

1993**Interview with Walt Rostow by Avner Cohen****Citation:**

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Summary:

Transcript of interview by Avner Cohen with Walt Rostow. Rostow served as national security advisor to US president Johnson. In this interview, Rostow discusses the US perspective on Israeli nuclear capability through the 1960s and 70s.

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Contents:

Transcript - English

Walt Rostow (Tape A-12)[\[1\]](#)

Interviewer: Dr. Avner Cohen

Rostow: I assumed that they [Israel] were making a bomb.

Cohen: You did?

Rostow: Yes. I assumed that. I assumed they were holding it in reserve against the Arab world, they were holding it in reserve as a form of restraint on the Arab world. And that, in the long run I didn't think it was a wise policy.

Cohen: On the side of Israel?

Rostow: On the side of Israel.

Cohen: Could they build the bomb?

Rostow: I didn't think it was . . . this is a very long line and we were faced with a situation which is [Gamal] Nasser[\[2\]](#) turned . . . Nasser was a bifurcated character. At times he knew that he was . . . he tried to make Egypt work economically. At times he was a big brother to the Arab world and so on and as he got older and started having diabetes and [his] heart trouble got worse he was a sucker for, people forget what brought his downfall, the Yemeni [unclear]. And so he went over to the Yemeni and so on and we had no time with him simply because he was such a mix[ed]-up character. And he, of course, went into the territory of the Sinai and I remember asking, our asking about it because the protocol between the Israeli foreign ministry and Dulles was obscure. We had a very good relationship with Eisenhower which I carried on with through [Andrew] Goodpaster[\[3\]](#). I said, "Good Bessie, go on and tell Ike, was it a deal or not a deal?"

Cohen: Who did you ask to check that?

Rostow: Eisenhower!

Cohen: No, but who did you ask, who did you call yourself?

Rostow: Goodpaster, don't pester me [audio unclear]. Was it a deal or not a deal?

Cohen: Did you promise or didn't you promise?

Rostow: The promise was [to keep] Aqaba open.[\[4\]](#)

Cohen: Right.

Rostow: Turned out we promised a few things.

Cohen: Right. But you didn't find it first?

Rostow: We couldn't find it first in documents and so on but Eisenhower was absolutely clear.

Cohen: That he did promise.

Rostow: He did promise, and Ike is . . . I tell you the Israelis and the whole business of the misunderstanding of Washington. They didn't understand that the president would honor that deal, [the?] previous president, and would have honored it and had the Dutch and Harold Holt^[5] sent cruisers, the British backed out . . . The British had the regatta that originally, but they . . .

Cohen: Let me ask you this . . .

Rostow: Yes.

Cohen: You were National Security Advisor on the eve of the war, including the war itself. Did you know, did you remember knowing that in fact before the war Israel had already nuclear weapons - two - [they] obviously [were] not prepared to use it, but it was assembled for the first time in case they would be attacked because at one point, actually shortly before Foreign Minister [Abba] Eban^[6] saw the President there was, I think it was on May 25th or May 26th . . .

Rostow: It was May 27th.

Cohen: That it [Dimona] was going to be attacked.^[7]

Rostow: Yes.

Cohen: And they came to you, but the CIA was not certain about that. But they felt very strongly about that and [that] one of the targets to be attacked was Dimona. Do you recall that?

Rostow: I don't remember the attack, the targeting of Dimona. I remember very well how it transpired from the middle of May. In the middle of May the Russians threw a match on the kerosene. They said that they [Israel] were massing troops on the Syrian frontier and then the Syrians, claiming brotherhood, went to Nasser and Jordan . . . they threw themselves into this at their own peril. And it was a . . . from that moment, the question of targeting was not the issue. The issue was whether the Israelis would jump off under this pressure.

Cohen: Right.

Rostow: Because an Egyptian turned up in . . . master of all the Arab armies. He had the commandos who were targeting the air fields which were proximate to the border and it was, you know, war [laughs]. I was quite comfortable with the war, I mean [unclear] and I didn't . . . I had assumed they'd attacked Dimona, but that they would find it very difficult to penetrate. It was . . . I warned the President that time was running out. We had . . .

Cohen: Before Eban?

Rostow: After Eban. Remember that on the 30th, three days after Eban, Eshkol^[8] gave us two weeks.

Cohen: That's right, and then he sent the head of the Mossad^[9].

