

February 15, 1969

**Memorandum from Assistant Secretary of Defense
for International Security Affairs [ISA] Paul Warnke
to Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird, 'Stopping the
Introduction of Nuclear Weapons Into the Middle
East'**

Citation:

"Memorandum from Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs [ISA] Paul Warnke to Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird, 'Stopping the Introduction of Nuclear Weapons Into the Middle East'", February 15, 1969, Wilson Center Digital Archive, Mandatory declassification review request. Originally published in Avner Cohen and William Burr, eds., National Security Archive Electronic Briefing Book #485 (September 12, 2014). <https://digitalarchive.umd.edu/document/121092>

Summary:

Assistant Secretary of Defense Paul Warnke wrote this memo to the Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird to alert him to the new reality that Israel may already possess nuclear weapons or was very close to that point. Warnke proposed that Laird "consider another serious, concerted, and sustained effort to push Israel to halt its work on strategic missiles and nuclear weapons."

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INTERNATIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS

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ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20301

15 FEB 1969

1-35091/69

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

SUBJECT: Stopping the Introduction of Nuclear Weapons into the Middle East (AS)

As I have reported to you, from all of the available intelligence and from my rather intensive conversations with Ambassador Rabin in the fall of 1968

[redacted] 25X1 and 6, E.O.13526

[redacted] Conversations on this subject with Ambassador Rabin were interesting and revealing and are attached at Tab A. At no time did the Ambassador seek to deny that Israel is engaged in the development and production of these weapons and of a [redacted] as well. My associates and I concluded that the Israelis believe that if times grow hard for them, they can somehow deter irrational Arabs from attacking. (This, of course, would imply that they consider the Fedayeen as no serious threat.) [redacted]

25X6, E.O. 13526

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Whatever the validity of Israel's position from its own standpoint, it does not coincide with the interests of the United States and, in fact, constitutes the single most dangerous phenomenon in an area dangerous enough without nuclear weapons.

25X1 and 6, E.O.13526

The problem is how to stop this development. If the Israelis complete the development of a nuclear weapon within the next 3 to 6 months -- [redacted] -- we will be powerless to do more than invoke sanctions, i.e., cease delivery of F-4s after the "introduction" of nuclear weapons into the area. Such a negative course would take us nowhere. The Israelis would be unable and unwilling to put the genie back in the bottle. Moreover, their requirement for conventional strength would be greater, not less, and the likelihood of our actually invoking the sanctions would not be great in such circumstances. Furthermore, at any time prior to such events, or certainly not long thereafter, we may well be faced with public knowledge of the essential facts. So far these facts have remained in the category of vague, unsubstantiated, and not fully accepted rumors; but we are depending primarily on luck. Once the public is made aware of the situation the Administration's delicate task will become even more difficult.

As you know, we were aware of the Israeli advanced weapons activity last autumn when we negotiated with them for the sale of 50 Phantoms. Because

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CALL AGENCY...
19 FEB 1969

of certain factors of which I have apprised you, we were unable at that time to extract from the Israeli agreement to sign the NPT and guarantee a cessation of work on nuclear weapons and strategic missiles. They did however, renew their agreement that Israel "will not be the first power in the Middle East to introduce nuclear weapons," and "not to use any aircraft supplied by the United States as a nuclear weapons carrier." It was further made clear in the agreement that the American definition of "introduction" would apply. (The agreement consists of an exchange of letters between Ambassador Rabin and myself dated 22 and 27 November 1968, respectively, copies attached at Tab B.) Furthermore, the government of Israel recognized our right "under unusual and compelling circumstances, when the best interests of the United States require it, to cancel all or part of its commitment to provide F-4 aircraft and related equipment and services at any time prior to the delivery of these defense articles or performance of these services." Such "unusual and compelling circumstances" would, under the terms of this agreement, not only exist were Israel to produce or possess nuclear weapons but at any time in our opinion that their activities constitute a danger to the security to the United States.

My extreme concern about the gravity of the risk leads me to urge that you consider another serious, concerted, and sustained effort to persuade Israel to cease and desist its work on strategic missiles and nuclear weapons. Some of the factors to be considered and my views on them, are:

1. It would be preferable to have the negotiations in Washington (not Tel Aviv). Better control over the operations will exist here; it is extremely difficult for any Ambassador to convey fully the serious purpose of the U.S. Government and to be as tough as will be required in this case.
2. The first demarche might best be made by the President, or by you and the Secretary of State together. Because the U.S. Government tried once unsuccessfully, high level participation is needed to convey the strength of our purpose. Moreover, a Defense Department representative should be present at all negotiations.
3. An Israeli request for a formal U.S. Security Guarantee as a quid pro quo can be expected. To accede to such a request would be tantamount to placing all of our chips in the entire area on Israel for an indefinite period and surely without commensurate control over Israel's policies or actions.
4. We may have to offer, through an exchange of letters, to supply Israel with conventional weapons in such quantity and kind as to assure them superiority over any combination of Arab foes. However, we are more or less in this position now.
5. Because of probable resort to delaying tactics, a time limit should be set, after which we would stop supplying F-4s and related services.

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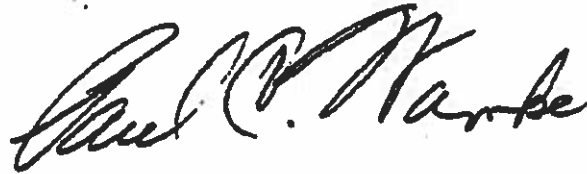
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Israel's resistance to this proposition will be of a high order and all our influence would be required to overcome it. This influence is probably neither so great as other governments think nor so weak as those who have long dealt with Israel believe. But we could not hope to succeed if, as we have done in the past, we concurrently placed equal emphasis on changing Israel's policies with respect to other matters of importance to her -- for example, to give up the militarily important Sinai to a hostile Egypt, to be generous with Jordan over Jerusalem and the West Bank, to give up her policy of retaliation, to adopt a negotiating stance with Ambassador Jarring which suits our taste, etc.

If you agree with this course of action, you may want to discuss it with the Secretary of State with a view to approaching the President jointly. Although the President may wish to discuss the matter with the NSC members -- without putting it on the agenda -- this extremely delicate operation would best be undertaken outside the regular NSC machinery.

Ralph Earle and Harry Schwartz, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Near East and South Asian Affairs, are fully familiar with this matter.



2 Enclosures:

- 1. Tab A - MemCons
- 2. Tab B - Ltrs - 22 & 27 Nov 68

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INTERNATIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS

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ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20301

4 November 1968
Refer to I-35993/68

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Negotiations with Israel - F-4 and Advanced Weapons

Participants:

Israeli Side

Ambassador of Israel, Lieutenant General Yitzhak Rabin
Minister Shlomo Argov, Israeli Embassy
Major General Hod, Commander, Israeli Defense Force Air Force
Brigadier General David Carmon, Defense and Armed Forces Attache
Mr. J. Shapiro, Director, Ministry of Defense Mission, New York

United States Side

Assistant Secretary of Defense (ISA), Paul C. Warnke
Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (ISA), Harry H. Schwartz
Deputy Director, NEBA Region (ISA), Robert J. Murray

Time: 1400 - 1445, 4 November 1968

Place: Assistant Secretary Warnke's Office, Pentagon

Ambassador Rabin opened the conversation by referring to his meeting on 30 October with Ambassador Hart, in which Hart had asked Rabin to write a proposed Memorandum of Understanding incorporating the provisions Israel considered necessary to the F-4 sale. This was written and delivered to Ambassador Hart. "We put in it what we thought was necessary, following the precedent of the prior agreement (A-4 aircraft)." Last Friday, 1 November, Rabin said he received a call from Department of State to the effect that "in principal, the answer is yes" with regard to Israel's request for F-4s and that he was to get in touch with Mr. Warnke. Ambassador Rabin said that today he would like to get agreement on how we proceed but not go into details.

