

CIA DOESN'T WANT YOU TO KNOW IT GAVE IRAN NUCLEAR BLUEPRINTS

Here's what I think happened with Jeffrey Alexander Sterling, the former CIA officer who just got arrested for leaking classified information to James Risen.

As I noted in the timeline, Sterling was assigned to an operation in November 1998. Given that the DOJ press release specifies that Sterling was "the operations officer assigned to handle a human asset associated with that program," and given that Risen's MERLIN story includes first person details from the case officer managing a Russian scientist asked to leak a nuclear blueprint to the Iranians, it seems that Sterling was that case officer.

In other words, Sterling was probably the guy who convinced a Russian defector to give a nuclear blueprint to the Iranians.

As Risen tells it, the CIA prepared the Russian for the operation in a series of meetings at a luxury hotel in San Francisco. At one point, they handed the blueprints to the Russian.

Within minutes of being handed the designs, [the Russian] had identified a flaw. "This isn't right," he told the CIA officers gathered around the hotel room. "There is something wrong." His comments prompted stony looks, but no straight answers from the CIA men in the room. No one in the San Francisco meeting seemed surprised by the Russian's assertion that the blueprints didn't look quite right, but no one wanted to enlighten him further on the matter, either.

In fact, the CIA case officer who was the Russian's personal handler had been stunned by the Russian's statement.

During a break, he took the senior CIA officer aside. "He wasn't supposed to know that," the CIA case officer told his superior. "He wasn't supposed to find a flaw."

"Don't worry," the senior CIA officer calmly replied. "It doesn't matter."

The CIA case officer couldn't believe the senior CIA officer's answer, but he still managed to keep his fears from the Russian, and he continued to train him for his mission.

In February 2000, the Russian was flown to Vienna by himself to deliver the blueprints to Iran's mission to the IAEA there. Worried that the CIA was framing him somehow, he wrote a letter to the Iranians that he included with the blueprints.

What is the purpose of my offer?

If you try to create a similar device you will need to ask some practical questions. No problem. You will get answers but I expect to be paid for that. Let's talk about details later when I see a real interest in it.

Now just take your time for professional study of enclosed documentation. My contact info on next page.

In other words, the Russian warned the Iranians that there was a flaw in the blueprints.

Three months later, in May 2000, Sterling appears to have been moved off the MERLIN operation and compartmented out of it. On August 2, 2000, Sterling first filed his employment discrimination suit against the CIA. In January 2002, his employment with the CIA ended. In April of that year, the CIA invoked state secrets in his employment discrimination lawsuit. And in January 2003, the CIA's Publication Review Board told him to include

false information in his memoirs. After the CIA rejected his settlement offer in February 2003, he first reached out to Risen. While he kept in contact with him, it may not have been until after Sterling's employment discrimination suit was rejected in either 2004 (by the VA District Court) or 2005 (by the Appeals Court, though that seems too late to have been included in Risen's book) that the story made it into Risen's book.

In any case, this all seems to be about the CIA's efforts to prevent you from knowing that it gave Iran nuclear blueprints in 2000.