Rostow: Mossad was over there, he went around seeing everybody. He didn't see the

President. There was a pretty big gap between the President and the Secretary of State and the Secretary of Defense.

Cohen: I know.

Rostow: He saw everybody else and came back and reported that the Americans would prefer our . . .

Cohen: He saw you?

Rostow: He saw me but I told him, I told him straight away that that the President felt he would open Aqaba to defuse the crisis and it was in Israel's interest that there not be a war. That he should let the President have a say at this. Now the long winded story about the President having leaked to the Israelis through the, I don't know [unclear, speaking very quietly] New York.

Cohen: Abe Feinberg^[10]?

Rostow: Abe Feinberg, that's right. Abe Feinberg.

Cohen: I want to ask you about Abe.

Rostow: And Abe was . . . lovely old [unclear] now. But he sends his cards and so on. I liked him. I'm telling you what I thought of the President and I talked to the President after he was president and he always, always felt it was a mistake for Israel to . . .

Cohen: To attack.

Rostow: But he couldn't . . .

Cohen: Did he [President Johnson] feel he [was] being cheated?

Rostow: No. He didn't because between the time [when] he told Eshkol . . .

Cohen: Two weeks.

Rostow: Two weeks, and keep your shirt on or you'll be alone, have to fight alone unless you're there . . . ^[11] He was having the Foreign Minister of Egypt come to Washington, but a lot was happening in the Middle East.

Cohen: That's right.

Rostow: And I wrote the President a memo that it felt like a coiled spring. You've probably seen it.

Cohen: Yes.

Rostow: That . . . this was after the fellow from Mossad [Meir Amit^[12]]. I don't know whether we can hold them. It was about that time that he had three evaluations made. And the evaluations said the Israelis would win in five days if they took the initiative in ten days that the . . .

Cohen: The attack.

Rostow: The attack. One was, I don't know who, [but] he had three different estimates. Maybe more, [the] British had . . . but the President knew, he knew that in a showdown we would be drawn into . . . defending Israel . . . he knew that . . . so . . .

Cohen: Did he know at the time that Israel already had two bombs? You don't think so?

Rostow: You know this I can't answer. I wish I could answer. If I were put against the wall and made to answer I would say yes, he knew.

Cohen: You think so?

Rostow: He knew they had the bomb. But I wouldn't be sure of it. And I can't, I'm a historian so unless I get at my own . . .

Cohen: No documents show this. I'll tell you something about when the President for the first time saw it, knew it. Because I think he may know about it too. The director of the CIA in '68, [Richard] Helms,[\[13\]](#) he came to the President and brought a report for "eyes only" saying to the President for the first time that we are convinced Israel either has the bomb or has the whole components for the bomb. This was the first time in '68, I believe. I do believe also that Mike Feldman[\[14\]](#) knew it earlier from whatever contact he may have had. I don't think that the bureaucracy [knew] because there is [nothing] to be brought, because for example in '68 when there is a big thing for the F-4 including the intervention of Abe Fienberg, you know from the very . . .

Rostow: That was around Christmas time we almost burnt down the birthplace of the President.[\[15\]](#) And then the first time it was use . . . Luke Battle[\[16\]](#), Luke Battle is someone you should . . .

Cohen: It's what?

Rostow: You should interview Luke Battle, is he still alive?

Cohen: I don't know.

Rostow: He was a character in all this.

Cohen: I'll tell you whom I talked to. With Paul Warnke.[\[17\]](#) Paul Warnke was doing the negotiation on the F-4 with Ambassador [Yitzhak] Rabin,[\[18\]](#) he and Ambassador [Parker T.] Hart.[\[19\]](#)

Rostow: We had the F-4 as being under the F-4. We thought down the road and we said we wouldn't . . . Said we'd give it to the Israelis if we would get an arms control deal. We wanted to get the arms control deal with the Russians.

Voice in Background: Mark.

[Rostow receives a phone call, personal conversation excised]

[Gap in Tape]

Rostow: I never talked to the President about it.

Cohen: About it . . .

Rostow: About the . . . I watch the intelligence; I'm an old intelligence officer. And I assumed they either had the bomb or would get the bomb. So I assumed they had the bomb but the bomb wasn't . . . we didn't want to have a nuclear war in the area. Neither did the Israelis want a nuclear war in the area. That's one of the reasons they jumped off. I say five days saved so many Israeli lives. It was a really hairy situation that . . . once Nasser decided to go into the Sinai.

Cohen: But you think that American intelligence knew for sure? Because none of the documents that were circulating . . .

