Israel Nuclear Chronology

As of April 2008, this chronology is no longer being updated.
For current developments, please see the India Biological Overview.

This annotated chronology is based on the data sources that follow each entry. Public sources often provide conflicting information on classified military programs. In some cases we are unable to resolve these discrepancies, in others we have deliberately refrained from doing so to highlight the potential influence of false or misleading information as it appeared over time. In many cases, we are unable to independently verify claims. Hence in reviewing this chronology, readers should take into account the credibility of the sources employed here.

Inclusion in this chronology does not necessarily indicate that a particular development is of direct or indirect proliferation significance. Some entries provide international or domestic context for technological development and national policymaking. Moreover, some entries may refer to developments with positive consequences for nonproliferation.

2009-2007

26 February 2009
Following Iran's announcement of the completion of its first nuclear power plant at Bushehr, outgoing Israeli Prime Minister Olmert reiterates Israel's ability "...to defend itself in all situations, against all threats, [and] against all enemies." Although the Prime Minister did not mention Iran by name, his statement was widely interpreted to have been directed at Iran.
—Borzou Daragahi, "Iran, Russia test joint nuclear reactor in Bushehr," Los Angeles Times, 26 February, 2009; "We are very strong, Israel Warns Iran," The Sydney Morning Herald, 27 February 2009; Behrouz Mehri, "Olmert warns Iran over nuclear plant," Agence France-Presse, 26 February 2009.

12 February 2009
Mohammed Naji Mohammed of the United Iraqi Alliance coalition is pursuing a parliamentary resolution to seek at least one billion dollars from Israel for its 1981 air strike on the Osirak reactor [Note: See NTI Israel and Iraq Nuclear Chronologies 7 June 1981]. Mohammed is using UN Security Council Resolution 487 as justification for the claim, which "considers that Iraq is entitled to redress for the destruction it has suffered, responsibility for which has been acknowledged by Israel."
—"Iraq MPs seek reparation for 1981 Israeli attack on nuclear reactor," Haaretz, 12 February 2009.

8 February 2009
Outgoing Prime Minister Ehud Olmert says no Israeli government will allow Iran to produce a nuclear weapon. Olmert's statements come on the eve of a new Israeli government, more than likely led by Benjamin Netanyahu,
who has hinted of a military solution to prevent Iran from producing a nuclear weapon. The consensus of Israeli officials is that a nuclear Iran is not in Israel's interests. However, debate continues over what means should be used to stop Iran from producing a weapon. Israel has used military force in the past to preempt neighbors' suspected nuclear programs, including the 1981 air strike on Iraq's Osirak reactor, and the more recent September 2007 air strike on the alleged Syrian reactor Al-Kibar.

—Dan Williams, "Olmert says no Israeli government would let Iran get nukes," Reuters, 8 February 2009; Jason Koutsoukis, "Israel ready to strike Iran: ex-envoy," Sydney Morning Herald, 14 February 2009; Alon Ben-David, "Iran will be major concern for new Israeli leadership," Jane's Defense Weekly, 12 February 2009.

13 January 2009

Israeli officials reject Syrian accusations that traces of uranium detected at the Al-Kibar site are from Israeli munitions. Israel claims the site, bombed in September 2007, was home to a reactor designed to produce plutonium for nuclear weapons, while Syria denies such allegations. Israeli officials have never formally confirmed or denied Israel's role in the bombing. [Note: For additional details on Al-Kibar, see NTI Syria nuclear chronology].


10 January 2009

According to unnamed senior American and foreign officials, President Bush denied a secret Israeli request last year for bunker-busting bombs for an attack on Natanz. The Bush administration was particularly alarmed by an Israeli request to fly over U.S. controlled Iraqi airspace. The White House denied the request and reportedly agreed to step up intelligence sharing and brief Israeli officials on new American efforts to subtly sabotage Iran's nuclear infrastructure. Knowledge of American efforts to sabotage Iran's nuclear program has been closely held, but some Bush administration officials are skeptical about their success. Other officials disagree, arguing that the Israelis would not have been deterred from attacking Iran if they believed American efforts to be ineffective.


5 January 2009

Recent Hamas rocket attacks have renewed Israeli concerns that adversaries could target the Dimona nuclear reactor. Israeli defense officials were initially concerned by Iranian capabilities and intentions, spurring them to place two radar antennae near the reactor. However, Israeli officials believe the frequency and sophistication of Hamas rocket attacks reflect the militant group's growing capabilities. For example, Hamas's Iranian Fajr-3 artillery rockets are longer-range and more sophisticated than previous rocket systems in its arsenal.


10 December 2008

A new Israeli government sponsored history of Israel's intelligence services, by former Shin Bet internal security service officer Barak Ben-Zur, asserts that the United States routinely collects information about Israel's nuclear capabilities. Titled, Masterpiece: An Inside Look at Sixty Years of Israeli Intelligence, the account states that the
United States spies on Israel using "methodical intelligence gathering," including eavesdropping technology and trained staff from the U.S. Embassy in Tel Aviv. In a Reuters interview, Ben-Zur "described such efforts as largely benign given the closeness of defense ties between Israel and the Bush administration."


23 September 2008

Israeli courts shorten nuclear whistleblower Mordechai Vanunu's jail sentence from six to three months in consideration of his poor health. Vanunu was released from prison after serving 18 years for revealing Israel's secret nuclear weapons program, but was sentenced to serve six months as a result of contact with foreigners, which violated the terms of his release. He appeared in Israeli courts in July to appeal the sentence.

—"Court Reduces Vanunu's Prison Time from 6 to 3 Months Due to Health," The Jerusalem Post, 23 September 2008; "Jerusalem Court Reduces Vanunu Sentence," Yedi'ot Aharonot, 23 September 2008.

30 May 2008

An ongoing lawsuit in Israeli courts involving former Dimona reactor employees who contracted cancer reveals that the tests performed between 1988 and 1993 on workers and their possible exposure to radioactive materials were faulty. The tests from that period of time showed that workers were not exposed to radioactive materials, while in actuality the detection threshold used by the testing equipment was set too high. The case is currently under review in Israeli courts.


27 May 2008

In Wales, former U.S. President Jimmy Carter discusses how a future U.S. President should deal with Iran's nuclear program. He contextualizes the issue by observing: "The U.S. has more than 12,000 nuclear weapons, the Soviet Union has about the same [Note: Carter is presumably referring to Russia], Great Britain, and France have several hundred, and Israel has 150 or more. We have a phalanx of enormous weaponry..." This is the first public declaration by a U.S. President that Israel possesses nuclear weapons. Asked to respond to Carter's statement, Israel's Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Arye Mekel says, "we never discuss the issue."


19 May 2008

Israel approves a new Director of the Dimona Nuclear Research Center Negev, Colonel Udi Adam. He will replace Yitzhak Gurevich, who was with the Center for forty years.

14 April 2008
Israel and the United States sign a nuclear cooperation agreement giving the Israel Atomic Energy Commission access to "nuclear safety data, procedures and technology available in the U.S." This new agreement is an update on previous agreements between the two countries which has been limited to cooperation on only nuclear safety issues.

21 March 2008
Germany and Israel announce an effort to try and initiate an international conference aimed at stopping Iran's nuclear program. At a meeting with Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, German Chancellor, Angela Merkel, discussed steps to continue the international pressure on Iran that has developed following the third round of sanctions imposed by the United Nations Security Council. Furthermore, both leaders discussed enlisting the international community to support their effort.
—Barak Ravid, "Israel, Germany plan int'l summit to stop Iran nuke program," Haaretz, 21 March 2008.

21 February 2008
Recently made public documents reveal that British officials ordered a negative comment about Israel’s nuclear arsenal to be removed from the now-discredited dossier on Iraq’s weapons of mass destruction. The comment originally appeared against a claim "that no other country (apart from Iraq) has flouted the United Nations' authority so brazenly in pursuit of weapons of mass destruction."

21 January 2008
Israel launches an advanced spy satellite. The TECSAR satellite fabricated by Israel Aerospace Industries is equipped with a SAR (Synthetic Aperture Radar) payload that gives it the ability to see through clouds and carry out day and night all weather imaging and reconnaissance.

23 January 2008
The Israel Atomic Energy Commission (IAEC), along with the Israel Port Company and the U.S. Department of Energy's National Nuclear Security Administration, announce the upcoming installation of radiation detection equipment at the Port of Haifa. The Port of Haifa is one of Israel’s busiest seaports, and the radiation detection equipment will "help to detect smuggled or illicit shipments of nuclear and other radioactive materials that might move through this port." The project will be useful in providing information to both Israel and the United States on the best way to detect nuclear and radiological materials.

26 February 2008
Prime Minister Ehud Olmert met with Japanese Defense Minister Shigeru Ishiba this week during a visit to Tokyo

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and discussed "the need to counter the threat of nuclear and missile proliferation from countries such as Iran and North Korea."
—"Japan, Israel Agree on Need to Counter Nuclear Proliferation," BBC Monitoring Asia Pacific, 26 Feb 2008.

18 November 2007
Syrian news sources allege that a plan has recently been implemented by Israel to set up "a winding nuclear strip in spiral caves of nuclear silos and scores of missiles fitted with nuclear warheads and planted mines in the Golan borders along the ceasefire line separating Syria and Israel."

30 November 2007
A set of documents released this week from the Nixon Presidential Library included memorandums from the late 1960s between Nixon and Henry Kissinger expressing concern about Israel's nuclear weapons program. Specifically, the documents indicated that the United States wavered over whether it should try to persuade Israel to freeze its program and whether it should announce to the world that Israel indeed possessed nuclear weapons.

30 September 2007
Israel recently submitted a proposal to the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG). The proposal urges the NSG to "adopt new guidelines allowing the international transfer of nuclear technology to states that have not signed on to nonproliferation rules." Because Israel has not signed the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), it is prohibited from trading in nuclear technology internationally. However, Israel's proposal offers a criteria-based approach, including allowing a state to engage in nuclear trade if it applies protection measures to all nuclear weapons, facilities and material in its territory. The timing of this proposal is meant to coincide with the impending deal between the United States and India, another non-signatory to the NPT, which would allow India to import nuclear fuel from the United States.
—Glenn Kessler, "Israel Submits Nuclear Trade Plan; Move May Complicate Efforts to Win Exemption for India," Washington Post, 30 September 07.

27 August 2007
Construction on the new National Command Center, which is where Israeli leaders would be rushed should Israel suffer a nuclear attack, is progressing and should be completed in 2011. Carved into one of Jerusalem's mountains, the bunker cost $240 million and is designed to withstand a nuclear bomb.

23 August 2007
Elhanan Abramov, Deputy CEO of the Negev Nuclear Research Center, affirmed the safety of the Dimona nuclear reactor. This statement is likely in response to the increasing opposition to the Dimona reactor and calls to shut it

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down because of health concerns. Abramov confirmed that the reactor is "safe according to Western standards and that every few years, work is halted for a comprehensive renovation."
—Yuval Azoulay, "Nuclear Center exec avows safety of Dimona reactor," Ha'aretz, 23 August 07.

22 September 2007
Arab nations pushed through an IAEA resolution this week calling on all Middle East nations to give up nuclear weapons, "targeting Israel's undeclared nuclear arsenal." Egypt introduced the resolution and the vote was 53-2, with 47 abstentions by Western nations.

16 August 2007
Israeli National Infrastructure Minister Benjamin Ben-Eliezer recently announced that the ministry is renewing plans to build a new nuclear plant. The nuclear plant would be built along Israel's southern border with Egypt, in a town called Shivta. The Ministry reports the reason behind building a new nuclear plant as diversifying energy sources for the country. Bel-Eliezer has stated that "Israel would agree to put the power reactor under IAEA safeguards but would not extend IAEA safeguards to other facilities in Israel." There have been mixed reactions in the Knesset over the proposed nuclear plant. However, one issue that received almost universal agreement is the fact that Israel is in need of alternative energy sources.
—Neal Sandler, Mark Hibbs, and Daniel Horner, "Israel Counting on US-India Deal to Further Power Reactor Project," Nucleonics Week, 16 August 07; Amir Ben-David, "For the First Time: Israel to Agree to Nuclear Inspection," Yedi'ot Aharonot, in OSC document GMP20070802741005, 02 August 07.