Mr. Warnke said that he would like at the outset to set forth the United States' position. The President agrees in principal to the sale. It is a difficult decision, not because we are not interested in Israel's security,

R.J. of R.S.

Classified by *1558A 1006*

EXEMPT PER EO 12958, Sec 1.4 (b) (4)
GEO F.L. 714 Date 30 July 2002
Review/Declassify On: 31 Dec 2027
Other Agency Reply: 1102

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but precisely because we are interested. Heretofore, we have avoided becoming the principal arms supplier to Israel. Wherever possible we have urged that Israel acquire its arms from other Western countries. We felt that this was to our mutual benefit for it lessened the risk of US-USSR confrontation in the Middle East and therefore lessened the dangers to the security of the United States and Israel. We would prefer to continue that policy; however, the Europeans apparently have opted out, and the French particularly seem reluctant to supply the Mirage aircraft Israel has purchased.

Mr. Warnke stressed that with a decision to go ahead on the sale of F-4 aircraft we will have a different set of circumstances concerning our supply relationship to Israel. We will henceforth become the principal arms supplier to Israel, involving us even more intimately with Israel's security situation and involving more directly the security of the United States.

Mr. Warnke reminded Ambassador Rabin that Secretary Rusk had talked with Foreign Minister Eban about the problems and the dangers of strategic missiles and nuclear weapons. Mr. Warnke referred specifically to the paragraph in the standard sales contract which permitted cancellation "under unusual and compelling circumstances"; he suggested that Israeli acquisition of strategic missiles and nuclear weapons would comprise such circumstances. Mr. Warnke told Ambassador Rabin that because the security of the United States was clearly involved we must seek from the Government of Israel certain assurances:

- (1) that Israel will not test or deploy strategic missiles,
- (2) that Israel will not develop, manufacture, or otherwise acquire strategic missiles or nuclear weapons,
- (3) that Israel will sign and ratify the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

At a subsequent point in the conversation, Mr. Warnke mentioned the inspection arrangement at Dimona as a precedent that might be required here.

Mr. Warnke noted that we had not sought such specific assurances in our prior agreements because, based on the information we had at that time, these developments were not imminent. Our present information, however, indicates that Israel is on the verge of nuclear weapons and missiles capability. This development would seriously and adversely affect the security interests of the United States; it involves the Soviet Union and risks a US-USSR confrontation; it dramatically changes the situation in the area.

(Ambassador Rabin did not dispute in any way our information on Israel's nuclear or missile capability, nor did he comment directly on the assurances we requested. He did not seem particularly surprised or upset at Mr. Warnke's presentation. He referred to the fact that the Israeli position on the question of Israeli nuclear and missile programs had been conveyed to Ambassador Barbour.)

Ambassador Rabin observed that this question (of missiles and nuclear weapons) had been raised two weeks ago, and that an answer was given by the Israeli Government to the United States Embassy in Israel. "I don't have anything to add to my Government's position." Rabin said he was asked to draft a

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Regarding the proposed sale of Phantom aircraft to Israel. Whenever possible we have
what was the reason for the sale of Phantom aircraft to Israel. 3

Memorandum of Understanding which he had done and which we have. Rabin said that "if you wish to suggest changes or additions to that memorandum you of course may do so." Rabin remarked that, when he saw Secretary Rusk on Sunday, the Secretary said that the American acceptance in principle "did not mean that we accept your draft Memorandum of Understanding."

Commenting more generally, Ambassador Rabin said that Israel did not come to the United States for military equipment when it could go elsewhere; with other governments Israel did not have the problem of "conditions" that it has with the United States. In any case, we do not see, said Rabin, that your selling us 50 Phantoms changes things appreciably.

Mr. Warnke said that it is not just 50 Phantoms, but 50 Phantoms plus 100 Skyhawks plus the great variety of other equipment that Israel is requesting that makes the policy we are entering upon a distinct change from our prior policy. Nevertheless, the United States is interested in doing what is necessary to assist Israel. Opinions vary on how best to do this but our goal is the same. It is for this reason that we are so concerned with Israel's missile and nuclear plans and intentions and this is why we need to "up-date" your assurances to us on these matters.

Mr. Warnke told Ambassador Rabin that we would prepare by tomorrow for his review a revised Memorandum of Understanding incorporating the kinds of assurances we require. Mr. Warnke asked if there were other questions that Ambassador Rabin would like to speak about today.

Ambassador Rabin said that he would like to call to our attention the current Israeli intelligence appreciation of the build-up of Soviet aircraft in Egypt and Syria. He said that the figures General Weizman had presented us in September 1967 had proven to be entirely too low. The inventories that Weizman had projected for those two countries by 1970 had in fact already been exceeded on 1 November 1968. The Ambassador undertook to provide details separately. Rabin went on to say that a number of technical terms needed going into, for example, Israel would like a certain number -- the more the better -- of F-4s delivered in the first half of 1969 (he later put the number at 25 aircraft). He attributed the urgency to "what was happening on the other side." Rabin said that they would like credit arrangements if possible, preferably on the same terms as the first Skyhawk sale (10 per cent down, 3 1/2 per cent interest, 10 years repayment). Rabin said they would like the F-4E configuration generally, but wish to include in the 50 aircraft 6 RF-4Es. Ambassador Rabin and General Hod asked if they could begin discussions on the F-4E with the Air Force. Mr. Warnke said he would inform them when this was possible.

Prepared by: R. J. Murray
ROBERT J. MURRAY

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Approved by: [Signature]
The Assistant Secretary of Defense (ISA)

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Date: 4 November 1968



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ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20301

5 November 1968
Refer to: I-35993/68
(Second Session)

INTERNATIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Negotiations with Israel - F-4 and Advanced Weapons

Participants:

EXEMPT FROM EO 12958, Sec 1.4 (b) (1)
ON 12-11-2011 Date 26 July 2012
Review/Declassify On: 31 Dec 2017
Other Agency Reply: 12958

Israeli Side

Ambassador of Israel, Lieutenant General Yitzhak Rabin
Major General Hod, Commander, Israeli Defense Force Air Force
Brigadier General David Carmon, Defense and Armed Forces Attache
Mr. J. Shapiro, Director, Ministry of Defense Mission, New York

United States Side

Assistant Secretary of Defense (ISA), Paul G. Warnke
Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (ISA), Harry H. Schwartz
Deputy Director, NEBA Region (ISA), Robert J. Murray

Time: 1410-1440, 5 November 1968

Place: Assistant Secretary Warnke's Office, Pentagon

Mr. Warnke told Ambassador Rabin that what he had done was to set out in a Memorandum of Agreement the points discussed yesterday. Mr. Warnke then passed the memorandum to Ambassador Rabin to read.