Rostow: I don't know, you see as a historian I can report you what is in the back of my mind.

Cohen: Right.

Rostow: I assumed they had a couple of bombs [up] their sleeves which they would only use in desperation.

Cohen: Last resort, right.

Rostow: If it came to that, our whole job was . . . I'm not going into that . . . It was in the American interest that they succeed and they succeed in a way that they maintain . . . hold their frontiers. And it was in the Israeli interest that they not be penetrated, be thrown back into the sea and [unclear], so the, I don't know what the end of the story will be. The reason that I spoke to, oh what's his name, number two, you'd know . . .

Cohen: At the embassy?

Rostow: At the embassy.

Cohen: F. E. Burns[20].

Rostow: F.E. Burns. Yes, very close friend of mine, I didn't tell him that I knew, that we knew from good intelligence that the Egyptian air force was washed out. We knew that immediately. And I didn't . . . We had a long reflective talk at the evening of the . . .

Cohen: First day?

Rostow: First day. I said that the only thing that could wreck the Israeli thing was hubris and putting the columns out there [unclear, speaking near whisper]. And I think it was wrong. But the point is that I am not the last judge of this . . . History will be.

Cohen: But let's go back to . . . do you have any specific recollections of those

because you sent people, including two or three of those before the war when you were National Security Advisor, to Dimona in the Culler Report in '64, '65, '66, '67[21], two months before the war.

Rostow: I sent out . . .

Cohen: A team of about three and four members from the AEC, they went to Dimona . . .

Rostow: I was working very closely with the very good guys, a Nobel Prize winner, AEC at the time.

Cohen: [Glenn T.] Seaborg.[22]

Rostow: Seaborg. Right. I don't remember . . .

Cohen: You don't have any specific details about that?

Rostow: I don't remember.

Cohen: Let me ask . . .

Rostow: I am a very careful historian. I will tell you precisely what I know and what I felt and so on.

Cohen: Let me ask you two or three more questions . . . general and maybe if you recall something specific. What was the power and the influence and the relationship between Abe Fienberg and the President and how did he handle [it]? What was the certain thing he [was] doing about Israeli affairs? Do you recall anything specific?

Rostow: I . . . that was a channel the President handled himself. It was all mixed up with money he [the President] was raising.[23] As everything can be and it was an extra channel that he had. It is quite proper for a President to have things he doesn't tell his National Security Advisor. Quite proper. Some things he told the National Security Advisor he didn't tell everyone else, like Pope. It's a complicated job, being President of the United States, and it's not less complicated now.

Cohen: But it's more complicated than . . . the citizen . . .

Rostow: That's right.

Cohen: Almost lobbying on behalf of the state.

Rostow: I didn't worry about the nuclear question very much because our job was to defend all, was to make sure it didn't rise. But in the long run the only . . . we . . . in '68 . . .

Cohen: Especially the NPT [The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons [24]], this is the time when the NPT is coming to being, Dean Rusk[25] is heavily involved . . .

Rostow: Yes.

Cohen: He wants very much for the Israelis to sign it. Do you recall anything specific around that?

Rostow: The Israelis didn't sign it.

Cohen: Of course.

Rostow: That's right. They didn't sign it. I just assumed they had the bomb. The Dimona story is an old story. They're not stupid, they worked this long, they had the bomb. Of course. But that didn't make any deep impression on me, that they had the bomb, because they wouldn't use it unless it was in extreme need.

Cohen: Sure.

Rostow: The whole game was to keep it from being used.

Cohen: Did they ever assure you that?

Rostow: No!

Cohen: Did they ever talk to you about that? What about when Rabin . . .

Rostow: The only fellow who ever talked to me about it was . . .

Cohen: It had been promised that "no introduction" meaning no tests, no declaration you recall . . .

Rostow: I don't remember that.

Cohen: The deal for the F-4 orders [\[26\]](#) saying we are not going to declare, we are not going to test.

Rostow: We may have made that promise to the President but that was out at the ranch. [\[27\]](#) We had the F-4 discussion.

Cohen: What do you remember of that?

Rostow: I remember the deal as follows . . .

Cohen: When was that, Christmas?

Rostow: Christmas?

Cohen: After Nixon took over?

Rostow: No! It was Christmas 1967. That's when . . .

Cohen: Oh, Ok.

Rostow: That's when made the . . .

Cohen: Before Eshkol came.

Rostow: Before we met . . .

