

Israel Does *Not* Spy on the United States

The Lie

Israel is not a true U.S. ally because it spies on American entities.

The Truth

Israel, like many U.S. allies, has engaged in intelligence activity involving the United States—and the United States has likewise spied on Israel. Such activity is common among allied nations and has never altered bilateral alliances.

Background

- On **Nov. 20, 2025**, *The New York Times* reported that convicted Israeli spy **Jonathan Pollard** had met with U.S. Ambassador to Israel **Mike Huckabee**, triggering renewed criticism from anti-Israel activists.
- Pollard, a former U.S. intelligence analyst, served **30 years in prison** for passing classified documents to Israel in the 1980s. The incident strained US-Israel relations for years and Israel apologized for the affair.

Truth Explained

- Former Israeli Prime Minister **Naftali Bennett** stated on **Nov. 22, 2025** that Israel has **not conducted any operations on U.S. soil since the Pollard affair**, responding to claims that Jeffrey Epstein operated a blackmail scheme for Israel—an accusation Israel has repeatedly denied. ([X](#))
- CIA archives describe allied espionage as a longstanding **“tradition.”** No country has ever lost its allied status with the U.S. for engaging in intelligence collection. ([CIA](#))
- Former CIA Director **Bob Gates** said that **at least 20 nations**—including **France, Germany, Japan, and South Korea**—have conducted intelligence operations harmful to U.S. economic interests. None ceased to be allies. ([Congressional Record](#))
- Classified documents leaked by Edward Snowden and WikiLeaks revealed NSA spying on **German Chancellor Angela Merkel’s cellphone; millions of French phone calls** and communications of **three French presidents; millions of Spanish phone calls** and senior political officials; and **Mexico’s government**, including hacking former President Felipe Calderón’s official email accounts ([CNN](#))
- U.S. surveillance of Israel dates back to the **1950s**. ([Los Angeles Times](#))
- In **2023**, reports showed the NSA hired dozens of Hebrew-language analysts, with **~250** personnel assigned to monitor Israeli communications. ([Ynet News](#))
- In **2024**, leaked Pentagon documents revealed **detailed U.S. surveillance of Israeli military operations**. ([Axios](#))

Quotes

“Megyn, you’re a decent and honest journalist. When this conspiracy theory first surfaced, that Israel supposedly used Epstein as an agent, I decided to check it out. After all, as Prime Minister I oversaw the Mossad, and if it were real, I would have likely known about this. So I checked with two former Mossad chiefs and another former Prime Minister whether anything like this had ever happened. No. It never happened. 100% untrue. Since the Pollard affair in the 1980s, Israel has not operated on American soil. This is simply a false theory. I have no personal stake here since the period in question was long before my tenure. I’m just describing the truth.” — former Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett

“I think there’s a degree of hypocrisy among the Europeans to say, ‘Oh, my gosh, the Americans are spying!’ Well, so are they.” — Peter Earnest, 36-year CIA veteran

“If the French were to be gathering intelligence in the United States, it’s not that they were anticipating an American invasion in Normandy. It’s to gather intelligence on American politics, maybe to do a little industrial espionage. It’s standard fare for intelligence agencies to do these types of things. That’s why they’re there. That’s their *raison d’etre*.” — Charles Kupchan, international affairs professor at Georgetown University and a senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations.

Takeaway

Intelligence gathering among allies is common, reciprocal, and not evidence of hostility or a broken alliance. Israel’s intelligence activity toward the U.S. has been limited since the Pollard case, and the U.S. repeatedly conducted surveillance of Israel—as it has with many close partners.