

Let Us Now Praise Famous Unknown Men: "A"

by Hugh Fitzgerald



Israel is the gift that, for the Free World (yes, let's agree to use that now-quaint phrase), keeps on giving. This tiny strip of unprepossessing land at one dusky end of Asia is an endless source of astonishments, in peace and in war. Every week, every day, brings news of technological inventions and agricultural improvements and discoveries from that little engine (of progress) that could. In recent months, we learned of new kinds of highly-efficient solar collectors, of proof that any plant can be transformed into an electrical source, of car batteries that can last for a million miles, of drip irrigation that can be aimed at a particular part of a particular plant at a particular time of day, of a new laser-based anti-missile system, which can be used for the interception of RAM (rocket, mortar, and artillery) threats, drones and anti-tank missiles. We learned of medical advances, too: new treatments for multiple sclerosis, a new anti-

diabetes drug, a 3-D heart, a new way of delivering chemotherapy without side effects. These are what I found within three minutes of searching. Give me an hour online, and I could fill many pages with Israeli discoveries, inventions, treatments, advances of every kind.

But right now let's praise someone – a famously-unknown man, whom neither you nor I is likely to ever meet, and if we did meet him, we wouldn't know whom we were meeting. His photograph is unavailable; his real name is unknown except to a select few. But he's now getting recognition from the Israeli government without, of course, being "recognized." To the community of Israeli cybersecurity experts, he is known as "A." The story of that recognition is [here](#).

A legendary Israeli cyber-spy whose name has remained a secret for years is set to receive a lifetime achievement award from Israel's President Reuven Rivlin.

According to Israeli news website N12, the agent, referred to only as "A," is a mastermind in the field of cyber espionage, and a unique figure in Israel's spy agency the Mossad.

A, the report says, is in his forties, has several children, and chose to work for the intelligence service over a lucrative career in the high-tech industry.

It would not surprise me if some of that information were intended to mislead any eavesdropping enemy. "A" could be 35, or 60, with no children, or ten. It would surprise me even less if the official taciturn biography were all true. What is undoubtedly true is that he chose government service over money-making in the high-tech industry.

Speaking anonymously, someone who knows him told N12 that A is "a genius whose reputation precedes him."

A, the source added, is "known in our and the American

intelligence community as a phenomenon in the cyber field. A not insignificant part of our work was created by him personally due to his special talent."

He added that A has "trained generations" of agents in cyber-espionage and cyber-security.

The announcement granting A the lifetime achievement award stated that the prize was for his "contribution over many years to national security and for initiating many technological solutions, while displaying unusual talent, creativity, curiosity, and daring."...

Of course I have no idea what exactly "A" has contributed to Israel's (and almost certainly to America's as well) national security, and even if it were patiently explained to me I wouldn't understand, but I am prepared to take gratefully on faith the official announcement of the lifetime achievement award that recognizes A's "contribution over many years to national security and for initiating many technological solutions, while displaying unusual talent, creativity, curiosity, and daring."

The enemy can have its decapitation squads, its suicide vests, its ramming vehicles, terror tunnels, Molotov cocktails, grenades, knives, and incendiary kites.

We have "A."

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