Cohen: Eshkol.

Rostow: Kosygin[\[28\]](#), at Glassboro.

Cohen: Ok, Ok.

Rostow: The President really wanted to see . . . out of the war in the Middle East. The smoke had settled by the time, the . . . Russia did a very foolish thing: [they] started a war. And we fixed up the Israelis so they'd get the F-4s at the same time they would have necessarily gotten them, but the President would have the breathing space to try for a for a Middle East arms control.

Cohen: So the deal was he probably would say yes, and once he would say yes, they get in the early '70s, they wouldn't have to wait but give him a full year until December next year to see what he can do in terms of . . .

Rostow: That's right. I remember the deal, now I am remembering, I remember there being something in '67.

Cohen: This was the deal with Israel, or am I . . .

Rostow: The people around the President.

Cohen: The people around the President.

Rostow: Yes, it was with the Israelis too. The head of the Air Force was now a politician, a very attractive fellow.

Cohen: Ezer Weizmann.[\[29\]](#)

Rostow: Ezer Weizmann, yeah.

[Personal conversation excised]

Rostow: I remember liking the airman and the deal we arrived at was a satisfactory deal. The President worked his heart out; he used every device of persuasion. Everything he could do. But this, this area can do neither of us any good, nothing but harm. They had been through hell in Moscow. Blamed for not intervening, and you promised to intervene, you started a war. Nasser left that out. Well of course he was not negotiating with the President and the Soviet Union. Cause he and the President . . . that's why we came back on Sunday because he had a report and instructions.

Cohen: You recall that the Israeli ask[ed] you because you freeze, the United States freezes the supply of arms to Israel for about three or four months after the '67 war. And they are really asking you because the French also put an embargo [against Israel] under [Charles] de Gaulle.[\[30\]](#) And they really ask you please stop this freeze and allow us [to] get aid for the Skyhawks[\[31\]](#). And then you allow them to have twelve more Skyhawks.

Rostow: That was before the F-4s?

Cohen: That's right. That's right. You recall that?

Rostow: Vaguely.

Cohen: Vaguely. Right. Right.

Rostow: Don't trust me on that.

Cohen: No I know, I'm looking at the documents but I'm . . . what do you recall about the NPT in terms of Dean Rusk? Because Dean Rusk, how much [did] you [feel] that Dean Rusk knew everything the President knew especially about the NPT and about . . . because there are certain things he didn't know.

Rostow: Well I don't want . . . I don't know what Rusk's assumption was about them already producing the bomb. I didn't articulate this, I don't remember articulating this. I assumed it, I took it for granted.

Cohen: That's very interesting what you're saying. You didn't articulate [it], you just assumed it.

Rostow: I assumed it, and I assumed that's what the President thought. He didn't think the Israelis were fools.

Cohen: Right. But it was [a] deal with very, very sensitive, [and needed to be dealt with] in a very sensitive way.

Rostow: Very sensitive way. I didn't chat about it with my...I worked . . . There were very few secrets I had from my small staff. I had a very, very good staff and I can still see it in the figures. We inherited a big staff from the Eisenhower administration. Mac Bundy and I came into [unclear]. I'd been a consultant all through the Eisenhower years; I knew how dreadful this big machinery was. We were down to twelve men. That's all.

Cohen: As you recall your two aids on the Middle East; first were [was] Bob Komer . . .

Rostow: Well Bob Komer, very quickly . . .

[Cohen and Rostow talking over each other]

Cohen: And then you had Hal Saunders.[\[32\]](#)

Rostow: Hal Saunders, right. I never leveled, I never talked with Hal Saunders about Dimona.

Cohen: About what?

Rostow: About the Israel nuclear . . .

Cohen: Nuclear?

Rostow: Facility.

Cohen: It was so sensitive?

Rostow: I just didn't think I probably should have that discussion.

Cohen: Do you recall . . .

Rostow: On the whole he was a very well balanced fellow.

Cohen: Hal Saunders?

Rostow: Yeah.

Cohen: But do you recall Dick Helms ever going to the President and telling him [unclear] can tell you . . . this was in '68.

Rostow: [If] he did have, he didn't tell me.

Cohen: He did not tell you?

Rostow: He did not tell me.

Cohen: And, according to the story, Dick Helms confirmed that. The President told him, and [told] me how much you are surprised with that, don't tell anybody, this was an "eyes-only" memorandum, don't tell anybody including Secretary [Robert] McNamara^[33] and Dean Rusk about the Israeli thing.

