAC is under Federal investigation. But, it is widely reported that the “firing” is only cosmetic, since AIPAC reportedly continues to pay their substantial legal bills.

There is also the matter of Israeli diplomat Naor Gilon, who served as the chief political counsellor at the Israeli Embassy in Washington, D.C., and with whom Franklin admitted meeting eight times. Franklin directly passed Gilon classified information. But various Israeli officials in sensitive positions, such as Defense and Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Yuval Steinitz, insist that Israel was not “running Franklin” as a spy.

But the investigation of the role of Israel, whose Embassy was involved in another case of spying against the United States—that of Jonathon Jay Pollard in 1985—is far from over.

Finally, there are officials in the neo-conservative cabal run by former Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz and former Undersecretary of Defense Douglas Feith, who also have to be concerned. Franklin told the court on Oct. 5, that he worked under Feith at the Office of Special Plans, which has been identified as a “rogue intelligence unit,” that manufactured bogus intelligence to justify the Iraq War.

Franklin was no wallflower in the Pentagon, buried among hundreds of thousands of employees. He was occasionally included in the highly selective “brown bag lunches” run by Feith, the No. 3 in the Defense Department, and Wolfowitz, the No. 2. Franklin also told the Federal court that he illegally took home classified documents, so that he would be “prepared” to answer questions when he had face-to-face meetings with Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld and Wolfowitz.

Damage Control Crumbles

When the Franklin investigation surfaced, in August 2004, would-be Venetian manipulator Michael Ledeen “conjured up” James Jesus Angleton (former CIA counterintelligence chief, and notorious nutcase), to ridicule the charges as nothing more than hot air.

In its Sept. 6, 2004 edition, *Newsweek* reported, “*Newsweek’s* efforts to reach Franklin or a lawyer representing him were unsuccessful. But a close friend, Michael Ledeen of the American Enterprise Institute, said he believes the charges against Franklin are “nonsensical.” The *Newsweek* spin continued, with the statement, “Israeli officials, meanwhile, bristled at the suggestion of espionage. Ephraim Sneh, a member of Parliament and a retired general who has been monitoring

the development of nukes in Iran for years, said that Israel would be crazy to spy on its best friend. ‘Since Pollard, we avoid any intelligence activity on U.S. soil,’ Sneh said in an interview. ‘I know the policy. . . . We avoid anything that even smells like intelligence-gathering in the U.S.’”

All this went up in smoke on Oct. 5, 2005, when Franklin released his “Statement of Facts.” And even defenders like Ledeen may find themselves subjects of investigation.