Ambassador Rabin, having finished reading the memorandum said: "As I understand it you put three basic conditions to the sale of F-4s."

Mr. Warnke said that the word "understandings" would perhaps be more appropriate.

Ambassador Rabin said "I prefer to put it in my words: First, Israel will not test or deploy strategic missiles; second, we will not acquire strategic missiles or nuclear weapons; and third we would sign and ratify the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. You also ask to make inspections, making a fourth condition." Ambassador Rabin asked: "Is this the official United States position, that without these conditions we do not get Phantoms?"

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EXEMPT FROM EO 12958, Sec 1.4 (b) (1)
ON 12-11-2011 Date 26 July 2012
Review/Declassify On: 31 Dec 2017
Other Agency Reply: 12958

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Mr. Warnke: "That would be my recommendation." Ambassador Rabin said he was not in a position to give his Government's answer.

Mr. Warnke said we understood that. He would like to say that the words of the memorandum were his. It is the assurances we seek, not the form.

Ambassador Rabin restated that he could not give his Government's position, but that his reaction was: "I don't believe Israel is going to accept conditions within a Memorandum of Understanding about selling the Phantoms. We were told more than once that there would be no conditions -- at least not those kinds of conditions." The Ambassador then added, haltingly: "It would be a pity --- all these conditions on paper --- just for 50 Phantoms."

Mr. Warnke said that he did not consider what was being discussed was "just 50 Phantom aircraft." He said that if we sold these 50 Phantom aircraft to Israel, our position would have changed markedly to one of the principal supplier of arms to Israel and he thought that the significance of this change is something that should be thought about very carefully by the Israeli Government as well as by our own. It is of great importance to Israel on the one hand and it is of significance to the United States on the other because it means that the security of the United States is more closely involved in the area. It is this larger matter which should be considered concurrently with the assurances for which we have asked.

Ambassador Rabin said that it would be possible to have discussions on each of the items. But he again said, as his personal reaction, that "to have these conditions just for selling of 50 Phantoms, I don't think it is right."

Mr. Warnke repeated that the Department of Defense would consider any other form which would give us similar assurances that Israel would care to propose. Ambassador Rabin asked for time to study the memorandum more carefully. He asked also whether, in the meantime, it would be possible for Major General Hod to talk with the U.S. Air Force.

Mr. Warnke said that he had spoken with Mr. Hoopes, Under Secretary of the Air Force, who agreed to arrange for a F-4E briefing for General Hod and would expect a call from Hod tomorrow.

Mr. Warnke said that we had drafted the Memorandum of Agreement so that Israel could see clearly the things that trouble us. Whether the assurances we receive are contained in separate documents or whether we come to separate understandings is, to our way of thinking, irrelevant. We feel we must know what missile and nuclear developments are going on in the Middle East. These vitally affect the national security interests of the United States. There has been a long and strong relationship between our two countries. We must

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have mutual trust and confidence. We have not had mutual understandings and therefore the facts as we now know them have frankly come as a surprise and shock to us. Ambassador Rabin asked: "What, may I ask, comes as a shock to you?" Mr. Warnke replied:

[Redacted]

25X6, E.O.13526

(Ambassador Rabin made no reply. "After a moment, he said: "General Hod will call Mr. Hoopes tomorrow.")

Mr. Warnke said that he would be gone for the next several days, but if it was necessary to have further discussions in this period that the Ambassador should contact Mr. Nitze or Mr. Schwartz.

Prepared by: *R. J. Murray*
Robert J. Murray

(Signed) *Paul C. Warnke*
Approved by: PAUL C. WARNKE
The Assistant Secretary
of Defense (ISA)

Date: 5 November 1968

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8 November 1968
Refer to: 1-35593/68
(Third Session)

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Negotiations with Israel - F-4 and Advanced Weapons

Participants:

~~EXCLUDED FROM 12800, Sec 1.4 (b) (1)
OGD P.S. 215 Date 20 July 2003
Review/Dissemination Dec 31 Dec 2007
Other Agency Supply: TMS~~

Israeli Side

Ambassador of Israel, Lieutenant General Yitzhak Rabin
Minister Shlomo Argov, Israeli Embassy
Major General Hod, Commander, Israeli Defense Force Air Force
Brigadier General David Cannon, Defense and Armed Forces Attache

United States Side

Assistant Secretary of Defense (ISA), Paul C. Warnke
Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (ISA), Harry H. Schwartz
Deputy Director, NESEA Region (ISA), Robert J. Murray

Time: 1210-1230, 8 November 1968

Place: Assistant Secretary Warnke's Office, The Pentagon

Ambassador Rabin began the conversation by asking whether Mr. Warnke had changed his mind with respect to the assurances we had requested of the Israeli Government. Mr. Warnke replied in the negative.

Ambassador Rabin, saying his words might not be diplomatic, read from a prepared talking paper as follows:

"I wish to address myself first to Article 3 of your proposed Memorandum of Agreement. I am now in a position to confirm that my original personal reaction upon first reading this paragraph -- namely, that it is completely unacceptable to us -- is indeed my Government's official position. We have come here for the purpose of purchasing 50 F-4's. We have not come here in order to mortgage the sovereignty of the State of Israel, not even for 50 F-4's. Furthermore, I wish to state that we consider Article 3 to be in the nature of a very major condition precedent to the sale of aircraft and it is therefore not acceptable to us also as

NESEA (Mr. Murray)

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a matter of principle. My Government's position is that the matters raised in Article 3 are extraneous to the question before us, namely, the terms for the sale of 50 F-4 aircraft. These matters have been the subject of separate discussions between our two Governments. Most recently, 23 October 1962, we submitted through the U.S. Ambassador to Israel a comprehensive statement concerning these issues, the contents of which I can make available to you now.

"Accordingly, I should like to propose that Israel's assurances in connection with the theoretical question of the use of the planes for the delivery of nuclear weapons remains as submitted to you in our original proposal, namely, that the Government of Israel agrees not to use any aircraft supplied by the U.S. as a nuclear weapons carrier. I am also authorized to reaffirm, in this connection, that it is Israel's long-standing policy not to be the first to introduce nuclear weapons into the Middle East. Assurances to that effect can be incorporated into the agreement.

"May I also comment on the Preamble to Article 3 and state that the Government of Israel does not consider itself qualified to express an opinion on what constitutes an endangerment of the security interests of the U.S. This is the exclusive prerogative of the Government of the U.S. Similarly, with reference to subsection 2 of Article 2, the Government of Israel does not feel that it is qualified to comment on what is or is not a major tenet of U.S. policy. Again, this is the exclusive prerogative of the U.S. Government.

"This is my Government's position and the only basis on which we consider it possible to conduct negotiations for the purchase of military equipment -- in this case, 50 Phantoms."