Rostow: He didn't tell me. He didn't tell anybody. He was very highly disciplined. See, I brought in Bus Wheeler ^[34] and Dick Helms to the Tuesday lunch . . .

Cohen: Every week?

Rostow: President should have the advice of the security . . . of an intelligence officer professional who is capable of saying here [unclear] and the President say, "Aw, what do you think," and President should have . . . and Wheeler . . .

[Rostow receives a phone call, personal conversation excised]

Rostow: How many more questions do you [have]?

Cohen: A few more. Yeah, a few minutes. We're talking about the President and Rusk and McNamara and you and how much the President kept certain circuits just for himself.

Rostow: That's right yeah...Very few things, but certain things. I just don't know. The President trusted me, I think. The President trusted his National Security Advisor, but that was up to him. I just assumed they had the bomb and he assumed they had the bomb. If I had to guess whether he assumed they had the bomb I'd say yes, he assumed they had the bomb. He turned to Helms and he said, I think his view . . .

Cohen: Helms came to him.

Rostow: Yeah, Helms came to him, that's right. And when he said to Helms, "Don't tell anybody," he meant it.

Cohen: He mentioned not [to tell] McNamara [and] not [to tell] Rusk.

Rostow: Yes. Well, the poor fellow, the chief of Mossad [Meir Amit] spoke to McNamara and Rusk. Rusk was worried about it and the President was completely unworried about opening Aqaba. Remember, he put an aircraft carrier through the canal in the middle of all this. And it was going to meet two cruisers coming from Australia and he was going to clean out Aqaba because it was a promise from one President to another [from Eisenhower to Kennedy].

Cohen: And you found it, you found, you got the OK from Eisenhower on that.

Rostow: Yes. We got that from Eisenhower through Goodpaster [unclear, speaking very softly] and . . .

Cohen: You know one thing which is kind of interesting historically, Dean Rusk felt . . . I don't think the President felt anything, you're right the President didn't feel that way. He felt a little bit disappointed because of what happened but he felt the Israeli you know . . . but Dean Rusk felt personally somewhat deceived about that.

Rostow: Well I warned him, you've read the memo and understand that on the weekend before I said I don't think you'll have to leave.

Cohen: That's right. That memo is very well known now.

Rostow: Is it?

Cohen: Yeah.

Rostow: Just think, press . . . did they use the image of the press [unclear]?

Cohen: I think so. I can fax you a few pages because there is a number of books about that with very specific of your memo.

Rostow: I put that behind me, that kind of books and . . .

[Tape ends]

[1] This transcript has been edited lightly for readability purposes and annotated for convenience. Small sections may have been excised to protect confidential sources and personal information. These excisions are explicitly marked in the text.

[2] Gamal Abdel Nasser Hussein (1918-1970) was the President of Egypt from 1956 to 1970.

[3] Andrew Goodpaster (1915-2005) was a general in the United States Army. He served as Supreme Allied Commander of Europe and Commander in Chief of the US European Command from 1969 to 1974. He was the staff secretary and defense liaison officer under President Eisenhower and advisor to Presidents Johnson, Nixon, and Carter.

[4] The Gulf of Aqaba is the northeastern gulf of the Red Sea. In 1957, Eisenhower announced that the Gulf constituted international waters and all nations would have free and unobstructed passage through it.

[5] Harold Holt (1908-1967) was the 17th Australian prime minister.

[6] Abba Eban (1915-200) was an Israeli civil servant, holding the positions of Foreign Affairs Minister, Education Minister, Deputy Prime Minister, ambassador to the United Nations and ambassador to the United States throughout his career. Eban was also the President of the Weizmann Institute.

[7] Just before the Six-Day War, two Egyptian MiG 21s flew a reconnaissance mission over the Negev Nuclear Research Center in Dimona, raising Israeli fears of an aerial attack on the facility.

[8] Levi Eshkol (1895-1969) was Israel's third Prime Minister, serving from 1963 to 1969.

[9] Mossad is Israel's foreign intelligence agency.

[10] Abraham Feinberg (1908-1998) was a philanthropist, Democratic Party fundraiser, and strong advocate of Israel. Feinberg commonly leveraged his contacts in Israel and Washington to strengthen American-Israeli relations.