6 August 2007
The Israeli Committee for a Middle East Free from Atomic, Biological and Chemical Weapons is publicly calling for "Israel to open the Dimona nuclear facility to international inspectors." The Committee is demanding that Israel's nuclear facilities be held to the same standards as Iran's.
—Rory Kress, "Israeli Nuclear Activists warn of Potential Disaster," Jerusalem Post, 06 August 07.

2 July 2007
Mordechai Vanunu, Israel's infamous "nuclear whistleblower," has been sentenced to six more months in jail for violating the terms of his parole. After spending 18 years in prison for giving details of Israel's nuclear program to a British newspaper, Vanunu was banned from leaving the country and talking to foreigners. However, two months ago, he was convicted of parole violations, which included contacts with journalists and attempts to leave Israel.
—Nir Hason, "Vanunu to Return to Prison for Violating the Terms of His Parole," Ha'aretz, in OSC document GMP20070702735002, 02 July 07.

24 May 2007
Hans Blix, Chairman of the Weapons of Mass Destruction Commission at the United Nations, is calling for Israel to "cease its nuclear fuel cycle and stop enriching uranium." At the Conference on Preventing Nuclear Catastrophe held in Luxembourg, Blix called on Israel to cease enriching uranium and considered is a step toward a "nuclear
free Middle East."

15 April 2007
Director-General of the International Atomic Energy Agency, Mohamed ElBaradei calls for a Middle East nuclear-arms-free zone, which would include Iran and Israel. He is quoted as saying, "This is the last chance to build security in the Middle East based on trust and cooperation rather than on the possession of nuclear arms." He went on to say, "When a just and comprehensive peace is established between the Arab states and Israel, is should be forged in parallel with a security order based on wiping our all weapons of mass destruction."

4 April 2007
Yonatan Leibowitz, Greenpeace Mediterranean communications director releases a report detailing the potential threats posed by Israeli nuclear facilities. Leibowitz was quoted as saying, "Israelis have the right to know where these facilities are and the right to be informed about the serious risks to health and the environment posed by these installations."

20 March 2007
A new biography about Shimon Peres reveals new information about a secret nuclear agreement between Israel and France. The book claims that in 1957, then director-general of Israel's Defense Ministry Shimon Peres, persuaded the French Prime Minister Maurice Bourges-Maunoury to backdate the final nuclear cooperation pact that was the framework for the Dimona deal. The government of Bourges-Maunoury had actually fallen the day before which would have annulled the deal had it been known at the time.

13 March 2007
Israeli Vice Premier Shimon Peres makes a statement which seemingly represents another breach of Israel's policy of nuclear ambiguity. In response to a question regarding Israel's possession of nuclear weapons Peres was quoted as saying, "Israel would not be the first to present nuclear weapons in the Middle East. But unlike other countries, we are not threatening to use them."
—"Peres: Israel 'Not Threatening To Use' Nuclear Weapons, 'Unlike Other Countries,'" Jerusalem Post, In OSC Document GMP20070313735001, 13 March 2007.

28 February 2007
The Lebanese Atomic Energy Commission has ruled that no radioactive materials were found in areas bombed by Israel during the conflict between Israel and Hezbollah, contrary to accusations following the fighting. The ruling was based on laboratory tests whose findings were presented during a scientific symposium held in Lebanon.

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February 2007
According to the Director General of the Israel Electric Corp Uri Bin-Nun the Israeli Atomic Energy Commission is considering the construction of a nuclear power plant in Israel for electricity generation. This plan was proposed several years ago, and in fact there has already been a site designated in the south of Israel near Shivta for its construction. The reported cost of constructing a nuclear power plant in Israel is estimated at $1.5 billion, and the expected output of the power station would be over 1,000 megawatts of electricity.

24 January 2007
Egyptian Foreign Minister Ahmed Abul Gheit urges Israel to join the Nonproliferation Treaty and put its nuclear facilities under the supervision of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

22 January 2007
Dr. Ariel Levite, deputy director-general of the Israel Atomic Energy Commission, reportedly grouped Israel with other nuclear "threshold states," namely India and Pakistan, at the Herzliya Conference. When questioned by the Jerusalem Post after the conference regarding his statements Dr. Levite denied that he had made any such statement, saying rather that he had, "left Israel to other speakers."

2 January 2007
Israel is set to test for the United Nations an underground installation designed to monitor any attempt by Iran to test nuclear devices. To conduct the test Israel will set off three strong explosions using 15 tons of liquid explosives in the northern Negev desert in order to monitor how those explosions register on equipment at the underground site. Recent nuclear tests conducted in India and Pakistan recorded well at the Negev site. A similar testing site is located near Mount Meron in Upper Galilee.

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2006
28 December 2006
Israel signs the United Nations Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism. The convention deals with the unlawful possession of nuclear devices by non-state actors, and calls for states to investigate alleged offenses, and to arrest, prosecute or extradite offenders. The convention also places emphasis on international cooperation with nuclear terrorism investigations and prosecutions through information-sharing and extradition of detainees.

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12 December 2006
In an interview with a German television station Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert violates Israel's longstanding policy of nuclear ambiguity. He said, "Iran openly, explicitly and publicly threatens to wipe Israel off the map. Can you say that this is the same level, when you are aspiring to have nuclear weapons as America, France, Israel, Russia?" The apparent breech of Israel's policy of nuclear ambiguity has led to widespread criticism by political opponents. In response to the criticism Miri Eisin, Olmert's spokeswoman, said that the prime minister had not been listing nuclear states, but rather "responsible nations." Olmert himself has responded by reiterating that Israel will not be the first country to introduce nuclear weapons to the Middle East.

7 December 2006
US Defense Secretary-designate Robert Gates declares that Israel has nuclear weapons. The statement was made in reference to Iran's desire to obtain nuclear weapons for deterrence purposes because it is surrounded by countries that posses nuclear arms; Pakistan, India, Russia, Israel and US troops in the Persian Gulf. In response, Israel's Vice Premier Shimon Peres stated that Israel has never confirmed its possession of nuclear weapons, relying instead on the ambiguity of its nuclear weapons program to create deterrence.

21 October 2006
In statements made to the UN First Committee of Disarmament and International Security, the UAE calls on the United Nations to put pressure on Israel to make it cooperate with the IAEA and open up its nuclear weapons arsenals in an effort to reduce the tensions felt throughout the Middle East.

27 September 2006
The United States Government Accountability Office's Natural Resource and Environment Director Gene Aloise said in a testimony given to a House Government Reform subcommittee that there are several weaknesses that face the IAEA. Among these weaknesses is the fact that the IAEA "has poor access to India, Israel, North Korea, and Pakistan, all nations that are outside the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty regime while believed to possess nuclear weapons."

24 September 2006
The IAEA rejects a resolution calling for Israel to join the NPT. The resolution was proposed by the Arab states, Iran and Indonesia, but failed to pass amid opposition from Western states. Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman Mohammad-Ali Hosseini stated that "the move encouraged disregard for the principles and regulations of nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty."

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September 2006
The IAEA passes a resolution requesting the establishment of a nuclear-weapons-free zone in the Middle East. Israel and the United States were the only countries that voted against the resolution; however, three other countries did abstain from voting. There was also a motion proposed calling on Israel to dismantle its nuclear arsenal that was not passed.

30 August 2006
An Israeli study reveals that cancer morbidity rate among employees at the Nuclear Research Center (NRC) is no higher than among the general population. Professor Manfred Green, a member of Tel Aviv University's Faculty of Medicine, was quoted as saying, "The results of the study do not indicate a connection between cancer morbidity among the workers at the nuclear reactor and their workplace." Professor Green headed the study which was conducted by the Israeli Health Ministry's National Center for Disease Control.

30 August 2006
Egyptian newspaper Al-Misriyun alleges that Israeli physicist William Cliff disclosed that the Nahal Zureg nuclear reactor had a leak 20 days ago. Allegedly the leak was temporarily stopped by the efforts of the reactor's staff.
—Husayn Awdah, "Israel has kept a secret the leak at the Nahal Surik nuclear reactor 20 days ago," Al-Misriyun, in FBIS Document GMP20060830035002, 30 August 2006.

August 2006
The German defense ministry confirms the sale of two Dolphin-class submarines manufactured by ThyssenKrupp AG subsidiary to Israel. The defense ministry claims that these submarines are not equipped to carry nuclear weapons. However, Jane's Defense Weekly asserts that they do have the capability to launch cruise missiles armed with nuclear warheads, which would provide Israel with crucial second-strike capabilities. The new Dolphin-class submarines also have a range of 4500 kilometers, which exceeds that of all other submarines currently in the Israeli fleet.

1 June 2006
Hans Blix, the head of the Weapons of Mass Destruction Commission, states that Israel is "assumed to have 200 nuclear weapons." He also says a nuclear weapon free zone in the Middle East could be created if countries in the

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area gave up their nuclear weapons programs.

June 2006
A new article by William Burr and Avner Cohen, an expert on the Israeli nuclear program, is published in the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists. The article, titled "Israel Crosses the Threshold," examines the National Security Study Memorandum 40 (NSSM 40), which was initiated to provide President Nixon with policy options and information regarding Israel's budding nuclear weapons program in 1969. The authors discuss the evolution of policy stances in Nixon's administration, particularly the early position that Israel's possession of nuclear weapons would "not be in the United States' interests and should, if at all possible, be stopped." Also addressed is the development of the Nixon-Meir agreement, allowing Israel to retain its nuclear program as long as it remained fully concealed from the international community. Surprisingly, President Nixon did not reveal the contents of his meeting with Prime Minister Golda Meir to his National Security Advisor, Henry Kissinger.

23 May 2006
France's nuclear laboratory (GANIL) and Israel sign a memorandum of understanding regarding collaboration in the field of nuclear research and the building of a new accelerator at the Soreq Nuclear Research Center in Israel.

19 May 2006
The Israeli government opposes a new treaty put forth by the United States at the UN Disarmament Commission that would halt the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons. Israeli officials have worried that it could threaten their opaque nuclear policy.

3 May 2006
A report of a classified Israeli document claims that if Iran succeeds in creating a nuclear weapon, it could cause a domino effect with other Middle Eastern countries following suit.

28 April 2006
The United Nations Disarmament Commission elects Israel as vice-chair alongside Belarus, Poland, and Austria.
27 April 2006
Israeli Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni meets with a delegation from the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) to discuss export controls on nuclear materials and the strengthening of ties between the NSG and the Israeli government. Also included in the talks are the Israeli Ministry of Industry, Trade and Labor, and the Israel Atomic Energy Commission.

—"Livni Tells Visiting NSG Group Israel 'Reliable' Counterproliferation Partner," Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 27 April 2006, in Open Source Center Document GMP20060428614002.

21 April 2006
Israeli authorities extend the international travel ban an additional year for whistleblower Mordechai Vanunu. Vanunu had hoped that new Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert would reconsider the travel ban restricting him from traveling outside of Israel. He also believes that "European governments could do more to persuade Israel to allow him to leave. Israel maintains, however, that Vanunu still possesses sensitive security related information." Vanunu is also scheduled to appear in court on May 1 on charges that he spoke to foreign media and violated the terms of his release from prison in April 2004.

—"Vanunu Travel Ban Extended by One Year," Global Security Newswire, 21 April 2006.

19 April 2006
In the second Saudi-British conference, "Two Kingdoms: Friendship and Partnership" in Riyadh, Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Saud Al-Faisal speaks about the two nations' desire that the Middle East be a region free of weapons of mass destruction. Prince Saud Al-Faisal also stated that, "If the international community is attempting to convince Iran not to develop nuclear arms, this should apply to Israel as well." He went on to say, "we are in agreement as to the right of any nation to seek nuclear technology for civilian use under customary international supervision. Under all circumstances, we believe in this country that the current crisis should be resolved through peaceful negotiations."


