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Ex-CIA Director Woolsey Makes Ass of Self

by DAVID MACARAY

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Last week it was reported that former CIA Director James Woolsey, forced to resign during the Clinton administration for his bungling of the Aldrich Ames affair, was going around telling people that the reason Jonathan Pollard, the notorious Israeli spy, was still in prison after 29 years is because the U.S. government is anti-Semitic. In short, Pollard remains in prison because he's a Jew.

That has got to be one of the silliest statements of the new year. If Woolsey honestly believes the U.S. government is anti-Semitic, that it is driven by anti-Jewish sentiments, he needs to explain why the U.S. has generously made Israel, the spiritual and geographical homeland of the Jewish people, a virtual client-state, having given/lent/made available billions upon billions of dollars over the years.

Consider those other spies. Aldrich Ames, formerly of the CIA, and Robert Hanssen, formerly of the FBI, are both serving life sentences without the possibility of parole for having supplied the Soviet Union with U.S. state secrets. John Walker, formerly of U.S. Naval intelligence, is set to

be released in 2015, after having served 30 years in prison for selling secrets to the Soviets. None of the three are Jewish.

Of course, the argument Woolsey and others make is that, while Ames, Hanssen and Walker handed over their goodies to our arch-enemy, the USSR, those thousands upon thousands of pages of top-secret documents that Jonathan Pollard stole from the U.S. government were handed over to Israel, an American ally. Those “Free Jonathan Pollard” protesters want to know why we would treat an ally this way.

There could be two reasons. First, Israel doesn't always act like an ally. In 1979, Andrew Young, the U.S. Ambassador to the UN, met secretly with a representative of the PLO, despite President Carter having assured Israel that would never happen. Young was forced to resign his ambassadorship. How did Israel find out about the meeting? Mossad agents were tailing Young, and had followed him to New York.

Second, when an ally steals U.S. top-secret documents, there's always a risk of those documents falling into the hands of an enemy that has infiltrated the ally's intelligence network. Take the 1950s and '60s, for example, when the U.S. refused to share sensitive info with Great Britain, knowing that its intel service (with Soviet agents Kim Philby, Guy Burgess, et al) leaked like a sieve. If Israel honestly believes Mossad and Shin Bet can't be infiltrated, they're deluding themselves.

In any event, Pollard's caper was monumental in scale. After being captured, and the full extent of what he had turned over to Israel was determined, Caspar Weinberger, Reagan's Secretary of Defense, referred to it as the most damaging intelligence breach in U.S. history. Maybe Weinberger was lying or wildly exaggerating. After all, DOD people regularly make things sound more menacing than they are. But that doesn't change the fact that Pollard was a liar, thief and traitor.

In truth, Woolsey's continued nitpicking since leaving office is a result of his never having forgiven Clinton for firing him. As sordid and disgraceful as the Aldrich Ames affair was, Woolsey didn't think he deserved any of the blame, even though this Ames fellow, this paid Soviet agent posing as a CIA operative, was so conspicuously guilty, so easy to track down, his trail resembled snail slime. The buck stops with Woolsey.

Releasing Pollard is fine. Why not? He has served 29 years. Besides, isn't spying common? Doesn't the U.S. regularly spy on people—allies, foreign citizens, its own citizens? So let's not

get morally self-righteous about some snooping. At the same time, let's not minimize what Pollard did. And while there's more than enough hypocrisy to go around, let's not pretend the sole reason he remains in jail is because he's Jewish.