[11] On June 3, 1967, President Johnson informs Prime Minister Eshkol that "Israel will not be alone unless it decides to go alone." Letter from Lyndon B. Johnson to Levi Eshkol, Johnson Library, National Security File, Country File, Middle East Crisis, Vol. III, Secret, compiled by the U.S. Department of State Office of the Historian and filed as Letter 139 of Foreign Relations of the United States, 1964-1968 Volume XIX, Arab-Israeli Crisis and War, 1967,

<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1964-68v19/d139>.

[12] Meir Amit (1921-2009) was the chief of Mossad from 1963 to 1968.

[13] Richard "Dick" Helms (1913-2002) was the director of Central Intelligence (DCI) from 1966 to 1973. In 1968, he submitted the first report to Lyndon Johnson stating that US intelligence believed that Israel possessed nuclear weapons.

[14] Myer "Mike" Feldman (1915-2007) was the deputy special council for President Kennedy from 1961 to 1963 and general counsel for President Johnson from 1963 to 1965.

[15] President Johnson met with Israeli Prime Minister Levi Eshkol at Johnson's Texas ranch between 7-8 January 1968 to discuss security concerns in the Middle East.

[16] Luke Battle (1918-2008) was a career foreign service officer in the State Department, serving as Executive Secretary during President Kennedy's administration and ambassador to the United Arab Republic (Egypt) under President Johnson. He left Egypt just weeks before the Six-Day War, returning to the United States to become Assistant Secretary of State for the Near East and North Africa.

[17] Paul Warnke (1920-2001) was an American diplomat and Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs for Presidents Johnson and Nixon.

[18] Yitzhak Rabin (1922-1995) was Israel's fifth Prime Minister, serving two non-consecutive terms from 1974 to 1977 and 1992-1995.

[19] Parker T. Hart (1910-1975) was the Ambassador to Saudi Arabia from 1961 to 1965 and the Ambassador to Turkey from 1965 to 1986. From 1968 to 1969 he served as the Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs.

[20] Findley E. Burns (1917-2003) served as ambassador to Jordan from 1966 to 1968.

[21] Floyd Culler was the director of the Oak Ridge National Laboratory and an expert in reprocessing. He visited Dimona four times as part of the Atomic Energy Commission inspection teams.

[22] Glenn Seaborg (1912-1999) was a noted chemist who won the Nobel Prize for

Chemistry in 1951. Over the course of his career Seaborg discovered ten new elements, worked on the Manhattan Project, served as a scientific advisor to ten presidents, and was the Chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission from 1961 to 1971.

[23] Feinberg's relationship with Johnson began in 1948, when fundraised for Johnson's senate campaign. During the Johnson presidential administration, he "enjoyed the greatest presidential access and influence in his twenty years as a Jewish fund-raiser and lobbyist...any issue raised by Feinberg had to be answered." Unlike other fundraisers, Feinberg worked with cash and "supplied [money] directly to Walter Jenkins, the President's most trusted aide." See Seymour M. Hersh, *The Samson Option*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1993), 126, 192.

[24] The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons seeks to encourage the peaceful use of nuclear power, while simultaneously attempting to limit the spread of nuclear weapons and promote disarmament. It is the principal treaty of the nuclear nonproliferation regime, and entered-into-force in 1970.

[25] Dean Rusk (1909-1994) was the secretary of state for Presidents Kennedy and Johnson from 1961 to 1969.

[26] The F-4 Phantom is a US manufactured fighter-bomber. The Johnson administration attempted to connect the sale of the F-4s to Israel to the nuclear issue.

[27] President Johnson would often retreat to his ranch in Johnson City, Texas throughout his presidency. It was known as the "Texas White House."

[28] Alexei Kosygin (1904-1980) was premier of the USSR from 1964 to 1980.

[29] Ezer Weizman (1924-2005) was a major-general in the Israeli Defense Forces and the commander of the Israeli Air Force from 1958 to 1965.

[30] Charles de Gaulle (1890-1970) was the leader of the Free French Forces during World War II, Prime Minister of France from 1958 to 1959 and President of France from 1959 to 1969.

[31] An A-4 Skyhawk is an attack aircraft made in the United States. It was the first plane bought by the Israeli Air Force after the US became the chief weapons exporter to Israel.

[32] Hal Saunders (b. 1930) was a staffer on the National Security Council from 1961 to 1974.

[33] Robert McNamara (1916-2009) was the Secretary of Defense for Presidents Kennedy and Johnson from 1961 to 1968.

[34] Earle 'Bus' Wheeler served as chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff from 1964 to 1970.