
Editorial

The Freeman Affair and the New Fascism

Perhaps no recent event better proves the point that the United States, and the Obama Presidency in particular, is under a vicious assault from an apparatus that, a half century ago, would have been openly called what it is—a bunch of lying Fascists—than the forced resignation of Ambassador Chas Freeman from his designated post as head of the National Intelligence Council (NIC).

Anyone who truly knows the work of Ambassador Freeman, from his years of dedicated service to his country, knows that he is precisely the kind of iconoclastic, deep thinker, perfectly suited to the job of overseeing the preparation of the nation's most important intelligence products: the National Intelligence Estimates.

It was precisely because he was eminently qualified that he was targeted for such a vicious character assassination campaign. The details of the campaign are so well known to all who follow the news that it hardly bears repeating here.

A few noteworthy facts about the lying character assault do, however, bear mention. First, the onslaught was launched by an indicted Israeli spy, Steve Rosen, a “former” top official of the right-wing Israeli lobby group AIPAC (American Israel Public Affairs Committee). No longer formally affiliated with the AIPAC structure he helped to build, Rosen is now operating in league with Daniel Pipes and his Middle East Forum, an organization known for its embrace of Israel's most rabid right-wing fanatic, Avigdor Lieberman, a man once described to me by a close Israeli friend as “the closest thing to a genuine National Socialist to ever appear on the Israeli political scene.”

In a post-mortem interview with *The Nation*, Freeman himself drew a careful distinction between what is too often over-generalized as the “Israel Lobby,” and the specific Lieberman-cen-

tered extreme right-wing apparatus and its American fellow-travelers that led the charge against his appointment.

Indeed, others who joined the assault on Ambassador Freeman, with a gusto bordering on desperation, included Australian press baron Rupert Murdoch, who lent the pages and editorial columns of his *Wall Street Journal*, *New York Post*, and his Fox News to an unrelenting smear campaign against the appointment of the former Ambassador to Saudi Arabia, China scholar, and Clinton Defense Department official. If there is anyone in the media business today, worthy of comparison to Joseph Goebbels and his “Big Lie,” it is Murdoch, whose right-wing credentials are only incidentally linked to Israel.

The sinking of Chas Freeman may go down as the most recent case of how to “out-Goebbels Goebbels,” and Murdoch, the protégé of the Hitler- and Mussolini-loving pre-war Cliveden Set's Lord Beaverbrook, may justly be given the Goebbels prize.

The authors of the campaign against Freeman, to the extent they are tied to Israel, are part of an apparatus that is both morally corrupt and clinically insane. We may yet see the folly of this apparatus play out in the self-destruction of Israel.

It may be fairly said that some people were so brutalized and traumatized by Hitler that they concluded that the only way to survive was by emulating their torturers. Bruno Bettelheim, the famous psychiatrist, wrote about that phenomenon. It may be Israel's downfall.

Ironically, as chairman of the NIC, I suspect that Ambassador Freeman would have warned that the greatest danger Israel faces today is not from Iranian nuclear weapons, but from its own internal decay.

—Jeffrey Steinberg