Ambassador Rabin, having finished reading from his prepared text, observed that paragraph 1 of the American draft Memorandum of Agreement is an exact wording of the 1965 Memorandum of Understanding, and therefore adds nothing new. He reiterated that Israel did not believe that they were qualified to comment or to make judgments concerning the points covered in Article 2. Ambassador Rabin also thought that Article 5 on secrecy was not even as favorable as the paragraph on secrecy in the A-4 Agreement, which he thought was "more mutual." Rabin said, however, that this was not a major point.

(At this point, Ambassador Rabin passed to Mr. Wornke a copy of the Government of Israel's statement which had been given to Ambassador Lathrop on 23 October 1962. Mr. Wornke glanced at it, confirmed that we already had a copy, and returned it to Ambassador Rabin.)

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Ambassador Rabin said that General Hod had met with the Air Force. General Hod said that, while he had one briefing, nothing more was being done, the Air Force was waiting for Mr. Hoopes. Mr. Schwartz explained that Mr. Hoopes had forwarded the Israeli requests to Mr. Warnke, but, because Mr. Warnke had just returned from Europe, he had not yet seen Mr. Hoopes' memorandum.

Ambassador Rabin said: "So there we are." Mr. Warnke said: "Yes, Mr. Ambassador. We have managed to isolate a major difference."

Mr. Warnke said he would like to take issue with two points raised by the Ambassador: first, that our request for assurances in connection with the sale of the F-4 aircraft is extraneous. What Israel does with strategic missiles and nuclear weapons affects the national security of the United States. "It is the national security of the United States that I am charged with protecting. By law I am required to consider the impact of the sale on the United States. You, from your vantage point, do not have to accept my judgments, but I am required to make them." Second, the assurances we have requested are not, and are not intended to be, an invasion of sovereignty. All international agreements impinge on absolute sovereignty. Our request is no different than other international agreements.

Mr. Warnke said that however these negotiations come out he has felt that this dialogue has been useful. "I have felt it was important to get across to you how we feel about Israel's acquisition of strategic missiles and nuclear weapons. As you know, there is a provision in our sales contract that permits cancellation of the contract by the United States for 'unusual and compelling circumstances.' To me, if Israel goes ahead with its missile and nuclear programs this would involve that paragraph; and while I can not speak for the next administration, I feel sure they will feel the same way too. Therefore, to a considerable extent, the arguments we are having about the wording of assurances are mere words and not substance. The substance remains the same."

Ambassador Rabin said: "I can understand you would like to have assurances about the way your hardware is going to be used -- not as a nuclear weapons carrier." But in Article 3 you ask for all the rights to know and for us to give agreement for you to inspect in our country. We were very careful not to use the word "inspect" with respect to Elmore. We see in the two words quite a difference. The word "visit" means you are a guest in our country -- not an inspector.

Mr. Warnke said: "I would be prepared to accept an amendment to our memorandum substituting "visit" for inspection."

Ambassador Rabin said: "We have an agreement today."

Mr. Warnke said: "Yes, but that applies only to Elmore, not to the sites where missiles are being produced" (nervous laughter from Israelis).

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Ambassador Rabin asked: "What do you call strategic missiles in the Arab-Israeli context?" Mr. Warnke replied: "Those capable of reaching the Arab capitals." Rabin agreed, saying: "At least we have the same definition." He also commented that the missiles "would not reach all the Arab capitals."

Mr. Warnke observed that the F-4 aircraft would be part of Israel's total defense environment; that they would be used, as the General well knew, to protect strategic missile sites as well as other possible targets. It is the totality of Israel's defense that we are involved in; it is not just a question of aircraft.

Ambassador Rabin said: "You are only selling arms. How do you feel you have the right to ask all these things?"

Mr. Warnke said: "I think I do. Otherwise I wouldn't bring it up."

Ambassador Rabin said: "We have promised not to carry nuclear weapons and that we do not would not be the first to introduce nuclear weapons into the Middle East."

Mr. Warnke replied: "We will think about what you have said and talk with Secretary Clifford and Secretary Mitzka. I will talk with you again tomorrow."

*in duplicate
R. J. H.*

Prepared by: R. J. Hurray
Robert J. Hurray

Approved by: (signed: Paul C. Warnke)
Assistant Secretary of Defense
(ISA)

Date: 8 November 1968

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INTERNATIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS

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ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20301

12 November 1968
Refer to: I-35993/68
(Fourth Session)

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Negotiations with Israel - F-4 and Advanced Weapons

Participants:

Israeli Side

Ambassador of Israel, Lieutenant General Yitzhak Rabin
Minister Shlomo Argov, Israeli Embassy
Major General Hod, Commander, Israeli Defense Force Air Force
Brigadier General David Carmon, Defense and Armed Forces Attache

United States Side

Assistant Secretary of Defense (ISA), Paul G. Warnke
Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (ISA), Harry H. Schwartz
Deputy Director, NESA Region (ISA), Robert J. Murray

Time: 1530 - 1630 12 November 1968

Place: Assistant Secretary Warnke's Office, The Pentagon

Mr. Warnke opened the meeting by saying that, as he had indicated in a previous discussion, we are interested in substance and not form in the matters we have been addressing. We believe it is your feeling that Israel will not and cannot accept our request for advance assurances concerning strategic missiles and nuclear weapons as preconditions to the contract. You propose alternative formulations to be included in the contract which are essentially reaffirmations of earlier agreements: not to use American aircraft to carry nuclear weapons, and not to be the first to introduce nuclear weapons into the area. In our discussions I believe I have made clear to you our interpretation of "unusual and compelling circumstances" which would require that we cancel the F-4 contract. The contract would provide that action inconsistent with these assurances would constitute such circumstances. On these bases I believe we can draft an agreement that will be acceptable to you and which will meet your requirements - although not fully meeting mine.

Mr. Warnke observed that he could not find in the record any understanding of what Israel means by the provision: "Israel will not be the first to introduce nuclear weapons into the area." Mr. Warnke asked the Ambassador what was meant by this term?

GROUP 1 PER EO 12958, Sec 1.4 (b) (2)
EXCLUDED FROM AUTOMATIC DOWNGRADING AND
DECLASSIFICATION ON 31 Dec 2007
Other Agency Reply: 1983

Classified by 6096
Date 12 Jun 2006
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Ambassador Rabin said that "it means what we have said, namely, that we would not be the first to introduce nuclear weapons." Mr. Warnke asked what specifically was meant by the word "introduce." Ambassador Rabin said, "you are more familiar with these things than we are. What is your definition of nuclear weapons?" Mr. Warnke said that there are two aspects to the question: the definition of what is and what is not a nuclear weapon, and what is and what is not introduction into the area. Regarding the first, if there are components available that could be assembled to make a nuclear weapon -- although part A may be in one room and part B in another room -- then that is a nuclear weapon. As for introduction, that is your term and you will have to define it. Does it mean no physical presence? Ambassador Rabin said, "I suppose so."

