

Diplomacy Canadian Style: New Identity and Canadian Passport for a Fugitive Mossad Agent

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A new identity and a precious Canadian passport for a fugitive Mossad agent. A honeypot security officer working for Canadian immigration romancing an Iranian-Canadian businessman, and letting the cat out of the bag.

Who needs John le Carre? The smitten Canadian, Trina Kennedy, a senior national security investigator at Passport Canada, revealed to tall, dark and handsome Arian Azarbar that one of the 27 Mossad agents who assassinated Palestinian Hamas member Mahmoud al-Mabouh in 2010 in Dubai had escaped to Canada, where he was living under a new name, as free as a Canada goose.

It is the perfect occasion for one of Iran's many talented film directors to turn to the world of international espionage. Poor Iran certainly has been exposed to enough of it since its revolution in 1979, though you wouldn't know it from reading the news or watching Hollywood movies.



The most well-known instance of Iran as the West's cultural bête noire is "Argo", Hollywood's Best Picture in 2012, a tendentious retelling of the Canadian ambassador's plot to help six American diplomats escape arrest in 1980 by issuing them with—surprise!—false Canadian passports. (The film's inaccuracies compelled the Canadian diplomat involved, Ken Taylor, to make a documentary "Our Man in Tehran" the next year politely correcting the exaggerated role given the CIA and other egregious inaccuracies.)

What about the view that perhaps a touch of revenge by very angry Iranians against the US after decades of intrigue and subterfuge might have been in order? Intrigue that went into high gear after the Iranian revolution, as documents from the US embassy published by the Iranian government in the 1980s revealed. In defence of the angry young Iranian occupiers, the women and Afro-Americans were released immediately, and no American died or was tortured during the siege or 'rendered'.

As relations between Iran and the US improve, it is perhaps best to let sleeping dogs lie. So a revisionist "Argo" is not likely in the near future. However, we can still fantasize a "Back to the Future", given the latest intrigue involving Israeli, Canadian and Iranian spies, a love nest, and those false Canadian passports.

Our post-Hollywood script is a who-dunnit featuring Sam Spade, cynical private detective, willing to follow the trail of the most nefarious suspects. He notes there have been quite a few strange coincidences in Canadian-Israeli-Iranian relations since Conservative Steven

Harper's election in 2006 and the signing of a Canadian-Israeli public security cooperation "partnership" in 2008.

Sam is puzzled by the unprecedented barring of a British MP George Galloway in 2009, during his North American speaking tour to bring attention to the plight of the besieged Palestinians. At the forefront of the campaign to prevent Galloway from entering Canada was the Jewish Defence League (JDL).

Digging a bit deeper, Sam discovers that in 1994, Baruch Goldstein, an American-born Israeli member of the JDL, opened fire on Muslims praying at the Cave of the Patriarchs mosque in the West Bank city of Hebron, killing 29 worshippers and injuring 125 before he ran out of ammunition and was himself killed. That the JDL called the incident a "preventative measure against yet another Arab attack on Jews" and noted that they "do not consider his assault to qualify under the label of terrorism".

That the FBI nonetheless condemned the JDL in 2001 as a "violent extremist Jewish organization", just prior to 9/11, and that JDL Canada disappeared under the radar after 9/11, but came alive again in 2006 with the arrival in Ottawa of ... Stephen Harper.

Fast forward to November 2012, when unceasing Israeli demands for an invasion of Iran reached a frenzied peak, with the breaking of diplomatic relations with Tehran by Ottawa, a few hours before "Argo" premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival. Sam smells a rat.

The over-the-top Canadian parliamentary junket to Israel in January 2014 was the straw that broke the camel's back. Among the 208 Canadians who travelled with the PM were 77 Conservative donors, 21 rabbis, a handful of influential evangelical Christians, 32 registered lobbyists and ... JDL Canada's 'event co-ordinator' Julius Suraski.

'How did a member of an organization labeled "violent extremist" by the FBI get on this junket?' Sam ponders. Explains JDL Canada head Meir Weinstein, "Julius knows some people in the Conservative party." Oh really?

Could JDL's 'event co-ordinator' Suraski have anything to do with banning Galloway in 2009 as a "security risk", the decision to cut diplomatic relations with Iran, or helping an accused assassin get a new Canadian identity?

Could it be that JDL Canada is the real security risk? After all, there's that FBI ruling in 2001, and in 2011, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police launched an investigation against at least nine members of JDL Canada accused of plotting to bomb Palestine House in Mississauga.

Even the ultra-Zionist Canadian Jewish Congress is not big on 'events' organized by JDL Canada, such as their "support rally" in 2011 for the neofascist English Defence League at the Toronto Zionist Center. CJC leader Bernie Farber said he was "disappointed" and accused the EDL of "violence and extremism". Hmmm. Think: FBI on the JDL.

An 'event' Suraski 'co-ordinated' last year was a Toronto speech by American Pamela Geller, founder of Stop Islamization of America, who was earlier prevented from entering the UK to address a rally of the same EDL. The British government ruled that her presence in the UK would "not be conducive to the public good".

JDL Canada's latest 'event' is to block the building of a seniors' home for Muslims in Thornhill, a suburb of Toronto. A potential terrorist cell?

So is Suraski the bad guy here? But, surely Harper can have any friends he wants. Any advice Suraski whispers in Harper's ear is, after all, strictly unofficial. In search of official ne'er-do-wells, our redoubtable Sam decides to look at a prominent official, Eden Attias, appointed as Canada's first Israel military attaché in 2012.

Attias was intimately involved in both the invasion of Gaza in 2008 and the assault on the Turkish boat Mavi Marmara in 2010 in which nine Turkish citizens bringing aid to besieged Gaza were killed by Israeli troops. Attias's actions were condemned by a group of remorseful ex-Israeli Defense Force members, and Turkish investigators charged him with murder.

When Attias arrived in Ottawa, freshly promoted, he remarked: "Israelis are starting to understand that Canada is a separate entity from the US." Sounds good. Appeal to Canadian nationalism. But it seems what he really meant was: "The Canadian government is now a total Israeli patsy, unlike the US government, which would not countenance issuing false passports to our agents on demand. Thank you, little brother."

Later, with his eye on Harper, Attias made this subtext clear at a public ecumenical prayer gathering in Ottawa, where he said, "On behalf of all the people of Israel, I would like to extend a sincere appreciation to you, the Evangelist community here in Canada for supporting Israel."

Who dunnit? Who is responsible for this string of humiliating , criminal coincidences, for dragging Canada through the diplomatic mud? Banning a British MP, breaking diplomatic relations with a peaceful state, issuing a fugitive Mossad assassin a new identity on a shiny new Canadian passport? Suraski? Attias? How about Harper?

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