

Oscar to Hollywood's "Argo": And the Winners are ... the Pentagon and the Israel Lobby

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Global Research, February 26, 2013

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Foreign policy observers have long known that Hollywood reflects and promotes U.S. policies (in turn, is determined by Israel and its supporters). This fact was made public when Michelle Obama announced an Oscar win for "Argo" – a highly propagandist, anti-Iran film. Amidst the glitter and excitement, Hollywood and White House reveal their pact and send out their message in time for the upcoming talks surrounding Iran's nuclear program due to be held tomorrow – February 26th.

Hollywood has a long history of promoting US policies. In 1917, when the United States entered World War I, President Woodrow Wilson's Committee on Public Information (CPI) enlisted the aid of America's film industry to make training films and features supporting the 'cause'. George Creel, Chairman of the CPI believed that the movies had a role in "carrying the gospel of Americanism to every corner of the globe."

The pact grew stronger during World War II, when, as historian Thomas Doherty writes, "[T]he liaison between Hollywood and Washington was a distinctly American and democratic arrangement, a mesh of public policy and private initiative, state need and business enterprise." Hollywood's contribution was to provide propaganda. After the war, Washington reciprocated by using subsidies, special provisions in the Marshall Plan, and general clout to pry open resistant European film markets[i].

Hollywood has often borrowed its story ideas from the U.S. foreign policy agenda, at times reinforcing them. One of the film industry's blockbuster film loans in the last two decades has been modern international terrorism. Hollywood rarely touched the topic of terrorism in the late 1960s and 1970s when the phenomenon was not high on the U.S. foreign policy agenda, in news headlines or in the American public consciousness. In the 1980s, in the footsteps of the Reagan administration's policies, the commercial film industry brought 'terrorist' villains to the big screen (following the US Embassy takeover in Tehran – topic of "Argo") making terrorism a blockbuster film product in the 1990s.

Today, whether Hollywood follows US policy or whether it sets it, is up for discussion. But it is abundantly clear that Hollywood is dominated by Israelis and their supporters who previously concealed their identity. According to a 2012 Haaretz article

"from the 1930s until the mid-1950s, Hanukkah never appeared on screen. This was because the Jewish studio heads preferred to hide their ethnic and religious heritage in attempting to widen the appeal of their products. Jews were thus typically portrayed as participants in an American civil religion, whose members may attend the synagogue of their choice, but are not

otherwise marked by great differences of appearance, speech, custom, or behaviour from the vast majority of American”.

This is no longer the case.

In sharp contrast to its past, Hollywood “celebrated” Israel’s 60th “birthday” [occupation] with a Gala called “From Vision to Reality”. Israeli TV blog wrote of the Gala: ‘Don’t Worry Israel, Hollywood is behind you’. Actor Jon Voight said: “World playing a dangerous game by going against Israel”. Israeli businessman and Hollywood producer Arnon Milchan, was a longtime weapons dealer and Israeli intelligence agent who purchased equipment for Israel’s nuclear program (the book, “Confidential: The Life of Secret Agent Turned Hollywood Tycoon Arnon Milchan,” written by Meir Doron and Joseph Gelman, recounts Milchan’s life story, his friendships with Israeli prime ministers, U.S. presidents and Hollywood stars).

It is important to understand Hollywood not only in the context of a multi-billion dollar industry, but the propaganda aspect of it and as one of the most powerful and universal methods of spreading ideas through visual propaganda. “Propaganda is defined as a certain type of messaging that serves a particular purpose of spreading or implanting a particular culture, philosophy, point of view or even a particular slogan”. With this capability, Hollywood owns the world of ideas on a scale too large and too dangerous to ignore – see this excellent example by Gilad Atzmon – Hollywood and the Past.

Atzmon writes:

“History is commonly regarded as an attempt to produce a structured account of the past. It proclaims to tell us what really happened, but in most cases it fails to do that. Instead it is set to conceal our shame, to hide those various elements, events, incidents and occurrences in our past which we cannot cope with. History, therefore, can be regarded as a system of concealment. Accordingly, the role of the true historian is similar to that of the psychoanalyst: both aim to unveil the repressed. For the psychoanalyst, it is the unconscious mind. For the historian, it is our collective shame.”

As Hollywood and the White House eagerly embrace “Argo” and its propagandist message, they shamelessly and deliberately conceals a crucial aspect of this “historical” event. The glitter buries the all too important fact that the Iranian students who took over the U.S. Embassy in Tehran, proceeded to reveal Israel’s dark secret to the world. Documents classified as “SECRET” revealed LAKAM’s activities. Initiated in 1960, LAKAM was an Israeli network assigned to economic espionage in the U.S. assigned to “the collection of scientific intelligence in the U.S. for Israel’s defense industry”[ii].

As it stands, the purpose of the movie and its backers was to push the extraordinary revelations to the background while sending a visual message to the unsuspecting audience – to lay the blame of the potential (and likely) failure of the upcoming negotiations over Iran’s nuclear program on the Iranians — the gun-wielding, bearded Iranians of “Argo” who deserve America’s collective punishment and the crippling, deathly sanctions.

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