Mr. Warnke said: "what if you have access to nuclear weapons that are in another country? Is that then 'introduction'?" Ambassador Rabin asked if we believed that this was the situation. Mr. Warnke replied that he was just trying to find the Israeli definition. He noted that the same situation could apply the other way around: for example, what if another country in the area had access to nuclear weapons but had not brought them in? Ambassador Rabin said, continuing the example, that if China said they had nuclear weapons for Egypt stored in China, he didn't know what the Israeli reaction would be. He hasn't given the matter a great deal of thought. He believed that "introduction" would require their physical presence in the area.

General Hod asked if the term "introduction" had an accepted usage in international law. Mr. Warnke replied that it had not. General Hod said that throughout the world the experience was that introduction of a weapon could only mean after testing. You could not introduce a weapon until after it actually became a weapon.

Ambassador Rabin asked: "Do you consider a nuclear weapon one that has not been tested, and has been done by a country without previous experience?" Mr. Warnke: "Certainly. China with a strategic missile capability would be assumed to have nuclear weapons even had it not tested these weapons." Ambassador Rabin said: "All nuclear powers -- the United States, Russia, the United Kingdom, France, China -- have tested nuclear weapons. Do you really believe introduction comes before testing?" Mr. Schwartz said that what the Ambassador was talking about is reliability. Ambassador Rabin disagreed saying that based on his experience with conventional weapons, he would not consider a weapon that had not been tested to be a weapon.

Mr. Warnke asked whether, if the UAR had missiles with nuclear war heads but had not actually tested them, would Israel consider that the UAR had not introduced nuclear weapons? He said that testing by other nuclear powers is very relevant to a potential nuclear power if the latter is developing weapons based on existing technology.

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Ambassador Rabin said that, "weapons serve policy, not vice versa. Since the UAR's goal is to destroy us I would take it with very great concern. Our policy is not to destroy the UAR. You must combine the weapon with the policy." General Hod observed that a very good example of introduction was when Egypt introduced missiles into the area in 1963, claiming they were capable of hitting anything south of Beirut. Ambassador Rabin said: "My concern with Egypt is with missiles with chemical rather than nuclear war heads. If Egypt were to hit our densely populated areas, even in a limited way, it could be disastrous."

Mr. Warnke said, as he understood it, Ambassador Rabin applied two prerequisites to the word "introduction" -- notoriety and pre-testing.

Ambassador Rabin, saying that "I don't know what the Prime Minister said, but" there must be public acknowledgment. The purpose of nuclear weapons is not to use the weapon itself, but to use their deterrent power. "I don't believe any powers that have nuclear weapons plan to use them, although you cannot ever be sure." Ninety-nine per cent of their value is deterrence. Mr. Schwartz said: "You mean deterrence against governments, to deter governments from specific actions." Ambassador Rabin agreed: "The fact that you have got it must be known."

Mr. Warnke said that the Ambassador also introduced the factor of intent: if the UAR has missiles, Israel would be concerned; if Israel has them, there is no cause for concern. The purpose of strategic missiles for Israel would be for deterrence.

Ambassador Rabin said: "You are trying to combine strategic missiles and nuclear war heads. This is not necessary in the Middle East. To my mind, in the Middle East, missiles with war heads which are not nuclear weapons can play a role." Mr. Warnke asked, "What sort of role?" Ambassador Rabin said: "It depends on the other side. What we are concerned about in Egypt is their chemical warfare capability. As I explained in 1963 when I was here, one of our thoughts was that Egyptian missiles, even with conventional war heads, might contribute to their success if they made a surprise attack on our cities. They could interfere with the mobilization system under such circumstances, and this might play a great role in determining the outcome. Seventy per cent more or less of Army capability, although less for the Air Force, is based on mobilization, not just on manpower but vehicles, transport, supplies, and so forth. During the six day war we had mobilized so much of the resources of our cities that we had to devote a portion of our military effort to resupplying the cities."

General Hod observed that Egypt has sea borne (Styx) missiles with 35 mile range and may have or may be receiving even more sophisticated missiles. Although these have a short range, they can be used sea-to-shore as well as sea-to-sea, and therefore can raise havoc with coastal cities such as Tel Aviv.

Ambassador Rabin said that they had heard of a plan, although they could not know for certain, to sell to Egypt missile destroyers with missiles of about 100 miles range which, although normally sea-to-sea, could also be used sea-to-shore. Rabin said Israel was worried that Egypt might launch sea borne missiles during the six day war, "but they did not dare to do this." Rabin said he also understand

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that there is a Cannon missile on the TL-16s now in Egypt that can hit the centers of our cities. "Therefore, we look at missiles somewhat differently than you. It is not necessary to have nuclear war heads on our missiles. There is a gap between high-explosive and nuclear."

introduction of missiles into the area in 1963, starting the

Mr. Warnke said: "Then in your view, an unadvertised, untested nuclear device is not a nuclear weapon." Ambassador Rabin said: "Yes, that is correct."

Mr. Warnke asked: "What about an advertised but untested nuclear device or weapon. Would that be introduction?" Ambassador Rabin said: "Yes, that would be introduction." Mr. Warnke said he would interpret mere physical presence in the area as constituting, in itself, "introduction".

Mr. Warnke concluded the discussion by saying that he would talk with Mr. Hoopes, that we would have a Memorandum of Understanding prepared within a few days incorporating the provisions we have discussed, and that General Hod could in the meantime meet with the Air Force to continue the technical discussions that we are at this time prepared to go ahead with. Mr. Warnke said that we ought to continue these discussions so that we might try to arrive at some understanding between us as to the problems of missiles and nuclear weapons. At this time, with respect to "introduction," Mr. Warnke said there was not much clarity and no agreement.

Prepared by

R. J. Murray
Robert J. Murray

Approved by

(Signed)
Paul G. Munroe
The Assistant Secretary
of Defense (ISA)

Date 12 November 1968~~TOP SECRET~~ SENSITIVE



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ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20301

SENSITIVE

22 November 1968
Refer to I-26126/68
(Fifth Session)

INTERNATIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Negotiations with Israel - F-4 and Advanced Weapons

Participants:

Israeli Side

Ambassador of Israel, Lieutenant General Yitzhak Rabin
Minister Shlomo Argov, Israeli Embassy
Major General Hod, Commander, Israeli Defense Force Air Force
Brigadier General David Carmon, Defense and Armed Forces Attache
Mr. J. Shapiro, Director, Ministry of Defense Mission, New York

United States Side

Assistant Secretary of Defense (ISA), Paul C. Warnke
Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (ISA), Harry H. Schwartz
Deputy Director, MESA Region (ISA), Robert J. Murray

Time: 1740 - 1815, 22 November 1968

Place: Assistant Secretary Warnke's Office, The Pentagon

Ambassador Rabin said that he had received his Government's reaction to the US-proposed Memorandum of Understanding (referring to the draft Memorandum of Understanding sent to the Israeli Embassy on 19 November 1968). He said that there is a paragraph in that memorandum which looks to the Government of Israel as "quite awkward." Rabin said that the awkwardness was "not because of its practical implications" but because of the way it is worded.

