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Book Reviews

The Territory of Lies: The Exclusive Story of Jonathan Jay Pollard. By Wolf Blitzer. Harper & Row, New York; 1989; 336 pp.

Wolf Blitzer's book on the Pollard affair is the first in-depth assessment of this case in the public arena by an Israeli. Blitzer, the Washington correspondent of *The Jerusalem Post*, has a strong track record of excellent contacts in both Washington and Jerusalem. His account is likely to be the definitive Israeli version of the Pollard espionage case for some time. Blitzer is more than an observer of the affair, as he was selected by Jonathan Pollard as his principal interviewer and the main channel for Pollard to communicate his own views to American and Israeli audiences. In the book, Blitzer suggests that he fears that the prosecution used him to help set up Pollard as unrepentant, in order to buttress the case for a stiff sentencing.

The book adds important new details not previously available in overt literature on the Israeli Lakam organization that ran the Pollard operation. Lakam operated as scientific research organ of the Ministry of Defense. According to Blitzer, the Lishka Likishrey Mada, or Office of Scientific Liaison, was created in the 1960s; early on, it made its mark by coordinating the operation that stole the blueprints for the Mirage fighter plane in Switzerland in 1968. Those blueprints served as the basis for the design of the Israeli Kfir fighter in the 1970s. Lakam's existence remained a well-kept secret, however, until the Pollard affair.

Blitzer reviews in detail Pollard's life and the path that led him to seek out Israeli intelligence and offer his services. The book records the operational details of Pollard's handling, particularly the role played by Rafi Eitan, the head of Lakam, who is nicknamed the "stinker" in Israel. Eitan, who was instrumental in the kidnaping of Nazi war criminal Adolf Eichman in Argentina, was already famous in Israeli espionage literature. But his rude and ruthless handling of the Pollard case should undermine his image as a crafty spymaster. He apparently never made any serious contingency planning to spirit Pollard out of the US.

The book's most important contribution is to refute the Israeli Government's official position that the Pollard operation was a rogue mission never sanctioned at the highest level of the Israeli intelligence community, let alone the government. Blitzer correctly notes that the magnitude of the information Pollard provided and the necessary infrastructure to analyze it makes such claims ridiculous. Only the Military Intelligence Branch (Aman) of the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) would have had the capability to absorb, assess, and use Pollard's enormous and highly technical take. Many within Aman's leadership and the rest of the IDF, as well as senior ministers in the government, had to be aware that some kind of clandestine operation was under way in Washington.

Blitzer's sources also illustrate how Eitan had to have gained the approval of the IDF high command in order to use Israeli Air Force hero Aviem Sella to initiate the operation. According to Pollard:

The type of guidance I received suggested a highly coordinated effort between the Navy, Army, and Air Force intelligence services. At the end of each month, I was given an extremely detailed list of material which was needed by the various organizations that included an explanation of why the information officially transferred did not satisfy their requirements. Although the acquisition lists appeared to

have been submitted by each service separately since dissimilar paper and formats were used by the three organizations, there was always one prioritized list which had evidently been agreed upon [by] the respective military chiefs of intelligence and bore their combined seal. While it is possible that the Mossad considered this affair to have been "unauthorized" because they were evidently never a party to it, the same cannot be said of the General Staff, which was intimately involved with identifying which type of scientific and technical intelligence was to be the object of my activity.

The timing of Blitzer's book is interesting. More and more Israelis have become disturbed over their government's handling of the Pollard affair, and the book is sure to increase the discontent. To some Israelis, particularly those on the right, Pollard is emerging as a heroic figure who was sacrificed by then Prime Minister Shimon Peres on the altar of Israeli-US political expediency. Blitzer sympathizes with the notion that the Israeli Government betrayed Pollard's trust, although he alleges that Israel has doubled Pollard's salary to \$5,000 a month since his arrest to provide an annuity when and if he is paroled.

The book also seeks to address the much-debated issue of a "Mr. X," a second Israeli spy high in the US Government who assisted in Pollard's tasking. Blitzer repeats the well-established notion that Pollard was exceptionally well tasked to secure highly technical intelligence material in general and also to obtain specific intelligence documents registered in the US numbering system. Blitzer does not reveal who Mr. X may have been, but he argues that if he existed, he probably has since been quietly recalled to Israel to avoid discovery.

Regardless of what happened to Mr. X, the book raises disturbing questions about the Israeli intelligence community. If Lakam could operate in Israel secretly for the last 20 years, who knows what has succeeded it as the truly clandestine collection arm of Israel in the West? Is there any reason to believe that Lakam would not be replaced by another intelligence organization with no ties to the Mossad or Aman to carry out sensitive operations?

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