12 April 2006
The World Muslim Congress calls on the West to adopt a more equitable approach to Iran and other countries' nuclear programs. World Muslim Congress Secretary-General Mohammed Raja Zafarul Haq pointed out that "Not a single voice has been raised about Israel's nuclear arms stockpile while on the other hand continuous pressure is being exerted on the Islamic republic of Iran." He also stated that a "Selective approach has always led to complications. Therefore, the West should follow an even-handed policy to make the world peaceful." The Congress' Secretary-General went on to make it clear that in his opinion Israel's policies and weapons pose a constant threat to the Middle East.


30 March 2006
The Arab League Summit Council calls for a region free from weapons of mass destruction. As part of the final

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statement at the 18th regular session of the Arab League Summit Council Arab leaders called on "the international community to declare the Middle East a region free from weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons, in order to boost international peace and security." They also urged "the international community to require Israel to sign the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty and bring its entire program within the scope of IAEA safeguards."


12 March 2006
Syrian authorities call for a WMD-free zone in the Middle East. Syrian Foreign Minister Waleed al-Mualeem told journalists, "We call on all Middle East nations, among them Israel, to join NPT [Treaty on the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons]. We insist on 'double standards' being renounced. We propose creating a zone in the Middle East that would be free of nuclear, biological and other kinds of weapons." However, according to the FM, Syria continues to support the existence of peaceful nuclear programs in the region.

—"Syria Calls on Middle East Countries, Including Israel, to Join Non-Proliferation Treaty," Moscow Interfax, in FBIS Document CEP20060312002002, 12 March 2006.

1 March 2006
Syria accuses Israel of dumping nuclear waste on the Golan Heights. Syrian ambassador Bashar Ja'afari stated that, "Israel, which has unambiguous support from major nuclear weapon states, continues to reject the will of the international community and dumps its nuclear waste in the Syrian Golan Heights." In response, the Israeli representative Itzhak Levanon called the information, "repetitive [and] inaccurate." He went on the say, "This issue was raised by the Syrians during the Commission on Human Rights and I refuted it completely, and I am refuting it now."


March 2006
Newly declassified documents reveal how Britain aided Israel in its development of nuclear weapons. In addition to the 20 tons of heavy water that were recently revealed to have been sold by Britain to Israel in 1959 and 1960, it is now clear that Britain also supplied Israel with a number of other vital materials during the 1950s and 1960s that sped up the process allowing it to develop nuclear weapons. Some of these materials include uranium-235, beryllium and lithium-6, which are used in making atom and even hydrogen bombs. It appears from the declassified documents that neither then Prime Minister Harold Wilson nor technology minister in 1966 Tony Benn had any knowledge of the sales. Upon learning of the secret deals Tony Benn said, "I'm not only surprised, I'm shocked. It never occurred to me that [civil servants] would authorize something so against the policy of the government." It is also reported that Michael Israel Michaels, a senior official at the science ministry during this period, played a key role in pushing through some of these sales. Despite intelligence to the contrary, Michaels continued to protest Israel's innocence regarding its nuclear weapons program. Mr. Michaels was Britain's representative at the IAEA, and was invited to Israel to inspect their nuclear facilities in 1961. It seems that Michaels' trip was part of a disinformation campaign to give the impression that everything was "above board" in Israel. In 1966, the Ministry of Defense strongly objected to a request by the UK atomic energy authority to export...
10 milligrams of plutonium to Israel, arguing that the sale might have "significant military value." It is reported that Mr. Michaels disagreed and eventually pushed the sale through, despite clear indications that he was aware that such a sale could save Israel months in developing nuclear weapons.

30 January 2006
The Arab Nuclear Energy Organization releases a report detailing alleged possible hazards facing Israel and neighboring Arab states because of Israel's nuclear power plants. Of major concern are allegations that nuclear waste may be being buried, seriously polluting air, water and soil. According to the report, subterranean water reserves are particularly susceptible to pollution, and could cause a major problem as they provide most of the potable water for the region.

2005
7 December 2005
Israel agrees to participate in the U.S. National Nuclear Security Agency's (NNSA) Megaports Initiative which installs radiation detection equipment and trains law enforcement officials at seaports throughout the world. Israel's Foreign Ministry Director General "Ron Prosor" said of the project, "This initiative provides an important defensive element to protect Israeli ports and ensures that exports from Israel to the U.S. are screened to prevent the threat of radiological terror. I know that our joint efforts under this project will directly contribute to our mutual nonproliferation objectives and to the safety and security of our two nations and the global maritime system."

4 December 2005
Germany approves the sale of two Dolphin-class submarines to Israel. The two submarines, which will be added to a fleet of three similar-class submarines, will have improved capabilities that will allow them to remain submerged for weeks at a time. The Dolphin-class submarine is also equipped with torpedo tubes reportedly capable of launching cruise missiles carrying nuclear warheads, which would strengthen Israel's second-strike capability. The new submarines will likely be delivered sometime in the next decade.
—Efraim Inbar, "Deterring the Iranian Nuclear Threat," Jerusalem Post, 4 December 2005.

1 December 2005
Mordechai Vanunu, the Israeli nuclear whistleblower, speaks with Iranian press about Israel's nuclear weapons program. According to Vanunu, in 1986 Israel had an arsenal of more than 200 nuclear bombs. Vanunu also states that "in 1986 the Israelis began producing...the hydrogen bomb." Vanunu goes on to say that "[Israel] was capable of producing 40 kilograms of plutonium a year. That is a quantity sufficient for manufacturing 10 nuclear bombs.

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That means that from 1986 until now it could have built 200 more warheads."

**December 2005**

Two recently aired documentaries indicate that Britain was instrumental in supplying Israel with heavy water for nuclear reactors in 1959. One documentary, aired by BBC Newsnight, suggests that Britain knew that the final destination of the 20 tons of heavy water it sold to Norway was Israel, and that it was to be part of a nuclear weapons program. A second documentary, aired in Norway by Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation (NRK), cites documents declassified by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs indicating that Norway also suspected that the Israeli purchase of heavy water was meant for the purpose of starting a nuclear weapons program.

—Robinson Freytag, "Film Sheds Light on How Israel got Heavy Water from Norway," Jerusalem Post, 7 December 2005; "UK Role in Israel's Nuclear Program Seen as 'Double Standard,'" BBC, 12 December 2005.

**16 November 2005**

Previously secret papers from Richard Nixon's presidency, released by the National Archives show U.S. alarm over Israeli nuclear capability in the late 1960s. A 1969 memo reporting intelligence findings by then assistant secretary of state, Joseph J. Sisco to Secretary of State William Rogers reveals Israel's rapidly developing capability to produce and deploy nuclear weapons, despite promises it would not introduce nuclear arms to the region.


**3 October 2005**

A resolution passes unanimously at the general conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency which calls for a nuclear weapon-free zone in the Middle East.

**2 October 2005**

The IAEA at its recently concluded General Conference approves a draft submitted by Egypt calling to subject all nuclear installations in the Middle East to the system of IAEA guarantees and to establish an area free of nuclear weapons. The Egyptian Foreign Minister Ahmed Aboul Gheit, highlighting the dangers of the Israeli nuclear capability and the challenges facing the NPT, pushed for the international community and the IAEA to assume their responsibilities and start taking practical and serious steps to implement decisions and avoid the policies of double standards in dealing with certain states.

**26 August 2005**

Tzvi Kamil, the chairman of the Committee for Nuclear Safety, in a first interview, comments on Israel's nuclear reactor safety standards and radioactive waste control. The Committee for Nuclear Safety (CNS) is one of Israel's most secretive bodies, acting only in an advisory capacity to the Prime Minister. It acts as the watchdog for the Israel Atomic Energy Commission (IAEC), which runs Israel's two reactors.
5 August 2005
Asher Karni, an Israeli businessman living in South Africa and apprehended while vacationing in Colorado, is sentenced by a U.S. federal judge to three years in prison for the sale of U.S. origin dual-use components to companies in Pakistan and India. This includes the sale of 200 triggered spark gaps [note: triggered spark gaps can be utilized as triggers for nuclear weapons]. According to Assistant U.S. Attorney Jay I. Bratt, Karni made at least 17 of these illegal transactions. Karni and his partner, Humayun Khan, had prior knowledge that the U.S. forbids the sale of triggered spark gaps to Pakistan and India because of their dual-use capability and therefore attempted to conceal the final recipient of the goods. The Pakistani government denies purchasing any illegal components for their nuclear program.

3 August 2005
Documents from the British National Archive reveal that Britain sold heavy water [necessary for the production of plutonium] to Israel in 1959 and 1960, providing a substantial push for the Israeli nuclear program at Dimona. The United States had previously refused the same sale. In 1956 Britain purchased 20 tons of heavy water from Norway. Noratom, a Norwegian company, was then formed to purchase the heavy water and ship it to Israel. The heavy water came in two-10 ton shipments, the first in June 1959 and the second in 1960. The export license was through Norway, yet the shipments were shipped from a British port on Israeli ships. British officials never asked for an Israeli guarantee that the heavy water was intended for peaceful purposes. In 1961, Israel approached Britain again for five tons of heavy water and was refused.

August 2005
Yuval Steinitz, chairman of the Israeli Knesset Foreign and Defense Committee, tells interviewers that "once it will be clear that Israel...[is] secured...then Israel will be ready to discuss an arms control regime or arrangement in the Middle East." Israeli officials maintain that they will keep a nuclear deterrent until there is a guarantee of peace in the region, and are unwilling to compromise it in international negotiations.

8 July 2005
According to the Islamic Republic News Agency of Iran, the G8 leaders in Gleneagles, Scotland are indirectly pushing for Israel to sign the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty. A G8 statement reads, "We call on all states not party to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty...to accede without delay."
— "G8 Urge Israel to Sign NPT 'Immediately'," IRNA, 8 July 2005.
16 June 2005
Israeli Professor Avner Cohen provides several revelations about the origins of the Israeli nuclear program in his new book, *The Last Taboo*. He identifies Professor Yisra'el Dostrovsky as the man responsible for the creation of the structure of Israel's nuclear program and as the "first chief nuclear commissioner." Cohen cites the structure of the program as being based on the "dual subjectivity principle," as Dostrovsky and his successors have served as both Israel Atomic Energy Commission (IAEC) director general under the Israeli prime minister and as chief of the Practical Science Administration under the Israeli defense department. According to Cohen, this affords them a "double personal mandate."

13 June 2005
At the same time the International Atomic Energy Agency requests to perform inspections in Riyadh, the Saudi Arabian Council of Ministers replies that "Israel must sign the NPT and all its nuclear facilities must be subject to inspection by the International Atomic Energy Agency and this must be made a basic condition for any future security arrangement."

10 June 2005
In response to accusations by the director general of Gal-Al company that secret nuclear information had been stolen from the company, the Israeli Atomic Energy Commission (IAEC) announces, "The Gal-Al company has not been involved in any nuclear reactor project and no classified information is held by this company. A quick and exhaustive check indicated that nothing of the sort has ever occurred. The check revealed that the only contact with this company was the purchase of a filter for a water-cooler system located at the nuclear reactor's offices."

9 June 2005
Israeli investigators are looking into the possible theft of instructions on the production of heavy water stolen from Gal-Al, an Israeli water company. This "Trojan Horse" investigation is now expanding beyond Israel into the United States and the United Kingdom.

9 June 2005
Reports indicate nuclear secrets for the reactor in Dimona were stolen as part of business espionage. Since May of 2005, several arrests have been made during an investigation where a Trojan Horse program was used to steal business secrets from rival companies. Water company Gal-Al says technical information describing how to produce and separate heavy water in a nuclear reactor was stolen. Israeli police have found files on computer servers in England and Germany which "could be used to help produce a hydrogen bomb," says Gal-Al CEO Baruch Zisser.