Ambassador Rabin read a portion of the paragraph in question: "It is understood by the Government of Israel that action contrary to any of the understandings specified in paragraph II of this memorandum shall constitute 'unusual and compelling circumstances' and shall permit the United States to recover any aircraft already delivered under this Agreement." Rabin said that his Government could not accept that the United States could ask for such language. "There is no precedent. It creates something that I

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EO 1.4 (b) (6) / 12
Revoked/Declassify On: 31-Dec-2027
Other Agency Reply: TBD~~

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don't believe that exists anywhere." Rabin said that the paragraph implied that the United States considered Israel "the bad guy" and that it did not believe the undertakings made by the Government of Israel, and therefore this paragraph was worded as it is.

Mr. Warnke took issue with Ambassador Rabin's statement. Mr. Warnke said that he had talked with Mr. Clifford, and Mr. Clifford in turn with Mr. Rusk, and the United States Government clearly did not put such a construction on this paragraph. The United States does believe the undertakings made by the Government of Israel. "I believe you and what you have said." It is quite natural, however, that Israel would look after its own national security requirements. It would be understandable for Israel to enter into an F-4 agreement now and later feel compelled to change its mind for reasons existing at that time. It would not be unusual in international agreements for undertakings previously made to prove improvident in the future. But the United States for its part must look after its own national security interests; if Israel were to decide at some point that it could not adhere to the provisions of the agreement, it would revert to status quo ante. That is the purpose of this paragraph.

Ambassador Rabin said he couldn't understand why, for example, the United States could ask in ten years for these aircraft to be returned. Mr. Warnke said: "Suppose you deliver nuclear weapons in these aircraft in ten years time?"

Mr. Warnke said that what was put in the Memorandum of Understanding, after all, represents only the summation of our discussions. Ambassador Rabin said that he had not agreed to commitments in the contract; he said that Israel had agreed to reaffirm its previous understandings -- that they would not be the first to introduce nuclear weapons or carry nuclear weapons on U.S. aircraft. "Why do you want us to do this?"

Minister Argov said: "We feel we are on parole." The Israeli Government is giving assurances, said Argov, but the paragraph presumes we will not live up to them. Ambassador Rabin said that it isn't the standard paragraph.

Mr. Warnke disagreed that there was a "presumption" in the contract that Israel would not live up to its assurances. Mr. Warnke also disagreed with Ambassador Rabin's statement that this wasn't a standard paragraph. "There is no such thing as a standard contract." Each one varies. A past contract is not a binding precedent for future contracts.

Ambassador Rabin, somewhat apologetically, said that his instructions were to follow the former wording. He said also that, although he agreed with the form of the U.S. proposal (i.e., a memorandum of understanding), "my Government has had second thoughts" and prefers the same format as in the Skyhawk Agreement: "I send you a letter, you send me a letter."

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Mr. Warnke observed that we had the form of a Memorandum of Understanding before, in the Skyhawk Agreement. Ambassador Rabin said he thought not. Minister Argov said that yes, at the time in 1965 of the visit of Mr. Harriman and Mr. Komer, there was a Memorandum of Understanding: "You participated in its development Mr. Ambassador." Ambassador Rabin agreed and said that that was the Harriman Mission, which was a different matter.

Mr. Warnke observed that that was the point he was trying to make: there are different matters and different circumstances that now exist. Mr. Warnke said that he understood that what Israel wanted now wasn't a Memorandum of Understanding but an exchange of letters; for this he had no instructions, and would have to discuss the matter with Secretary Clifford. Mr. Warnke also asked the Ambassador whether he had a letter to submit. The Ambassador passed him the Israeli letter (attached).

Mr. Schwartz suggested that Ambassador Rabin not press the A-4 analogy too far, that it consisted of a number of documents, not just an exchange of letters, and that it was negotiated under different circumstances. For example, it contained an agreement that Israel would not come back to the United States for planes for five years.

General Hod observed that the President, when Prime Minister Eshkol was here, was willing to overlook the five year clause. Ambassador Rabin said that the United States didn't say anymore that it would not be a major supplier; the formulation of the communique issued at the Ranch in 1968 was different from that of 1965. In 1965 it said that the United States would not be a major supplier; it did not say that in 1968, but said instead that the United States would keep Israel's defense requirements under review in light of the situation in the area.

Mr. Warnke said that the Ambassador's remarks were not inconsistent with what Mr. Schwartz had just said. Mr. Schwartz said that the 1965 precedent (of the Skyhawk) didn't apply.

Mr. Warnke said he would discuss the latest Israeli proposal with Mr. Clifford. Mr. Warnke asked Ambassador Rabin if he wished to sign the letter. Rabin did.

Ambassador Rabin said that there is a third problem. He laughingly said that he assumed we would overcome the "technical difficulties" of getting a satisfactory agreement in an acceptable form. Rabin said: "Everyone has his own superiors." Rabin asked if we could proceed with the technical talks while waiting to sort out the basic agreement.

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Mr. Warnke said that the problem won't arise, for he expects to respond to Ambassador Rabin the first of next week. General Hod interjected that what he needs to know is what specific equipment can be included on the F-4 aircraft and its approximate cost, so that he can draw up a list of his specific requirements for the USAF, and they in turn may prepare a Letter of Offer. Mr. Murray said that he would review this and call General Hod on the telephone.

Prepared by:

Robert J. Murray
 Robert J. Murray

Approved by:

Paul W. Warnke
 The Assistant Secretary
 of Defense (ISA)

Date:

22 November 1968

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INTERNATIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS

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ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20301

EXEMPT FROM E.O. 13526, Sec 1.4 (b)
OIG P.S. 210 Date 20 July 2002
Review/Declassify on: 31 Dec 2027
Other Agency Reply: 1-26196/68

26 November 1968

Refer to: 1-26196/68

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: F-4 Negotiations with the Government of Israel

On November 26, Ambassador Rabin called me and reported that he had received my letter in reply to his letter requesting that the United States Government sell 50 F-4 Phantoms to Israel. Ambassador Rabin said that the letter posed no problems for him except for the reference to the interpretation of the United States Government as to what would constitute the introduction of nuclear weapons by a Middle East power.

Ambassador Rabin said that he understood from our second conversation that we would not incorporate a definition of this term. I pointed out that this discussion had occurred in the context of an anticipated Memorandum of Understanding, to be subscribed by both parties. With a Memorandum of Understanding it would be necessary to arrive at an agreed upon interpretation and our conversation had made it clear that this was unlikely. I commented further that the existence of such differences of opinion had, as I understood it, been the reason for his proposal of an exchange of letters in lieu of a Memorandum of Understanding. I also commented that, as Ambassador Rabin had noted in our last conference on Friday, neither of us was responsible for the content of the other's letter.

I pointed out further that the interpretation of the United States Government was not directed exclusively at the circumstances under which Israel would be deemed to have introduced nuclear weapons into the Middle East but that it applied equally to the eventuality of such action by any other Middle Eastern power. In the event that another Middle Eastern power should acquire possession and control of nuclear weapons then this would relieve the Government of Israel from the restrictions of its announced policy.

Ambassador Rabin said that he recognized that our position was equally applicable to other Middle Eastern powers and asked again if I thought this paragraph should remain in the letter. I said that I did and Ambassador Rabin said "all right."

