

Of patriots and assassins

by *Patrick_Buchanan*

During Nixon's historic trip to China in 1972, his interpreter and I, free for a few hours, conscripted a driver to take us on a tour of Beijing. Somewhere in my files are photos from that day we toured the grim city of Chairman Mao in the time of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution.

The interpreter: Charles Freeman – the same Charles Freeman Adm. Dennis Blair chose to chair the National Intelligence Council that prepares National Intelligence Estimates on critical national security issues such as Iran's nuclear program.

Educated at Yale and Harvard Law, Freeman has served his country in Delhi, Taipei, Bangkok and Beijing. He was Ronald Reagan's deputy assistant secretary of state for Africa and Bill Clinton's assistant secretary of defense for international security affairs. George Bush I named him ambassador to Saudi Arabia. Freeman was our man in Riyadh when Gen. Norman Schwarzkopf and 500,000 U.S. troops arrived to evict the army of Saddam Hussein from Kuwait.

In 1997, Freeman succeeded George McGovern as president of the Middle East Policy Council – and he began to speak out.

He opposed the bombing of Serbia and said aloud what few privately deny: Reflexive support for Israel's repression of the Palestinian people is high among the reasons America is no longer seen as a beacon of liberation in the Arab and Muslim world.

Freeman echoed the Obama of yesterday, who bravely blurted, "Nobody is suffering more than the Palestinian people."

At MEPC, however, Freeman committed a great crime. He published "The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy" by Stephen Walt and John Mearsheimer, which went onto the New York Times best-seller list – and put Freeman on AIPAC's enemies list.

Hence, when his name surfaced as Blair's choice to chair the NIC, the Israel Firsters went berserk, with Steven Rosen declaring him to be a "textbook case of the old-line Arabism" that infected the Department of State when Gen. George Marshall was secretary.

And who is Rosen?

A former fixture at AIPAC, Rosen faces imminent federal criminal prosecution under the Espionage Act for transferring top-secret Pentagon documents to the Israeli Embassy. Rosen's accomplice, Larry Franklin, is serving a 12-year sentence.

Picking up the Rosen dog whistle, the neocommentariat came howling. To Gabriel Schoenfeld, late of Commentary, Freeman is a "China coddling Israel basher." Tom Piatak of Chronicles found no fewer than five blogs from National Review Online, in two hours, savaging Freeman, two by Jonah Goldberg and two by Michael Rubin.

Rich Lowry of NR calls Freeman "Chas of Arabia," a diplomat of "odious" views, a "lap dog" and "blinkered ideologue" who enjoys "pandering to and making excuses for the world's dictators and terrorists."

To The New Republic's Jonathan Chait, Freeman is a "fanatic." To Jeffrey Goldberg of Atlantic, formerly of the Israeli Army, Chait's piece was dead on. To TNR ex-publisher Marty Peretz, Freeman is a "bought man." To Michael Goldfarb of The Weekly Standard, Freeman is a "shill for the Saudis," who defends "corrupt Arab states that foment and support terror."

Freeman is denounced as a shill of Saudi Arabia "by people who have spent careers shilling for the Israeli lobby and Likud.

Within this smear bund (Murray Rothbard's phrase), who has given America a tenth of the patriotic service and loyalty of Chas Freeman?

What were the specific charges? That, in private life, Freeman advised a Chinese company. Would the Israel Firsters have used that argument against Al Haig or Henry Kissinger?

Saudi contributions to MEPC should disqualify Freeman, they say. But what did they say when Douglas Feith, Richard Perle, David Wurmser and the rest with inextricable ties to Israel stove-piped to the press the cherry-picked War Party propaganda lies about a "Prague connection" between Mohammed Atta and Iraqi intelligence, yellow cake from Niger, Saddam and al-Qaida, Saddam and the anthrax attacks, "mushroom clouds," "aluminum tubes" and WMD?

Who among them questioned State's decision to hand the Iran portfolio to Dennis Ross of the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, a creation and front of AIPAC?

Realizing the assaults would not end, Freeman last week withdrew, saying, "I do not believe the National Intelligence Council could function effectively while its chair was under constant attack by unscrupulous people with a passionate attachment to the views of a political faction of a foreign country."

The foreign country is Israel; the political faction Likud.

Nor did Freeman shrink at naming the source of the noxious campaign of slander against him.

"The tactics of the Israel lobby plumb the depths of dishonor and indecency and include character assassination, selective misquotation, the willful distortion of the record, the fabrication of falsehoods and an utter disregard for the truth."

"A lobby," Steve Rosen confided in an AIPAC internal memo, "is like a night flower; it thrives in the dark and dies in the sun."

Yes, and long ago, Al Smith addressed the age-old problem of the Rosens within: "The best way to kill anything un-American is to drag it out into the open, because anything un-American cannot live in the sunlight."

Well done, Ambassador Freeman.

Patrick Buchanan is the author of the new book "Churchill, Hitler and 'The Unnecessary War.'
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