Related content is available on the website for the Nuclear Threat Initiative, www.nti.org.
2 June 2005
A recently declassified U.S. national intelligence assessment from 1961 indicates that Washington knew Israel was pursuing a nuclear weapons path. The document estimated Israel would be capable of producing a nuclear bomb by 1965-66 and had the capability to deliver the weapon to a range of 550 miles (~885km) via a bomber.

28 May 2005
Egypt’s request that Israel be sanctioned for not signing the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) and possessing nuclear weapons is rejected at the NPT review conference in New York.

25 May 2005
Israeli whistleblower Mordechai Vanunu tells author Dr. Yo’el Cohen that "Today Israel evidently has about 200 warheads... I have also revealed new information on a hydrogen bomb and a neutron bomb. The Israeli public may support the possession of a simple nuclear bomb, but it does not support the possession of a hydrogen bomb." [Passage omitted on hydrogen bomb’s qualities]

17 May 2005
Palestinian public health minister, Zhodi el-Wiheidi accuses Israel of burying 80 tons of nuclear and chemical trash near Nablus in the West Bank.

3 May 2005
At the 7th U.N. Nuclear Disarmament Conference, the United Arab Emirates calls on the international community and specifically Israel to take all necessary steps to completely dismantle its nuclear programs to create a nuclear free world. U.A.E. Permanent Ambassador to the UN, Abdul Aziz bin Nasir Al Shasmi, indicates several nuclear states continue to develop their nuclear programs under the auspice of deterrent security measures.

22 April 2005
Israel’s interior minister, Ofir Pines-Paz, extends Israeli nuclear whistleblower Mordechai Vanunu’s travel ban for another year.

19 April 2005
Israeli ministry spokesman Gilan Heiman states that Mordechai Vanunu cannot leave Israel before 19 April 2006.

Related content is available on the website for the Nuclear Threat Initiative, www.nti.org.
His travel ban has been extended for another year because he still poses a security threat to national security.

12 April 2005
Prior to the opening of his trial in Jerusalem, Israeli nuclear whistleblower Mordechai Vanunu tells reporters that Israel possesses 200 atomic neutron and hydrogen bombs and produces 40 kilograms of plutonium each year. Mr. Vanunu says charges brought against him by Yehiel Horev, head of security for the Ministry of Defense, proves his statements about Israel's nuclear program are true.

8 April 2005
American Federal Prosecutors investigating nuclear technology smuggling reveal that Asher Karni, a Hungarian-born Israeli businessman who lives in South Africa, pleaded guilty to such charges last September and has been cooperating with investigators. Mr. Karni was arrested on New Year's Day 2004 for selling triggered spark gaps and violating the Export Administration Act. Triggered spark gaps are dual-use items. One use is in hospital protocol to power lithotripters. When installed into an enriched uranium casing, however, a triggered spark gap can ignite a nuclear explosion. Karni was the seller of about 200 of these devices to Humayun Khan, an Islamabad businessman from Pakistan.

7 April 2005
Former U.S. President Jimmy Carter states that the United States fails to acknowledge how Israel's nuclear program encourages countries such as Syria, Iran, and Egypt to pursue nuclear weapons.

April 2005
Jackie Wolcott Sanders, the American ambassador to the Conference on Disarmament and special representative of the President for the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, and Mark Fitzpatrick, another State Department official, indirectly call Israel a nuclear power by suggesting that it start planning on canceling its nuclear weapons programs. "The United States continues to support the goals of the Middle East resolution adopted at the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference, including the achievement of a Middle East Free of Weapons of Mass Destruction," said Jackie Wolcott Sanders.

17 March 2005
An Israeli court charges Mordechai Vanunu with violating the terms of his release from jail last year. Israel's ministry has charged Vanunu with twenty-one counts of violating the restrictions. Vanunu was initially charged with disclosing secrets about the Israeli Dimona reactor and passing on classified information about the country's
nuclear program.

March 2005
Mohamad ElBaradei, head of the IAEA, says that the creation of a Nuclear Weapon Free Zone will be pushed again at the Treaty on Non-Proliferation Review Conference that will be held in May 2005. ElBaradei says that Middle East security will be part of the Arab-Israeli peace process as it has in past years. Israeli officials argue that their nuclear weapons do not present a threat to other nations, only a deterrent to protect their country from invasion by larger neighbors.

February 2005
In an interview between a Hungarian reporter and Iranian Foreign Minister Kharrazi, the Iranian leader reaffirms the necessity for the Middle East to have a nuclear weapon free zone that includes Israel.

February 2005
Jordanian official Asma Khadir states that Jordan is worried about Israeli nuclear activities and the dangers posed by the Dimona Nuclear reactor. She also says that from recent information, Israel has decided to operate a new nuclear reactor near Dimona in the Negev desert. The new reactor will be operational in 2009.
—"Government Spokeswoman Expresses Worry about Israel's 'Nuclear Activities,'" Al-Ghadd, 7 February 2005, in FBIS Document GMP20050208000124.

2004-2000
22 November 2004
Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon states that Israel's nuclear reactor near the town of Dimona is "relatively small and safe." There are claims that the Dimona reactor is more than 40 years old and needs maintenance.

9 November 2004
Iran states that it can mass produce Shahab-3 missiles that are capable of reaching Israel or U.S. forces in the Middle East. The United States and Israel have developed the Arrow anti-ballistic missile system in response to the Shahab-3.
—"Iran says it can make nuke rocket to hit Israel," Toronto Star, 10 November 2004.

8 November 2004
IAEA Director Mohammed ElBaradei says that Israel's nuclear weapons are an obstacle to peace in the Middle East
and that the Israeli arsenal should go as part of a peace settlement with Palestinians. "This is not really sustainable that you have Israel sitting with nuclear weapons capability there while everyone else is part of the non-proliferation regime," he said.
—"Israel's nukes blocking Mideast peace, ElBaradei says," Deutsche Presse-Agentur, 8 November 2004.

October 2004
The United Arab Emirates calls upon Israel to sign the NPT in order to make the region more secure. It also demands that Israel cooperate with the IAEA on matters relating to its nuclear program, to stop processing fissionable material, to refrain from building facilities to produce WMD, to cease nuclear experiments, and to dismantle its nuclear weapons.

23 August 2004
Iranian Foreign Minister Kamal Kharrazi warns that if Israel targets its nuclear facilities, Iran will retaliate by attacking Israel's Dimona nuclear complex. Kamal says, "If they do that, we would react... We have our defense capability and that certainly keeps others from exercising such a threat. They know what is our capability and how... we react."

8 August 2004
Israeli officials begin distributing iodine anti-radiation tables to residents living near the Dimona nuclear complex. The tables are to be distributed in the towns of Yeroham, Dimona, and Aruar, as well as to Bedouins living in the Negev desert. Government officials deny that this measure is a response to safety concerns.

26 May 2004
British journalist Peter Hounam is arrested in Jerusalem by Israel's internal security services. Police suspect that Houman may have been in contact with Mordechai Vanunu, which would violate restrictions placed on Vanunu after his release from prison for divulging secrets about Israel's nuclear weapons program. While working for the Sunday Times, Houman authored the story of Vanunu's exposé in 1986.

29 July 2004
Prime Minister Ariel Sharon implies that the United States supports Israel's nuclear weapons program, stating that Israel "has received here a clear American position that says in other words that Israel must not be touched when it comes to its deterrent capability".

18 July 2004
Amid mounting reports about Iran's secret efforts to develop nuclear weapons, Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon calls Iran's nuclear program "the biggest threat to the existence of Israel" and that "Israel will not allow Iran to be
equipped with a nuclear weapon".

6-8 July 2004
El Baradei three-day visit to Israel was a series of cordial meeting with various Israeli officials and scholars. In a meeting with Israeli Prime Minister, El Baradei and Ariel Sharon discussed the establishment of a nuclear free zone. According to the IAEA Chief, "the Prime Minister this morning affirmed to me that Israel's policy [is] that in the context of peace, establishment of peace in the Middle East, Israel will be looking for establishment of a nuclear-free zone in the Middle East."

7 July 2004
At a press conference regarding International Atomic Energy Agency director Mohamed ElBaradei's visit to Israel, Prime Minister Ariel Sharon comments on comments on the success of Israel's doctrine of nuclear ambiguity. "Israel has to hold in its hand all the elements of power necessary to protect itself by itself... Our policy of ambiguity on nuclear arms has proved its worth, and it will continue." Israeli officials tell ElBaradei that they will not discuss nuclear issues until there is an overall Middle Eastern peace agreement.
—"Israel Tells of Iran Nuclear Fear," BBC, 7 July 2004; "Israel Will Not Discuss Nuclear Issue Until Overall Peace Secured—IAEA Head," BBC, 7 July 2004.

6 July 2004
Former senior Mossad official Uzi Arad says that Israel's "vision for the long term is to turn the Middle East into a zone free of all weapons of mass destruction" but that to "pave the way towards that vision one needs to conclude peace agreements with all countries in the region, to have peaceful relations, good neighborliness, and to have durable such conditions".

6 July 2004
Implying that Israel will continue its policy of nuclear opacity, Prime Minister Ariel Sharon indirectly references the nuclear weapons program. When asked about an upcoming visit by International Atomic Energy Agency director Mohamed ElBaradei, Sharon responds by saying, "I don't know what he is coming here to see. Israel has to hold in its hand all the elements of power necessary to protect itself by itself."

4 July 2004
International Atomic Energy Agency officials state that Dr. El Baradei's will visit Israel on July 6, and that visit was partly a routine visit, and that IAEA Director intends to meet with the Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and other Israeli officials "to promote the concept of a nuclear weapons-free zone in the Middle East."

4 July 2004
The Israeli Atomic Energy Commission launches an official website, which does not mention any nuclear weapons

Related content is available on the website for the Nuclear Threat Initiative, www.nti.org.
program. This website provides a general and limited account of the facilities and history of Israel nuclear program, and has some community related information.


23 April 2004
In an interview for Israeli television Prime Minister Ariel Sharon alludes to Israel's nuclear program. Commenting on the potential threat posed by Iranian nuclear weapons, he says the United States recognizes Israel's right to defend itself from such threats. "But the recognition of Israel's right—and of the importance of Israel's ability—to defend itself, by itself, these things are clearly understood." He also used foreign press reports as a means of indirectly referencing the nuclear program, saying, "if you read the foreign press you will see that they talk about a whole complex of defensive tools, which Israel needs in its hands."


21 April 2004
After having spent 18 years in prison for divulging sensitive information on the Israeli nuclear program, Mordechai Vanunu is released from custody. Upon release, Vanunu immediately defies the restrictions the Israeli government has place on him by speaking with the international media. He calls for Israel to open its nuclear program to international inspections.


16 March 2004
The Knesset debates a bill proposed by Arab MP Issam Makhul calling for the closure of Israel's nuclear reactor at Dimona because it has become an environmental hazard.


16 March 2004
The Knesset debates a bill proposed by Arab MP Issam Makhul calling for the closure of Israel's nuclear reactor at Dimona because it has become an environmental hazard.


25 February 2004
In an interview with Al Arabiya television, IAEA Director Mohamed El Baradei says about Israel's nuclear weapons program: "I can't give a precise opinion on it because we don't do any inspections in Israel...I know it's a developed program, and Israel does not deny that it has nuclear capability, but the size of the program, the extent of its development, really I can't know...It's enough for me to know that it has nuclear capability, there is a conviction that it has a nuclear weapon."


24 February 2004
In a discussion involving Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, the defense minister, the justice minister, the attorney
general, the state attorney and defense officials that soon-to-be-released nuclear spy Mordechai Vanunu will not be placed under administrative detention after his release. He is to be placed under close government supervision, using technical means to monitor his movement. He may never be allowed to leave Israel again.

22 February 2004
A Defense Intelligence Agency report cited in a new book about Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld states that Israel has 82 nuclear weapons. The book, Rumsfeld's War, also makes estimates at the nuclear arsenals of other states of concern.