In response to my question as to how the negotiations are proceeding, Ambassador Rabin said that General Hod had met yesterday with Mr. Schwartz and had presented a list of the items desired in order that an appropriate letter of offer could be prepared. He also commented that he might want to talk with me at the end of the week with regard to the delivery schedule. I said that I would be free to see him on Friday.

NESEA C.A.M.

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Paul C. Vance



INTERNATIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS

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ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20301

29 November 1968

I-26232/68

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Negotiations with Israel - F-4 and U.S. Intelligence Requirements

Participants:

Israeli Side

Ambassador of Israel, Lieutenant General Yitzhak Rabin
Minister Shlomo Argov, Israeli Embassy
Brigadier General David Carmon, Defense and Armed Forces Attache

United States Side

Assistant Secretary of Defense (ISA), Paul C. Warnke
Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (ISA), Harry H. Schwartz
Deputy Director, NESAs Region (ISA), Robert J. Murray

Time: 1630 - 1730 29 November 1968

Place: Assistant Secretary Warnke's Office, The Pentagon

Ambassador Rabin began by saying he had three subjects to discuss. The first concerned the definition of "introduction" in Mr. Warnke's letter to him of 27 November 1968. Rabin said "some people" in Israel are not happy that the definition appears in the letter; they feel that it may imply that Israel accepts that definition, and that nothing in the correspondence makes it clear enough that Israel has its own definition.

Mr. Warnke said that he could not see any ambiguity in the situation. The letter clearly states that this is the American definition and the last sentence was changed to preclude the construction that Israel agrees with it.

Ambassador Rabin said that some people say that by failing to comment on it, we in fact accept it. Mr. Schwartz suggested that, in order properly to clarify that issue, Israel should write down its own definition. Ambassador Rabin said that he would have to send Mr. Warnke another letter. Mr. Warnke said: "I can not of course stop you from sending me a letter." Ambassador Rabin laughingly replied: "Yes, I know, but I want you to answer it." Mr. Warnke suggested that the Ambassador draft a letter to him and show it to him "and I'll tell you what my response would be." Ambassador Rabin agreed.

EXEMPT PER EO 12958, Sec 1.4 (b) (6)
OSD PR 312 Date 30 July 2002
Review Continuity On 11 Dec 2007
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Ambassador Rabin said that the second problem concerned publicity. The Ambassador mentioned an article in today's Baltimore Sun and a recent Finney article. Mr. Warnke said that he doubted that this was recent information. Ambassador Rabin said that publicity in this case should be different than in the A-4 negotiations. In this case, it was public knowledge that F-4 negotiations were going on, as was clear from the President's announcement. The Ambassador said he was concerned about future leaks and that, while he didn't want to give the numbers of aircraft involved, he would like to say something. The Ambassador said that, "political figures are involved" and it wasn't fully under his control.

Mr. Warnke said that the press knew already that negotiations were underway, and that there really wasn't much more to be said that could satisfy them without giving the full details. Mr. Warnke asked what the Israelis wanted to say.

Minister Argov said that he gets three to four calls a day from the press, and he finds it difficult to keep repeating the same thing day after day. He would like to say a deal has been consummated. Mr. Warnke said that that would not be appropriate: no contract has been signed, no final arrangements made, and there are a variety of loose ends to tidy up. Mr. Warnke said that he would think about it and let the Ambassador know.

Mr. Schwartz asked if the requirement for publicity was in Israel. The Ambassador replied: "Not only in Israel, but also here." The Ambassador thought that if we could say that in principle a positive decision had been taken, it would take the pressure off. Mr. Warnke said that this wasn't a problem for the Defense Department alone, that he would have to check with others including the White House, but that he would let the Ambassador know.

Ambassador Rabin next raised the problem of delivery of F-4 aircraft. The Ambassador said: "We think we have justified reasons for earlier deliveries. Six or eight or ten aircraft by the middle of 1969 should not be too much of a problem for the big U.S. Air Force." Rabin said that he had spoken with General McConnell who had said there are two problems, one is the political and the other is technical. Rabin said that McConnell is working on the technical problem, but the two were related. "If a political decision can be made" said Rabin, "then this would help along the technical decision."

Mr. Schwartz said that the Air Force was concerned about the technical difficulties of rapid introduction of this very sophisticated aircraft without adequate preparation. Mr. Schwartz said that the Air Force had had similar difficulties in Australia and Iran. Ambassador Rabin suggested that we not compare Israel with Australia and Iran. Israel has great technical capabilities. He noted that Israel was already flying the MIG aircraft without any assistance and without spare parts.

Mr. Schwartz noted that Israel under this plan would be able to fly the aircraft, but could not maintain the electronics systems or use the weapons systems. Ambassador Rabin said: "You give them to us and we'll use them." Rabin said that what was wanted was "six to twelve" aircraft by mid-1969. Rabin said he realized that there were some differences between our intelligence people on numbers of Soviet aircraft, but even so, the numbers in the Arab inventory were large. Rabin noted that since the June war Israel had not received one additional supersonic aircraft although it had lost four or five.

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Ambassador Rabin said that he had also raised the question of delivery with General Wheeler. Ambassador Rabin said, in reference to General Wheeler, "what he had to say at the Ranch was the most favorable from our point of view. When I met him again in May 1968, he (Wheeler) said Israel's situation depends on two things: if we get the MIRAGEs, and the rate of Soviet shipments." On the first, said Rabin, "although we don't like it, there is no sign" of delivery. On the second, Soviet shipments (to the Arab states) have been faster than expected.

Mr. Warnke said that he could not give an answer now but that he would look into the problem.

The Ambassador said he had a fourth problem. The fourth problem, the Ambassador said, concerns technical negotiations. He asked whether we could now proceed to such negotiations?

Mr. Murray said that we were already doing this, that Generals Roth and Carmon and others met with the Air Force on Wednesday and that the Air Force was now in the process of arranging follow-on briefings. Mr. Murray said that it was our understanding that these negotiations were proceeding satisfactorily.

General Carmon said that they had had useful discussions on Wednesday but that they had not obtained certain information on weapons systems, mentioning specifically the Sparrow missile. Mr. Schwartz said the Air Force was authorized to discuss with Israel all the systems that we are now prepared to release; that there were certain systems which Israel could not have because they are not releasable to anyone and were used only by the U.S. military forces, and these of course the Air Force was not permitted to discuss; and there was a third category of items we were prepared to talk about but for which no final decisions on releasability have been made. Mr. Murray said that we are prepared to continue these discussions and that the Air Force was now preparing a briefing schedule to this end. Mr. Warnke said that we could not release full information on systems as to which we had not taken a decision to release. He commented that it might not be in Israel's interest to push for immediate decisions on these unresolved items.

General Carmon agreed that there were no serious problems in this connection at this time.

