

Mossad book spills few new secrets

When I couldn't buy a copy of *By Way of Deception* in Canada because Israel had somehow used its influence here to get a court to temporarily ban the book's distribution, I got it in New York.

There, the sensational expose of Mossad, Israel's intelligence agency, had just been released after a court order blocking its sale in the U.S. was overturned on appeal.

Like many people, I was outraged that a foreign nation could use its political clout to censor a book in North America. And equally angered that the author's life was reportedly threatened by Israeli agents and the offices of the Canadian publisher, Stoddard, burglarized in a crude attempt at intimidation.

If any other country but Israel had acted this way, there would have been a huge public outcry.

Why Israel used such ham-handed tactics is beyond me. All it managed to do was generate intense publicity for the work by ex-Mossad agent Victor Ostrovsky and co-author Claire Hoy. Even Israeli prime minister Yitzhak Shamir got into the act by branding the work a pack of lies.

Shamir, who used to run Mossad hit teams in Europe, knows better. Apart from some glaring errors or dubious claims, *By Way of Deception* appears a reasonably accurate expose of Mossad operations and the best work on the subject since George Jonas' excellent book, *Vengeance*.

Disappointingly, most of the "revelations" in this book are common knowledge to veteran Mideast watchers; many have already appeared in print, including in this column. In fact, the book contains a lot of background but surprisingly little new information.

For example, the author's allegations that Israel has long worked with South Africa to develop nuclear weap-

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ons and delivery systems is old news. So is Israel's training of secret police units from Chile, Panama, Iran and Sri Lanka.

This column has long said, as do the authors, that Mossad has duped and misled the CIA and U.S. government for years by providing them with fake information designed to turn Americans against the Arabs and the PLO. Or noted how Mossad assassinated PLO officials who favored peace with Israel.

That Mossad uses assassination, blackmail and other nasty methods, as the book charges, is true. Israel's agents operate in the world's most murderous and dangerous environment. Mossad, as the authors claim, does sometimes make policy without telling its political masters. And, yes, it has often been run by ultra-rightists who say the only good Arab is a dead one.

But after reading this book, I'm left with a sense of deep admiration, not shock. Mossad deserves its reputation as the world's most efficient and effective spy agency. It thinks smart, works secretly, and fights dirty. Mossad runs rings around the bumbling Arabs, whose generals and diplomats are notorious for telling all under the influence of Scotch and blondes.

The authors do raise a few new points. Such as charges that Saudi tycoon Adnan Khashoggi is a longtime Mossad agent (as was Yasser Arafat's former

chauffeur. Unfortunately, the book does not give adequate evidence of claims it makes about Israel's involvement with Gen. Manuel Noriega and drug-dealing in Panama, Lebanon and Thailand. How Mossad agent Mike Harari just about ran Panama as Noriega's chief honcho, is worthy of a full book.

Two charges made by the book are highly inflammatory. First, the claim that Israel spies on the U.S. This is absolutely true, in spite of Israeli denials. But the book curiously fails to explore the extent to which Israel has placed agents of influence, in most cases U.S. citizens, in the upper levels of the Pentagon, Congress and department of justice — and how they influence government policy or pass secrets back to Israel.

This last point raises the book's most explosive issue. Oddly, it is mentioned only in passing. This concerns how Mossad uses non-Israeli Jewish volunteers, called *sayanim*, to provide services, finance, information and influence.

Key members of Jewish communities around the world serve as permanent Mossad auxiliaries. Which, of course, raises the profound dilemma of Zionism — whether the loyalty of diaspora Jews is first to Israel or to where they live. This is a life and death question.

Extensive use by Mossad of Jewish communities in the USSR and Iran, for example, has produced charges of treason and persecution. Revelations of Israel's penetration and manipulation of the U.S. government could ignite a wave of anti-Semitism in America — and cut off Israel's economic lifeline.

Having said all this, I think Jews everywhere should feel rightly proud of Mossad and how effectively it is defending the interests of the worldwide Jewish community, which is now entering its 5,751st year.

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