8 February 2004
Former Mossad agent Shabtai Shavit states in an interview that the agency considered killing Mordechai Vanunu when he was taken into custody.

2 February 2004
As the discharge of convicted nuclear spy Mordechai Vanunu approaches, the Israeli government considers restricting his activities once released. Israeli officials fear he will continue to disclose information about the nuclear weapons program. The governments is considering restricting his movements, preventing him from leaving the country by disqualifying him from obtaining a passport, censoring his writing, and barring him from giving interviews to the media.

2 January 2004
Israeli citizen Asher Karni is arrested at Denver International Airport while on a skiing vacation and charged with falsifying export invoices to smuggle nuclear “triggered spark gap” detonators to Pakistan.

October 2003
Speaking on condition of anonymity, two Bush administration insiders and one Israeli official confirm that Israel has modified American-supplied Harpoon cruise missiles to carry nuclear warheads. This report confirms Israel's ability to launch a nuclear strike from land, air, or sea, as well as its second-strike capability.

4 March 2003
The news agency Deutsche Presse-Agentur reports that Patriot missiles batteries, including two received from Germany, are to be deployed near Dimona.
—"US Teams Deploy Patriot Missiles in Tel Aviv Area," Deutsche Presse-Agentur, 4 March 2003.

Related content is available on the website for the Nuclear Threat Initiative, www.nti.org.
19 January 2003
The Arab newspaper *Al-Bawaba* reports that workers shut down Israel's Nuclear Research Facility at Dimona in protest against plans to cut down the workforce. Employees suspend work for several hours in order to bring plant management to the negotiating table. The article estimates the total number of employees at Dimona to be approximately 2,700 scientists, technicians, and administrative staff.

5 January 2003
Israel successfully test-fires Arrow anti-missile defense systems in a rehearsal for potential Scud attacks by Iraq in preparation for an American-led invasion of Iraq. Israel is also preparing for an attack on the Dimona reactor complex via Iraqi warplanes.

27 November 2002
The Arab newspaper *Al-Bawaba* reports that Israel plans to build another nuclear reactor for generating electric power in southern Israel. The project is estimated to be completed by 2020 and would be for "civilian purposes." An additional reactor might enhance Israel's nuclear weapons capability.

November 2002
The United States offers Israel a new generation of Patriot anti-missile batteries in anticipation of a war with Iraq. The new Patriot missiles are specially designed to intercept Scud in flight and would be placed under the control of US troops deployed in Israel.

27 October 2002
Avigdor Feldman, defense attorney for convicted nuclear spy Mordechai Vanunu, alleges that Foreign Minister Shimon Peres of overstepping the limits of disclosure concerning Israel's secret nuclear weapons program. Peres is subpoenaed to testify at Vanunu’s parole tribunal. Feldman’s intention is to show that because Peres has disclosed intimate details of the nuclear program in an interview of the previous year, Vanunu should not be considered capable of further harming national security.

24 October 2002
In response to a proposal put forward by Palestinian Minister of Environment Yousef Abu Safiyya, the Council of Arab Ministers of Environment address the importance of design a cooperation mechanism in the event of nuclear radiation exposure in the region. Safiyya alleged that there were indications of radiation leakage from Israel's Dimona nuclear reactor.

Related content is available on the website for the Nuclear Threat Initiative, www.nti.org.
6 October 2002
Israeli officials say that Israel's Arrow anti-missile batteries would destroy 90 percent of incoming missiles in the event of an Iraqi attack. Israel also still has Patriot missiles batteries that are used as a second line of Defense.

June 2002
Former State Department and Pentagon officials state that Israel has acquired three diesel submarines that it is arming with newly designed cruise missiles capable of carrying nuclear warheads, potentially giving Israel a triad of land-, sea-, and air-based nuclear weapons.

14 May 2002

February 2002
Members of Jordan's Green Party ask United Nations Secretary General Kofi Anan to demand that Israel's nuclear reactor at Dimona be subject to international inspections and monitoring because of the potential dangers it poses to the environment and people of the Middle East. They say that American satellite images show large cracks in the wall of the reactor that may be leaking radioactivity that can harm the plant's workers and Jordanians.

14 January 2002
Former Israeli cabinet minister and physics professor Yuval Neeman states that during Israel's wars the government has shut down the nuclear reactor at Dimona. He tells a symposium at Tel Aviv University that reactor shut down was "one of the first things done in war time."

2002
The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace estimates that Israel possesses between 98 and 172 nuclear weapons.

December 2001
A television documentary made by Israel's leading documentary team in which Shimon Peres discloses details of Israel's nuclear program is broadcast in the Arab world. The film shows testimony by former French officials about how France was complicit in developing Israel's nuclear weapons program. Shown in Israel the month before, it is broadcast by Qatar-based satellite channel Al-Jazeera and other Arab networks. There is speculation that the
broadcast of explicit information about Israel's nuclear capability throughout the Arab world is intended to send a deliberate warning at a time of heightened tensions in the region.

7 September 2001
Former Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu publicly urges Israel to discontinue its official policy of nuclear ambiguity in light of changing conditions, namely the progression of Iran's nuclear program.

10 May 2001
Representatives from Israel's State Archives enter the home of Miriam Eshkol, widow of former Prime Minister Levi Eshkol, while she out of the country to confiscate documents relating to state nuclear secrets. Ha'aretz reports that Defense Ministry, alarmed by persistent leaks of nuclear secrets to the media, ordered the seizure.

3 May 2001
The Israeli Atomic Energy Commission denies allegations by Egypt and Jordan that radiation from the Dimona reactor has been seeping into their land. Israel officials say that the allegations are politically motivated.

21 April 2001
Israeli officials detain a former military scientist for passing sensitive information to a Russian woman. Retired Brigadier General Itzhak Yaakov played an important role in Israel's nuclear weapons program and holds joint American-Israeli citizenship.

14 March 2001
Avner Cohen, author of the book Israel and the Bomb, returns to Israel for the first time since its publication. He is questioned by Israeli authorities, but not arrested. Cohen published his book in the United States to avoid Israeli government censorship and has been working as a senior researcher at George Washington University in Washington, D.C.

13 March 2001
Israel's Ha'aretz reports that newly-elected Prime Minister Ariel Sharon has no intention of modifying Israel's policy of nuclear ambiguity. It states that Sharon is also expected to renew the American-Israeli "nuclear understanding," which dictates that Israel will not conduct any public nuclear tests and not declare that it possesses nuclear weapons.

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1 November 2000
Environmental ministers from Arab League states begin a two-day meeting on the effects of Israeli policies on the Palestinian ecology. They allege that the "outdated technology" of the nuclear reactor at Dimona is an environmental threat and call for its closure.

—"Arab Ministers Meet on Israeli "Damage" to Palestinian Environment," Argence France Presse, 1 November 2000.

August 2000
The Federation of American Scientists (FAS) posts on its website images of the Dimona nuclear complex taken by Space Imaging Corporation's Ikonos satellite. The accompanying FAS report states that the pictures "indicate that no new cooling towers were constructed in the years between 1971 and 2000. ...This strongly suggests that the reactor's power level has not been increased significantly during this period. This would suggest an annual production rate of plutonium of about 20kg." The report estimates Israel's nuclear stockpile at 100 to 200 weapons.


July 2000
Israel completes reception an order for three Dolphin-class diesel submarines from the German firm of Thyssen-Nordseewerke. The submarines are reportedly able to launch nuclear-capable cruise missiles, an essential component of Israel’s intended second-strike capacity.


18 June 2000
London’s Sunday Times reports that Israel Defense Forces claim to have tested a submarine-launched cruise missile capable of carrying a nuclear warhead. The test is said to have hit its target 900 miles away. This test demonstrates Israel's three-pillared second strike capability.


12 June 2000
Avner Cohen, author of the controversial book Israel and the Bomb, appeals for a chance to present his case to the Knesset. Cohen has not been to Israel since the publication of his book for fear of arrest by Israeli authorities.


30 April 2000
Shimon Peres openly discusses with the Foreign Press Association the benefits of a policy of nuclear ambiguity and
cites Iran and Iraq as the chief threats to Israel's security. He postulates that, "As long as the suspicion is clear enough to deter, why should we go clearer than that? We don't want to threaten anybody, we want to deter. ...Iraq and Iran signed the NPT. So what? They are building in full daylight a nuclear capacity. There is no one to stop them. ...Our problem is not Egypt. Our problem is not Jordan (nor) many of the Arab countries. Our problem is basically Iran and Iraq, two irresponsible governments that are clearly building a nuclear capacity and there is nobody in the world (to stop them)."

26 March 2000
Israeli Deputy Defense Minister Ephraim Sneh denies the report in The Sunday Times of London that Israel plans to lay landmines in the Golan Heights in order to prevent Syrian attack after Israeli forces withdraw. Sneh tells The Jerusalem Post that, "The Sunday Times is ignoring the fact that Purim has passed and it's not yet April Fool's Day. 'David's Sling' is a pretty name for plans and operations, but this report is truly stupid."

26 March 2000
London's Sunday Times reports that the Israeli government is considering planting small nuclear landmines near the Golan Heights which could be detonated to halt a Syrian tank invasion. The plan, reportedly called "David's Sling," involves deploying neutron bombs in the manner of landmines to thwart any tank advance after the mountain region is handed back to Syria as a result of peace talks between Damascus and Tel Aviv. The paper also alleges that a neutron artillery shell has already been tested and laser-guided rockets with neutron warheads are ready for use.

22 February 2000
Israel and the United States sign an agreement giving Israeli scientists access to monitoring technologies to be used for verifying nuclear nonproliferation. U.S. Secretary of Energy tells a news conference that, "It is a signal that Israel is a friendly country. It is not treated in a similar fashion as others on our list of sensitive countries."

3 February 2000
The Knesset holds its first public discussion of Israel's nuclear program in more than 35 years. Israeli Arab MP Issam Makul petitioned the Supreme Court to request the debate. Representing the Israeli government, cabinet member Chaim Ramon reiterates what he says are Israel's guiding nuclear principles: that Israel will not be the first country in the Middle East to introduce nuclear weapons, that Israel supports in principle preventing the spread of nuclear weapons, and that Israel supports the creation of a region free of nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles once there is a "proven peace over a sustained period of time." The debate lasts only 52 minutes.

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1999-1990

25 November 1999
After it petitioned a court to allow publication, Israeli daily Yediot Ahronot publishes excerpts of the released portions of the trial of Mordechai Vanunu. In the published transcripts are allegations by Vanunu that he was beaten and kicked by Israeli interrogators after his abduction in Rome in 1986.

25 November 1999
Israeli prison officials deny a newspaper report that Mordechai Vanunu passed bomb-making information to Palestinian security prisoners during walks in the prison yard.

24 November 1999
Israel releases 1,200 pages of testimony from the trial of Mordechai Vanunu, the nuclear technician serving an 18-year sentence for reveal details of Israel's nuclear program. The documents give an account of Vanunu's stated motives for his actions. Shimon Peres criticizes the release of the transcripts.

October 1999
A secret document written by the U.S. Department of Energy claims that Israel possesses 300 to 500 kilograms of weapons-grade plutonium, enough to produce at least 250 warheads. This information was disclosed in the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists and on the front page of the Israeli daily Ha'aretz.

October 1998
Because of military censorship rules in Israel, Avner Cohen publishes his book Israel and the Bomb in the United States. The book gives detailed accounts of the development of Israel's nuclear program and doctrine of nuclear ambiguity. While Cohen insists that he has done nothing to harm Israel's security, he asserts that Israel armed two nuclear bombs on the eve of the 1967 war, that U.S. President Eisenhower turned a blind eye to the French-aided construction of Israel's nuclear reactor, and that the only U.S. president to try to stop Israel's proliferation was John F. Kennedy.

11 August 1998
The Israeli daily Ma'ariv reports that Israel will sign the treaty, which will include control and supervision mechanisms enabling international inspectors to visit the Dimona nuclear reactor. This decision was made by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu after consulting with senior Defense and Foreign Ministry officials.

