

UK RELATIONS WITH ISRAEL "IN THE DEEP FREEZE" OVER DUBAI ASSASSINATION

Those JSOC guys doing America's assassinating better make sure they don't get caught using British passports. Because if the Brits' claimed anger at Israel for giving its Mossad killers UK passports is any indication, it would not help relations.

Britain fired the first shot last night in a potentially explosive diplomatic row with Israel by calling in the country's ambassador to explain the use of fake British passports by a hit squad who targeted Mabhouh in Dubai last month.

The Israeli ambassador was at the Foreign Office this morning for a brief meeting to "share information" about the assassins' use of identities stolen from six British citizens living in Israel, as part of the meticulously orchestrated assassination of Mabhouh.

"After receiving an invitation last night, I met with Sir Peter Ricketts, deputy-general of the British foreign minister," Ron Prosor said after the meeting. "Despite my willingness to co-operate with his request, I could not shed new light on the said matters."

Britain has stopped short of accusing Israel of involvement, but to signal its displeasure the Foreign Office ignored an Israeli plea to keep the summons secret. "Relations were in the freezer before this. They are in the deep freeze now," an official told the Guardian.

Of course, the UK is pissed about the passports, not necessarily about the assassination of a top Hamas figure more generally. So maybe Britain is okay with our assassinations squads, too.

But the very public response to the Mahmoud al-Mabhouh killing, as well as certain details like the involvement of the Palestinian Authority, is sure to bring some interesting scrutiny on our own practices (as a number of you have pointed out in comments).

And WTF? Did the clowns who botched the Abu Omar rendition in Italy teach this Mossad squad tradecraft? Or did they just misjudge Dubai's willingness to play host to assassinations?

Update: Reader cw notes this Robert Fisk story, suggesting that the UAE is getting pissed that countries like the UK haven't alerted Interpol to the use of these passports.

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) suspect – only suspect, mark you – that Europe's 'security collaboration' with Israel has crossed a line into illegality, where British passports (and those of other EU nations) can be used to send Israeli agents into the Gulf to kill Israel's enemies. At 3.49pm yesterday (Beirut time, 1.49pm in London), my Lebanese phone rang. It was a source – impeccable, I know him, he spoke with the authority I know he has in Abu Dhabi – to say that "the British passports are real. They are hologram pictures with the biometric stamp. They are not forged or fake. The names were really there. If you can fake a hologram or biometric stamp, what does this mean?"

[snip]

My source is both angry and insistent. "We have sent out details of the 11 named people to Interpol. Interpol has circulated them to 188 countries – but why hasn't Britain warned foreign nations that these people are using

passports in these names?"

Which is sort of what I meant when I referred to
"the Brits' **claimed** anger."