

Fifth Columnists



They were originally Falangist sympathizers inside Madrid during the Spanish Civil War, prepared to side with General Franco's four columns that were

besieging the city. By 1939, as Germany and France were poised for war, French Fifth Columnists were busy undermining those who preached resistance to German demands. Until now, America has not had a Fifth Column in its midst, unless one counts the media during the war in Vietnam. (Roosevelt unfairly and needlessly detained Japanese-Americans during World War II as potential Fifth Columnists, when he should have been detaining some of his cabinet).

The first real case (Benedict Arnold aside) of Fifth Columnists inside America working for foreign interests are the neo-conservatives, the best known of whom include David Frum, William Kristol, Norman and John Podhoretz, Michael Ledeen, Richard Perle, Paul Wolfowitz, and the egregious Douglas Feith, as close to being a foreign agent as is possible to be but still holding on to his job at the Pentagon. America's Fifth Columnists aim to shape United States foreign policy to suit Israeli interests. The gruesome carnage in Iraq is proof that this administration is ready to fight Israeli battles to the last American marine.

We have lost more than 1,200 dead, 30,000 wounded, and have killed an unknown number of Iraqis, not all of them insurgents or terrorists. We have military hospitals full of blind and crippled young men and women, while thousands of Iraqis and their children are mortared and shot daily. Despite the bloodshed, however, victory in Iraq is still up for grabs. Not only have the neocons not bothered to apologize, they want more blood. Mind you, there are no Frums dying among our troops. Instead, they are ensconced inside the Beltway appearing on television and egging the president on to Tehran and Damascus.

In a soundbite age, "War on Terror" has a good ring to it. Once upon a time, Christian missionaries tried to vanquish "evil savages" by teaching them religion. Now we try to teach them democracy. The way America's Fifth Column operates is a simple one. It uses the charge of anti-Semitism to smear honorable conservatives who do not believe that Uncle Sam's and Israel's interests are one and the same. (The most outrageous example was when Midge Decter accused the venerable conservative Russell Kirk of anti-Semitism.) David Frum, a sleazy self-promoter, infamously painted conservative writers like Pat Buchanan, Paul Gottfried, Samuel Francis, Tom Fleming, and others as unpatriotic Americans, forgetting to mention that in his book "unpatriotic" means not serving the interests of the state of Israel. Norman Podhoretz's "World War IV" is a blueprint for an endless campaign to destroy all of Israel's enemies. Why are these bogus patriots getting away with such stuff? Alas, it is a very easy question to answer.

With 85,000 members, a staff of 165, and a \$33.4 million annual budget, AIPAC, the American Israel Political Affairs Committee, is Washington's most influential and most feared lobby. It is forceful, extremely aggressive, and more or less calls the tune inside the Beltway where the Middle East is concerned. Woe to the politician who ignores its wishes. He will be targeted, his opponents showered with donations, his reputation immediately shredded by charges of anti-Semitism.

Neocons work closely with AIPAC and the Israeli embassy. As Philip Giraldi wrote in this magazine, "Principal neocons have been accused of illegally providing classified information to

Israel. None was ever prosecuted." Last I heard AIPAC was busy accusing the FBI and the CIA of pursuing a vendetta against Israel and the Pentagon, while neocon Michael Rubin of the American Enterprise Institute alleges that the Franklin affair was motivated by anti-Semitism.

America's pro-Israel stand is nothing new. Israel is, after all, our closest ally in the region, despite the spying it regularly conducts on Uncle Sam. If there ever was a one-sided marriage, this is it. As Thomas Friedman wrote in the *New York Times*, "there is a steadily rising perception across the Arab-Muslim world that the great enemy of Islam is JIA—Jews, Israel and America, all lumped together in a single threat." Friedman goes on to say that Arab satellite television stations show split-screen images of Israelis bashing Palestinians and Americans beating up Iraqi insurgents. Nothing new here. Arab preachers, mostly paid by our other "allies," the Saudi rulers, explain all the world's ills by wrapping them up in JIA. But Arab lies and outrageous anti-Western propaganda aside, the Bush regime's total embrace of Ariel Sharon makes it impossible to know where American policy stops and Sharon's begins.

Now, with Colin Powell gone, my fears are that Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz and Undersecretary Douglas Feith—two of the most bluster-prone cheerleaders of the Iraq War and of Ariel Sharon's brutal and expansionist strategy on the West Bank—will enjoy even more power and influence. Under normal circumstances, Rumsfeld, Wolfowitz, Feith, and others would have been dismissed on the spot, and neocon propagandists such as Frum, Kristol, Podhoretz, Perle, and their ilk denounced as working for a foreign power. But we are not living in normal times. This is the time of AIPAC, and woe to those who oppose America's Fifth Column, starting with poor little me. ■

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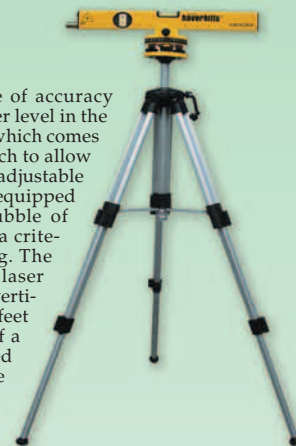
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