Related content is available on the website for the Nuclear Threat Initiative, www.nti.org.
11 August 1998
Although it does not commit to open the Dimona nuclear complex to international inspections, Israel opts not to veto motions to begin discussing a treaty to stop production of fissile material at the United Nations Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, according to The Jerusalem Post.

14 July 1998
The website of The Jordan Times reports that former Israeli Prime Minster Shimon Peres acknowledges Israel's nuclear weapons program. He is reported to have told an audience of academics and the media in Amman that, "We built a nuclear option, not in order to have a Hiroshima, but to have an Oslo."

17 June 1998
Israeli Deputy Defense Minister Silvan Shalom tells the Knesset that rumors of Israel having tested a nuclear device a month earlier are "absolutely without foundation." Two members of the Knesset had claimed that the alleged test may have triggered an earthquake in the region.

5 June 1998
Shimon Peres makes remarks alluding to Israel's nuclear capability in a televised interview. On Israel TV's Channel Two, Peres said that, "No one made a bomb to use it. Instead, we wanted a veiled nuclear option in order to prevent war."

1 June 1998
Egypt's MENA news agency reports that Pakistan's ambassador to Egypt, Tayyab Siddiqui, alleges that Israel has cooperated in India's nuclear weapons program. He states that "neutral" sources inside Israel confirm this, but does not reveal those sources.
"Envoy to Egypt Says Reports 'Confirmed' India-Israel Cooperation," BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, 3 June 1998.

11 May 1998
Israeli authorities reveal that they have been holding an Arab Israeli for eight years on charges of spying for Iraq. Munir Fathi Said is to be released early from his 13-year jail term for passing information on Israel's nuclear program to Iraqi agents.
"Israel Reveals It Has Been Holding Spy for Iraq Eight Years," Agence France Presse, 11 May 1998.

13 March 1998
Mordechai Vanunu, convicted of revealing details of Israel's nuclear program in 1986, is allowed to leave solitary confinement for the first time in 12 years, but remains in prison serving an 18-year sentence.

Related content is available on the website for the Nuclear Threat Initiative, www.nti.org.
19 February 1998
The Israeli newspaper Ma'ariv reports that Israeli scientists, in response to the U.S. ban on the export of supercomputers to the Israeli Nuclear Research Centre, have developed a "virtual supercomputer" to perform the same functions. Scientists at Israel's Technion computer science department have clustered personal computers linked by a network to carry out supercomputer tasks.

3 February 1998
Israel deploys four batteries of American Patriot anti-missile missiles on a hill in the southern Negev Desert near Dimona in response to public anxiety about Israeli preparedness for Iraqi-launched Scud missile biological weapons attacks.

1997-1998
In a review of Israel nuclear strategy involving Prime Minister Netanyahu's Office, the Ministry of Defense, and the Foreign Ministry, it is decided that Israel should keep its weapons of mass destruction and missiles secret, strengthen its missile defense, and reduce the vulnerability of its nuclear force.

12 October 1997
An Israeli court awards compensation to a former Dimona plant worker suffering from cancer due to radiation exposure.

30 July 1997
British-based Jane's Intelligence Review publishes images indicating that Israeli missile facilities are susceptible to destruction by nuclear attack. The photos show that the Zachariah base southeast of Tel Aviv shows no sign of missile storage silos that can withstand a nuclear blast. These missiles are stored in limestone caves, which cannot be reinforced to provide adequate protection.
—"Jane's: Photos Show Israel's Nuclear Missile Base Vulnerable to Attack," Associated Press, 30 July 197.

June 1997
Prompted by allegations that an Israeli university collaborates in the Israeli nuclear weapons program, the United States bars American firms from having business ties with Ben Gurion University. The university allegedly used a U.S. supercomputer for nuclear arms research.

20 April 1997
The Israeli daily Ha'aretz reports that Former South African Deputy Foreign Minister Aziz Pahad confirms that the South African and Israeli governments helped each other develop nuclear weapons in the early 1980s. The article

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also quotes South African General Constand Viljoen as saying, "We wanted to get nuclear knowledge from whoever we could, also from Israel."

25 February 1997
An Iraqi official confirms that Iraq targeted the Dimona nuclear complex with Scud missiles during the 1991 Gulf War. General Abderrazzak Al-Ayubi tells the Iraqi newspaper Al-Jumhuriyah that "ten Iraqi missiles were fired at hostile targets in Haifa, 28 on other targets in Tel Aviv, and five at Dimona."

25 July 1996
An article published in the Israeli newspaper Ha'aretz reveals two important aspects of the Israeli nuclear program. The piece reports that expenses for the Nuclear Research Centre in Dimona are paid for out of the defense budget and that Israel Defense Forces (IDF) soldiers serve in Dimona installations. The facts were revealed during a disagreement over the defense budget and salaries of IDF career personnel.
—"Budget Dispute Said to Reveal Defense Funding for Dimona Nuclear Centre," BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, 26 July 1996.

25 June 1996
Israel's most widely circulated daily newspaper, Yediot Ahronot, publishes aerial photos of the Dimona reactor complex obtained via the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency. The images, acquired through loosened American information laws, are printed on the front page of the paper.

7 April 1996
Syrian Ba'ath Party Assistant Secretary-General Abdallah al-Ahmar calls for Israeli nuclear facilities to be placed under international supervision.

24 March 1996
The Israeli newspaper Ha'aretz reports that Israel is seeking public recognition by the United States government of its need for nuclear weapons. Such an acknowledgement would represent a drastic change in American policy.

23 December 1995
Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres says, "Give me peace and we'll give up the nuclear program. That's the whole story."

31 March 1995
Shimon Peres states that Israel is ready to propose a Middle East free of nuclear weapons and missiles as soon as
regional peace is assured.
—"'Father' of Israeli Atom Programme Proposes Nuclear-Free Middle East," The Times, 31 March 1995.

26 February 1995
A Saudi newspaper reports that Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres refuses to grant the Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Mussa access to the Dimona complex after prolonged Egyptian pressure to do so.

24 February 1995
A New York Times article reports on deteriorating relations between Israel and Egypt over recent Egyptian pressure on Israel to sign the NPT.

November 1994
Jane's Intelligence Review estimates in its November issue that Israel has 7 nuclear facilities and as many as 200 nuclear weapons in a detailed review based on satellite images of Israel. The report also indicates that Nachal Soreq is the installation where Israel conducts research on nuclear weapons design and claims that nuclear weapons are assembled at a facility in Yodefat.

27 January 1994
Israel invites Egyptian scientists to visit Dimona to verify that there is no basis to rumors about environmental damage caused by the reactor. Israeli officials accuse the Egyptian government of spreading rumors of radiation leaks for political reasons.

26 January 1994
Former Soviet KGB agent Yuri Linov reveals that he had penetrated Israel's top secret nuclear laboratories He claims that he entered Israel disguised as a Jewish immigrant from Austria in 1968. For five years he operated a ring of agents, including informants working at the reactors at Dimona and Nachal Soreq, but discovered, he believes, "nothing new."

9 June 1993
Israeli authorities take a group of journalists and environmentalists on a tour of the site adjacent to the Dimona facility to quell rumors that it is leaking contaminants into the surrounding environment.

Related content is available on the website for the Nuclear Threat Initiative, www.nti.org.
5 January 1993
The Egyptian Al-Sha'b newspaper alleges that Israel is increasing the capacity of the Dimona reactor in order to increase the yield of plutonium separation units.

December 1991
Israel returns 10.5 tons of heavy water to Norway, exactly half the amount if purchased in 1959 and 1971. Israeli officials say that the remaining 10.5 tons have been lost through waste and evaporation over the years.

24 October 1991
The New York-based journal *Nucleonics Week* reports that a fire broke out in at the Dimona reactor. Israeli officials deny the charge.

29 May 1991
American President George Bush proposes an initiative to create a nuclear weapons free zone in the Middle East. The proposed initiative, involving all permanent members of the United Nations Security Council, would also discontinue the sale of all non-conventional weapons to Middle Eastern states and would subject all nuclear facilities to International Atomic Energy Agency inspections.

25 February 1991
Iraq fires two SCUS missiles at Israel, one of them landing in the Negev desert region. Israeli officials report that the missiles caused no damage.

17 February 1991
Iraq claims to have carried out "destructive strikes" against the town of Dimona with three missiles. Israeli officials report that one missile landed in the Negev desert, but refuse to say if the Dimona reactor is the target.

January 1991
Israel goes on nuclear alert once during operation Desert Storm. Hundreds of nuclear warheads are armed in response to Iraqi Scud missile attacks against Israel.
— "Persian Gulf war: The revised version of the 'mother of all battles' was a dud. So, it turns out, was the

Related content is available on the website for the Nuclear Threat Initiative, [www.niti.org](http://www.niti.org).

**26 February 1990**

In a question and answer session with members of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, Deputy Foreign Minister Shimon Peres makes a public remark about Israel's nuclear program, referring to it as strategic asset. He says: "We have everything that a small nation can have. Tell me, are there any other countries that produce a plane of our own, a missile of our own, and tank of our own, a missile boat of our own?" He adds that, "we have something in Dimona which is called textile industry."


**1989-1970**

**May 1989**

The Director of U.S. Central Intelligence indicates that Israel may be seeking to construct a thermonuclear weapon.


**4 April 1989**

Israel and Norway agree to reopen talk on the 20 tons of heavy water Norway sold to Israel in 1959. The Norwegian government is still seeking permission to inspect the heavy water.


**27 March 1988**

Former Israeli nuclear technician Mordechai Vanunu is sentenced to 18 year in prison by an Israeli court for espionage.


**12 February 1988**

Egyptian semi-official newspaper *Al Ahram* alleges that Israel detonated a nuclear device in a test near the South Pole in 1979 and has exploded two more nuclear devices in Antarctica since then. The report also states that Norway, South Africa, and France were involved in the Antarctic nuclear tests.


**6 January 1988**

Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres testifies under subpoena against accused spy Mordechai Vanunu. Peres has been issued a restraining order limiting the scope of his testimony for the trial so as to avoid damage to Israel's policy of nuclear opacity.

1 May 1987
Israel denies a request by Norway to inspect the 20 tons of heavy water it sold to Israel in 1959.

12 October 1986
In an interview with the Sunday Times, former-head of the French Atomic Energy Commission Francis Perrin acknowledges that during the 1950's France provided Israel with the Dimona reactor, a plutonium extraction plant, and other technology relating to the design and development of nuclear weapons.

5 October 1986
The story of Mordechai Vanunu, an ex-technician at the Dimona reactor, is printed in the London Sunday Times, in which Vanunu reveals his knowledge of Israel's nuclear weapons program. The exposé alleges that Israel possesses more than 200 nuclear bombs, neutron bombs, F-16 deliverable warheads, and Jericho warheads. After the story's publication, Vanunu is kidnapped by Israeli agents, tried, and imprisoned.
—"Revealed: The Secrets of Israel's Nuclear Arsenal" (London) Sunday Times No. 8,461, 5 October 1986, 1, 4-5.

12 July 1985
A BBC report alleges that Israel armed nuclear missiles and that the Soviet Union deployed nuclear weapons to Egypt during the 1973 Yom Kippur War.

14 April 1985
French plans for the sale of a 900-megawatt nuclear power reactor to Israel are progressing, according to the Manchester Guardian Weekly. The deal, initiated in 1982 during a visit by French President François Mitterrand to Israel, is reported to be worth between $2 and $3 billion.

12 December 1984
An unidentified Reagan administration official states that the United States is opposed in principal to French plans to sell a nuclear reactor to Israel. The Administration is concerned with the financial burden such a sale would impose on Israel. American reactor manufacturers also oppose the reactor sale, estimated at $1 billion.

7 June 1981
Using US satellite imagery, Israeli forces attack the Iraqi nuclear reactor at Osiraq in order to maintain its nuclear monopoly in the Middle East. It is the first military strike in history against a nuclear reactor.

1 March 1980
The Telegraph Agency of the Soviet Union alleges that reported nuclear test of September of the previous year was

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a joint effort by the Israeli and South African governments. The test is said to be the manifestation of a longstanding cooperative relationship on nuclear weapons matters.
—"South Africa 'Working Hand in Glove' with Israel to Develop Nuclear Weapons," *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 1 March 1980.

22 February 1980
Israeli Defense Minister Ezer Weizman denies a report that Israel tested a nuclear bomb the previous year in cooperation with South Africa.

22 September 1979
American satellites observe a bright flash in the south Indian Ocean that is speculated to be a joint South African-Israeli nuclear test.

1979
The United States Defense Intelligence Agency concludes in a study that a cooperative nuclear relationship between Israel and South Africa exists and that its aim is to manufacture nuclear weapons.

1 June 1978
Iraqi United Nations representative Saadun Amadi denounces the alleged cooperative nuclear arrangement between Israel and South Africa, saying, "The Zionists provide the racists with nuclear technology and receive from them uranium in exchange."

June 1977
On 30 May *Time Magazine* alleges that 200 tons of uranium lost on the high seas were part of an elaborate scheme to smuggle fissile material into Israel for the production of nuclear bombs.

May 1977
At a fringe nuclear conference in Salzburg, Paul Leventhal, a former adviser to an American senate Committee on the spread of nuclear weapons, alleges that in 1968 Israel smuggled 200 tons of uranium from Antwerp to Israel via the high seas disappearance of a West German freighter bound for Genoa.

1977
Perhaps with Israeli complicity, South Africa prepares to conduct a nuclear test in the Kalahari Desert, but is prevented from doing so by U.S. and Soviet intervention.
1976
In a secret briefing to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, the Central Intelligence Agency expresses the opinion that Israel is somehow separating Dimona plutonium to produce bomb-quality material.

July 1975
Former *New York Times* writer Tad Szulc alleges that "the United States government, or elements of it in the Central Intelligence Agency acting independently, had given assistance to the Israeli nuclear program...in the wake of the 1956 Suez War." He charges that "U.S. aid had been given...as a quid pro quo for Israel's territorial withdrawals after the 1956 victory and its future cooperation."

Mid 1970s
Rumors circulate about nuclear weapons cooperation between Israel and Iran. The reports are never substantiated.

1974
The U.S. Central Intelligence Agency estimates that Israel has between ten and twenty nuclear weapons. This estimate is based on the assumption that has been able to separate enough plutonium for at least six bombs since 1970, in addition to those made with stolen uranium.

18 October 1973
A Soviet ship allegedly carrying nuclear weapons arrives in Alexandria, Egypt. The shipment of nuclear weapons to Egypt is intended to counterbalance Israel's nuclear capability in the context of the Yom Kippur War. This action may indicate a security guarantee between the Soviet Union and Egypt. United States President Richard Nixon puts the military on worldwide nuclear alert, prompting Israel to go on nuclear alert as well. Israel eventually agrees to a ceasefire and the Russian ship remains docked and unloaded until its departure in November.

8 October 1973
Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir makes the decision to assemble 13 twenty-kiloton atomic bombs in response to Egyptian and Syrian attacks during the Yom Kippur War. Jericho missiles at Hirbat Zachariah and nuclear strike F-4s at Tel Nof are armed for strikes against Egyptian and Syrian targets. US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger is
notified of these developments hours later on 9 October.

1972
Israeli scientists Isaiah Nebenzahl and Menachem Levin develop a quicker, more cost effective uranium enrichment method, which uses a laser beam to separate isotopes. The process is reported to be capable of enriching seven grams of Uranium 235 by sixty percent in a twenty-four hour period.

18 July 1970
In a New York Times article by Hedrick Smith, it becomes public knowledge that the U.S. government considers Israel to be in possession of an operational nuclear weapons capability. The story is prompted by comments by Senator Stuart Symington of the Armed Forces and Foreign Relations Committees made in response to briefing by Director of Central Intelligence Richard Helms on 7 July, marking the first occasion on which the CIA shares intelligence on Israel’s nuclear status with Congress.

7 July 1970
Director of Central Intelligence Richard Helms testifies before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that Israel has the means to build an atomic bomb.

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1969-1960
5 September 1969
The U.S. delivers F-4E Phantom jets, equipped with hardware enabling nuclear weapons delivery, to Israel. The State Department’s objections to the delivery are overruled by the Whitehouse, which denies the allegations that the delivery took place.

12 July 1969
American scientists visit the Dimona nuclear complex for the last time and the visitation program set up under

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President Kennedy and Levi Eshkol in 1963 is discontinued in 1970. The inspection team complains in writing that because the Israelis hurried and limited their earlier inspections and did not permit them to move about freely, they cannot guarantee that no weapons-related work is being done at Dimona.


**1969**
Ernst David Begrmann states in an interview that as early as 1949 or 1950 it was thought "at the highest political level" that France would be the logical source for nuclear assistance to Israel.


**1968 and 1969**
In his book *Israel’s Nuclear Arsenal*, Peter Pry alleges that Israeli agents in Britain and France make teargas attacks against government trucks carrying uranium in order to secure fuel for the Dimona reactor and nuclear weapons program.


**Early 1968**
An intense debate among leading Israeli security policymakers ensues. Nuclear weapons opponents Prime Minister Levi Eshkol, Mapai leader Golda Meir, and Cabinet Defense Committee member Yigal Allon veto the proposed construction of a plutonium separation plant. Shortly afterwards Eshkol discovers that Defense Minister Moshe Dyan has secretly ordered the start of construction on a separation plant. Eshkol and his advisers fail to stop construction already underway and approve the Defense Ministry’s project.


**Early 1968**
The U.S. Central Intelligence Agency reports that Israel has successfully produced four nuclear weapons. This assumption is based on conversations between Carl Duckett, head of the CIA’s Office of Science and Technology, and Edward Teller, father of the hydrogen bomb. Teller said that, based on conversations with friends in the Israeli scientific and defense establishment, he concluded that Israel was capable of building a nuclear weapon. Teller also asserted that Israel would not publicly test a nuclear device.


**1968**
Having lost its uranium supply from France, Israel is suspected to have executed Operation Plumbat, a clandestine action carried out by the Mossad. Using a West German front company, Israeli operatives secure 200 tons of uranium oxide in Antwerp. Mossad agents conduct a high seas, ship-to-ship transfer of the 560 barrels of uranium to another vessel in the Mediterranean. The secret cargo is then transported to Israel. The drums containing uranium are labeled "plumbat," meaning lead.


**14 June 1967**

A *New York Times* article alleges that authoritative sources in Tel Aviv report "that Israel's next move may be to make the atom bomb."


**June 1967**

During the Six-Day War, Israel mistakenly shoots down one of its own Mirage jetfighters for flying too close to the Dimona reactor facility. Israeli Prime Minister Levi Eshkol orders that both of the two Israeli nuclear warheads be armed during what becomes the country's first nuclear alert.


**Pre-June 1967**

Israel considers overflights by Egyptian Air Force planes possible reconnaissance for an impending military strike. Such overflights, along with the withdrawal of United Nations peacekeeping forces and the repositioning of Egyptian troops to the Sinai, are reportedly triggers to a possible Israeli preemptive strike.


**17 May 1967**

Egyptian aircraft make high-altitude reconnaissance flights over Dimona. The reactors at Nachal Soreq and Dimona become high-priority targets for Egypt in the Six Day War.


**May 1967**

Israeli Defense Ministerial Committee member Yigal Allon amends his 1959 list of situations that would justify Israel in launching a preemptive war to include "an aerial attack on nuclear reactors and scientific institutions."


**May 1967**

Israel assembles two nuclear bombs ten days before the outbreak of the Six Day War.


**Related content is available on the website for the Nuclear Threat Initiative, www.nti.org.**
22 April 1967
American scientists visit Dimona, again finding no evidence of weapon-related activities.

1967
An anonymous French source alleges that Israel sends France 40 tons of Dimona's spent fuel, rich with plutonium, and the French technicians separate and return "about half" or at least enough for "fifteen to twenty bombs."

1967
France discontinues uranium supplies to Israel collected from the former French colonies Gabon, Niger, and the Central African Republic.

1967
An Israeli-Brazilian nuclear agreement concludes.

2 November 1966
Israel is suspected of performing some type of non-nuclear test as part of its continued pursuit of nuclear capability. It is assumed to have been a zero-yield or implosion test in the Negev desert.

November 1966
An accident occurs at the Dimona complex, the cleanup of which lasts until February 1967.

October 1966
According to some Western sources, Israel conducts an underground nuclear test at Al-Naqab in the Negev desert.

18 May 1966
Prime Minister Levi Eshkol tells the Knesset that Israel will not be the first to introduce nuclear weapons into the region. He also states that Israel does not possess nuclear weapons. He tells the Knesset that his government reserves the right to continue research and training at Dimona, but that the atomic bomb development program has been terminated.

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May 1966
Prime Minister Levi Eshkol fires long-time proponent of the nuclear program Ernst Bergman from his position as Chairman of the Israel Atomic Energy Commission. The IAEC is reformed and transferred out of the Ministry of Defense to the Prime Minister’s office. Eshkol assumes chairmanship of the IAEC and new commission members are appointed whose background relate primarily to the civilian uses of nuclear energy.

2 April 1966
American scientists visit Dimona. The visit is disclosed in the *New York Times* three months later, embarrassing Israeli President Levi Eshkol.

1966
Israel is capable of producing weapons-grade fissile material, weapons design, and the testing of delivery means. According to French CEA official Pierre Pean, “the first plutonium extraction tests took place during the second half of 1965,” and by 1966 Israel had enough plutonium to “manufacture the bomb during 1966, or at the latest early 1967.”

Late 1960s
The United States proposes to give Israel technical assistance and $40 million for construction of a nuclear desalinization plant if Israel agrees to international safeguards on the Dimona complex. Israel refuses.

10 March 1965
After failing to persuade Israeli officials to accept IAEA safeguards on the Dimona reactor, White House aide Robert Komer compromises with Levi Eshkol, the result of which is a "Memorandum of Understanding" between the two states. The document expresses the United States' "concern for the maintenance of Israel's security" and renews its commitment to the "independence and integrity of Israel." Israel in turn reaffirms its pledge that it "will not be the first to introduce nuclear weapons into the Arab-Israel area." The document further solidifies Israel doctrine of nuclear opacity.

28 January 1965
American scientists visit Dimona.

1965
The U.S. government accuses Zalman Shapiro, president of the Nuclear Materials and Equipment Corporation (NUMEC) in Apollo, Pennsylvania, of "losing" 200 pounds of highly enriched uranium. Investigations by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Central Intelligence Agency, and the Atomic Energy Commission are inconclusive. Some
allege that the misplaced uranium eventually found its way to the Israeli nuclear program. The decommissioning of NUMEC in the early 1980’s, however, casts doubt on such allegations when over 100 kilograms of unaccounted for uranium are discovered throughout the facility.


1965

The Egyptian Air Force claims to possess aerial reconnaissance intelligence obtained in overflights of the Negev desert identifying the Dimona complex as a nuclear reactor. Half of the 50 HAWK antiaircraft missiles provided to Israel by the U.S. are reportedly positioned around the Dimona complex.


1965

East German President Walter Ulbricht alleges that Israel and West Germany have concluded “joint preparations to produce atomic weapons,” but offers no proof of his allegations.

— Pry, Peter, Israel’s Nuclear Arsenal (Boulder, Colorado: Westview, 1984), 35.

1965

The French complete work on an underground plutonium reprocessing plant at the Dimona complex.


1965

Israeli military officials participate in testing of French nuclear devices in the Saharan Desert.


December 1963

The Dimona reactor goes into operation.

— Pry, Peter, Israel’s Nuclear Arsenal (Boulder, Colorado: Westview, 1984), 12.

5 August 1963

Israel signs the Partial Test Ban Treaty in Moscow.

Related content is available on the website for the Nuclear Threat Initiative, www.nti.org.
17 April 1963
Egypt, Syria, and Iraq sign in Cairo an Arab Federation Proclamation calling for a military union to bring about the liberation of Palestine. The proclamation is a step towards the realization of Israeli Prime Minister David Ben Gurion’s greatest fear—a Pan-Arab military alliance bent on Israel’s destruction.

2 April 1963
In an informal meeting with President Kennedy at the White House, Shimon Peres states that Israel "will not introduce nuclear weapons to the region, and certainly will not be the first," laying the groundwork for what is to become Israel’s doctrine of nuclear opacity for years to come.

January 1963
Israeli Deputy Defense Minister Shimon Peres declares that the Dimona complex is to play part in the Defense Ministry’s plan to desalinate a billion cubic meters of seawater annually for the irrigation of the Negev Desert. Aharon Wiener, director of the Israel Water Company Tahal, calls this statement "unfounded."

October 1962
Israeli Foreign Minister Golda Meir addresses the United Nations General Assembly on the subject of Israel’s attitude toward nuclear weapons, stating that "Israel watches with special concern the growing nuclear arming and it is our declared policy to support every effort to remove the awful dangers to humanity arising out of the continuation of this process. Israel therefore supports every means that may limit and decrease weapons in the world."

26 September 1962
The second visit by American scientists to the Dimona complex takes place.

1962 to 1969
In response to U.S. pressure, Israel commits to use its nuclear facility for only peaceful purposes and allows American teams to inspect the facility twice a year. The inspection teams, however, do not see much of the facility, especially the underground portions hidden by Israeli agents.

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1962
The Dimona reactor, officially known as the Negev Nuclear Research Center, goes critical.

1962
Communist and Mapam Knesset members propose a resolution advocating the establishment of a nuclear weapons free zone covering Israel and the Arab states. Prime Minister Ben Gurion responds by recalling that his government backed the Basic Principles approved by the Knesset in 1959 that advocate total regional disarmament, including the abolition of all armed forces, "on condition that constant and unhampered mutual control of this agreement is assured and that the borders and sovereignty of these States are not affected."

30 May 1961
President Kennedy and Ben Gurion meet at the Waldorf Astoria Hotel in New York to discuss Dimona.

20 May 1961
As part of a diplomatic nonproliferation offensive launched by President Kennedy, two AEC scientists visit the Dimona reactor in the Negev desert. The visit, set up by Kennedy and Ben Gurion, is the first by American scientists to the reactor complex.

January 1961
Israeli Prime Minister David Ben Gurion informs the Knesset that the Dimona complex is not in fact a textile plant or a pumping station (as he had previously stated to foreign leaders), but a "scientific institute for research in problems of arid zones and desert flora and fauna."

21 December 1960
In the Prime Minister's only public statement about the Dimona reactor, David Ben Gurion tells the Knesset that no bombs are being built and that the complex "is designed exclusively for peaceful purposes."

16 December 1960
Precipitated by a Time magazine article alleging that a "small power... neither of the communist nor the NATO bloc" was developing a nuclear weapons capability, the London Daily Express names Israel as the state, adding that "British and American intelligence authorities believe that the Israelis are well on their way to building their first nuclear bomb." Two days later AEC Chairman Jon McConne appears on the television program "Meet the Press" to confirm that Israel is building a nuclear reactor and that the United States has inquired with the Israeli government

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about it. The following day's *New York Times* also runs a similar exposé on the Israel's secret nuclear program.


**8 December 1960**
The U.S. Central Intelligence Agency issues a report outlining Dimona's implications for nuclear proliferation.


**2 December 1960**
Before Israel can voluntarily disclose its nuclear program, the U.S. State Department issues a statement revealing Israel's secret nuclear installation.


**Mid 1960**
The Central Intelligence Agency tells President Eisenhower that what is being constructed in the Negev Desert at Dimona is a large nuclear reactor with the potential for producing fissionable material in quantities sufficient to produce nuclear weapons—about 1.2 per year.


**16 June 1960**
The reactor at Nachal Soreq is activated under safeguards to prevent it from producing weapons-usable material.


**13 February 1960**
France tests its first nuclear device. It is believed that collaboration between French and Israeli scientists is so extensive that the test represents the creation of two nuclear powers. Israeli observers are reported to be granted "unrestricted access to French nuclear test explosion data."


**1960 to 1966**
The United States provides Israel with 50 kilograms of uranium-235, of 90% purity, to fuel the reactor at Nachal Soreq. This amount of uranium of this purity could be used to manufacture several bombs.


**1960 to 1965**
The French government permits the nuclear company Saint-Gobain Nucleaire (SGN) to construct the Dimona

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reactor.

1960 to 1964
France may have helped Israel design and detonate its own nuclear device at the Reggan or Ekker proving grounds in Algeria.

1960
France, now under the leadership of Charles De Gaulle, terminates nuclear assistance to Israel before the Dimona reactor is operational. After several months of negotiations, however, France agrees to proceed with construction on the conditions that Israel announces the project and pledges not to pursue a weapons program.

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3 October 1957
A formal agreement for the construction of the Dimona nuclear facility is signed by French officials. Shimon Peres assures French Foreign Minister Christian Peneau that the reactor will be used only for "scientific research."

20 March 1957
Israel signs a formal agreement with the United State for the construction of a small swimming-pool research reactor at Nachal Soreq as part of the Atoms for Peace program.

Early 1957
The EL-102 reactor that France had agreed to supply to Israel before the Suez operation is upgraded to a large plutonium-processing reactor along the same lines as the French G-1 reactor at Marcoule (40-MW thermal power).

1957
The Eisenhower administration inquires about the establishment of a strict security zone and heavy construction occurring at Dimona, Israeli Prime Minister David Ben Gurion responds with assurances that the project is a textile plant. Later, the project is called a pumping station.

1957
Several West German newspapers report that Israelis and Germans are working together on atomic weapons technology.

November 1956
Under the direction of President Guy Mollet, the French government agrees to supply Israel with a twenty-four-thermal-megawatt natural uranium reactor. From this point on, French and Israeli scientists collaborate towards the development of their respective nuclear weapons programs.

29 October 1956
The Suez operation begins. For the United Kingdom and France, the operation is a failure. Despite Israeli military success, Britton and France cede to a ceasefire in response to pressure from the U.S. and Soviet Union, which issues an implicit threat of nuclear attack if Israel does not withdraw from the Sinai.

Related content is available on the website for the Nuclear Threat Initiative, www.nti.org.
21 September 1956
Israeli Director-General of the Defense Ministry Shimon Peres meets with French Foreign Minister Maurice Bourges-Maunoury, who agrees to provide Israel with a nuclear reactor. The agreement is reached at a secret meeting held outside Paris where they also finalize the specifics of Israel’s role in the Suez Canal operation. Israeli support in the Suez operation is accepted in exchange for French aid to Israel’s nuclear efforts.
—Golan, Matti, Peres (Tel Aviv: Schocken Books, 1982), 54 as cited in Raviv, Dan and Melman, Yossi, Every Spy a Prince: the Complete History of Israel’s Intelligence Community, (Boston, Massachusetts: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1990), 63-69.

Mid-1956
The IAEC submits the information needed for its request for a $350,000 American grant for a small, pool-type reactor.

22 June 1956
Precipitated by a Czech-Egyptian arms deal of the previous year that more than doubles Egypt's conventional forces, Israel formalizes a comprehensive security understanding with the French government of Guy Mollet in the city of Vermars.

11 April 1956
A large IAEC delegation visits the AEC headquarters to discuss Israel's nuclear plans.

1956
Israeli Prime Minister David Ben Gurion writes that "what Einstein, Oppenheimer, and Teller, the three of them are Jews, made for the United States could also be done by scientist in Israel for their own people."

12 July 1955
Under the Atoms for Peace program, Israel and the United States sign a general agreement for peaceful nuclear cooperation, including an agreement for the sale of a small research reactor. It is to be a light water or "swimming pool" type, 5-megawatt reactor.
— Pry, Peter, Israel's Nuclear Arsenal (Boulder, Colorado: Westview, 1984), 5, Cohen, Avner, Israel and the Bomb (New York: Colombia University Press, 1998), 44.

1955 to 1967
Israel spends over $600 million purchasing weapons from France, including $75 million for a nuclear reactor.

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1955 to 1960
Under the auspices of the Atoms for Peace program, 56 Israelis receive training in the United States Atomic Energy Commission research centers at the Argonne National Laboratory and at Oak Ridge.

20 January 1954
Israeli Defense Minister Pinhas Lavon makes the decision to move the physics department of Machon 4 to the Weizmann Institute. On 1 May of the same year the Department of Nuclear Physics at the Weizmann Institute is founded, with Amos de Shalit as its head.

Late 1953
Two Israeli scientists, Zvi Lipkin and Israel Pelah, are sent to the French Nuclear Research Centers at Saclay and Chatillon to study reactor physics.

December 1953
President Dwight Eisenhower launches the Atoms for Peace campaign in an address before the United Nations General Assembly, calling for the establishment of an international uranium stockpile to be controlled and dispensed by a new international atomic energy agency. This program will later lead to the construction of the research reactor at Nachal Soreq.

1953
In an effort to cultivate a scientific relationship with French officials, Ernst David Bergmann negotiates with CEA officials the sale of two patents (chemical uranium extraction and heavy water production) for possible commercial production. Israel receives 60 million (old) francs for the new technology.

1953
Technical exchanges between the Israeli Atomic Energy Commission (IAEC) and the French Commissariat of Atomic Energy (CEA) begin and a formal agreement on cooperation between France and Israel in nuclear research is drafted.

1953
Israeli scientists perfect the uranium extraction process and develop a new procedure for making heavy water, both essential components of a nuclear weapons program.
— "Israel's nuclear defense history," Los Angeles Times, 12 October 2003.

Related content is available on the website for the Nuclear Threat Initiative, www.nti.org.
June 1952
Israel secretly founds its own Atomic Energy Commission (IAEC) under the control of the Israeli Defense Ministry.

15 July 1951
David Ben Gurion appoints Ernst David Bergmann his scientific advisor.

Late 1940s and early 1950s
The U.S. Department of Defense and the National Institutes of Health provide financial support to the Weizmann Institute on defense-related projects.

1949
Francis Perrin, a member of the French Atomic Energy Commission and nuclear physicist, visits the Weizmann Institute. He invites Israeli scientists to the new French research facility at Saclay and a joint research effort is subsequently set up between the two states.

1949
The Weizmann Institute establishes a Department of Isotope Research.

1949
The newly created Weizmann Institute of Science actively supports nuclear research by funding the postgraduate education of promising young Israeli scientist abroad. These scientists are intended to become the foundation of a nuclear weapons program.

Late 1948
Ben Gurion meets with Jewish, Palestinian-born physicist Moshe Sordin, who is working on construction of the first French nuclear reactor.

Related content is available on the website for the Nuclear Threat Initiative, www.nti.org.
14 May 1948
Israel declares itself a sovereign state after the British withdraw from Palestine.

April 1948
In a letter to an operative in Europe, Ben Gurion instructs him to recruit Eastern European scientists who can "either increase the capacity to kill masses or cure masses; both things are important."

March 1948
The General Staff of Haganah officially recognizes the scientific unit as a staff unit in the operations branch. This unit is responsible for coordinating and assigning tasks to the newly created Ha’il Mada, or Science Corps, commonly known by the Hebrew acronym HEMED.

1948
Israeli scientists actively explore the Negev Desert for uranium deposits on orders of the Israeli Ministry of Defense. These efforts reveal low-grade deposits near Sidon and Beersheba.

1948
Israeli scientist Ernst David Bergmann contends that "by developing atomic energy for peaceful uses, you reach the nuclear option. There are no two atomic energies."

Mid 1947
Chairman of the Jewish Agency David Ben Gurion creates a scientific department at the headquarters of Haganah, the semi-official Jewish defense organization, and allocates it a mandatory annual budget of 10,000 pounds.

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