Prepared by

Robert J. Murray
Robert J. Murray

Approved by

(Signature)
PAUL C. WARNKE
Assistant Secretary of
Defense, ISA

Date 29 November 1968

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INTERNATIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS

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 ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
 WASHINGTON, D. C. 20301

21 December 1968

In reply refer to:
 I-26590/68

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: F-4 Agreement

Participants:

Israeli Side

Israeli Ambassador to the U.S. - Ambassador Rabin
 Deputy Commander IAF - B/General Peled
 Defense and Armed Force Attache - B/General David Carmon

United States Side

Assistant Secretary of Defense (ISA) - Paul C. Warnke
 Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (NESEA) - Harry H. Schwartz
 Deputy Director, Near East & South Asia Region, ISA - Robert J. Murray

Time: 1710-1730, 20 December 1968

Place: Assistant Secretary Warnke's Office, The Pentagon

Ambassador Rabin said he had called to review the status of the F-4 agreement. He said that the political side was finished with his exchange of letters with Mr. Warnke. The negotiations with Mr. Schwartz are also finished. Ambassador Rabin asked if they may start tomorrow to develop a letter of offer. Mr. Schwartz said that they could.

Ambassador Rabin said that the answer on financing had been given to Mr. Kuss; Israel would only take government credit. Rabin said: "If someone asks why our reserves in the United States go down, this is it." General Carmon said that the overall package would cost about \$300 million. Some of this would be on credit with the remainder a "dependable undertaking."

Mr. Schwartz said he had just learned that Israel had decided to buy 6 RF4C aircraft now and, working with the company, have the engines changed to make it compatible with the F-4Es. General Peled confirmed that this was their decision.

EXEMPT PER EO 12958, Sec 1.4 (b) (4)
 OED P.S. 113 Date 30 July 2008
 Review/Declassify on: 31 Dec 2027
 Other Agency Reply: Yes

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Ambassador Rabin said there was still one problem: early deliveries. Mr. Warnke said that we had done our work and sent the facts to the President. He said that the decision rests with the White House. Ambassador Rabin observed that there were two aspects: political and technical. He said the President would of course decide the political. He asked, however, whether Mr. Warnke could tell him whether early deliveries were possible on the technical side. Mr. Warnke said anything was possible; it was a question of whether it was desirable.

General Peled said that he had talked with everyone he could in the Air Force about how the IAF would handle early deliveries. He complained that the USAF people would not engage him in a discussion -- they just listened. Peled asked whether we thought he had been convincing. Mr. Warnke said he did not appear to have convinced the Air Force. He said that while General Peled's sincerity in pleading his case was not at all doubted, it was a difference of professional judgment. General Peled asked if he may talk further with the Air Force people. Mr. Warnke replied that he could and that General Larson was the man to talk to. Mr. Warnke said that it would be the President who made the decision, in any case.

General Carmon suggested that a draft letter of offer be completed for General Peled to take back to Israel with him. Israel could then make decisions and these decisions could be communicated to the United States after the holidays. Mr. Warnke agreed.

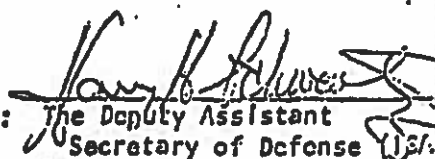
Ambassador Rabin raised the question of publicity and said, somewhat unhappily, that he presumed that we wanted to continue to say the same thing as before. Mr. Warnke said yes. We would say only that negotiations were continuing. Mr. Schwartz suggested this was a matter primarily for the Department of State.

Ambassador Rabin asked Mr. Warnke if he would like to sign the agreement in Israel. Mr. Warnke said he would like to very much but was not sure he would be able to do so.

Prepared by:


Robert J. Murray

Approved by:


The Deputy Assistant
Secretary of Defense (131)

Date:

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EMBASSY OF ISRAEL
WASHINGTON, D.C.

שגרירות ישראל
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22 November 1968

Dear Mr. Warnke:

In accordance with the Memorandum of Understanding dated March 10, 1965, in which the Government of the United States reaffirmed its concern for the maintenance of Israel's security and renewed its assurance that the United States firmly opposes aggression in the Near East and remains committed to the independence and integrity of Israel, and;

Pursuant to the joint statement of January 7, 1968 by the President of the United States and the Prime Minister of Israel in which, "the President agreed to keep Israel's military defense capability under active and sympathetic examination and review in the light of all relevant factors, including the shipment of military equipment by others to the area";

I should like to request hereby that the Government of the United States sell to the Government of Israel 50 "Phantom" aircraft, together with related armament, ammunition, training, spare parts and other services to be specified in Annexes, which will be considered an integral part of this agreement.

On its part the Government of Israel reaffirms its long-standing policy as laid down in the Memorandum of Understanding of March 10, 1965, that it will not be the first power in the Middle East to introduce nuclear weapons and agrees not to use any aircraft supplied by the U.S. as a nuclear weapons carrier.

The Government of Israel understands that the United States reserves the right, under unusual and compelling circumstances when the best interest of the U.S. requires it, to cancel all or part of its commitment to provide.

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OSD 7.3. 212 - Date 30 July 2002
Review/Declassify On: 31 Dec 2027
Other Agency Reply: TBD

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EMBASSY OF ISRAEL
WASHINGTON, D.C.

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22 November 1968

F-4 aircraft and related equipment and services, at any time prior to the delivery of these defense articles or performance of these services. The Government of Israel further understands that the United States accepts the responsibility for all costs directly resulting from such cancellation.

The Government of Israel agrees to full secrecy on all matters concerning this sale until the Government of the United States decides to make the matter public and will cooperate fully with the Government of the United States with respect to the timing and method of public disclosure.

Sincerely yours,

Y. Rabin
Lt. General Y. Rabin
Ambassador

The Honorable
Paul C. Warnke
Asst Secretary of Defense
The Pentagon
Washington, D.C.

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INTERNATIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS

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ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20301

27 November 1968

In reply refer to:
I-26174/68

His Excellency
Lieutenant General Yitzhak Rabin
Ambassador of Israel
2916 Chesapeake Street, N.W.
Washington, D. C. 20008

EXEMPT FROM EO 12958, Sec 3.4 (b) (6)
OASD P.S. 217 Date: 30 July 2002
Review/Declassify On: 31 Dec 2027
Other Agency Reply: TBD

Dear Mr. Ambassador:

This will acknowledge and respond to your letter of 22 November 1968, requesting on behalf of the Government of Israel that the United States sell to the Government of Israel fifty Phantom aircraft and related equipment and training. The Government of the United States agrees to sell to the Government of Israel fifty F-4 Phantom aircraft and related equipment and services in accordance with this exchange of letters and technical and financial annexes to be negotiated separately. This transaction is subject to the provisions of the Foreign Military Sales Act and the Mutual Defense Assistance Agreement of July 23, 1952.

The United States Government, for its part, accepts the assurances given by the Government of Israel as stated in your letter:

"On its part the Government of Israel reaffirms its long-standing policy as laid down in the Memorandum of Understanding of March 10, 1965, that it will not be the first power in the Middle East to introduce nuclear weapons and agrees not to use any aircraft supplied by the United States as a nuclear weapons carrier."

In this connection, I have made clear the position of the United States Government that the physical possession and control of nuclear arms by a Middle Eastern power would be deemed to constitute the introduction of nuclear weapons.

I wish also to confirm the understanding of the Government of Israel as set forth in the fifth paragraph of your letter of 22 November 1968. Such unusual and compelling circumstances would exist in the event of action inconsistent with your policy and agreement as set forth in your letter.

The agreement contained in the last paragraph of your letter concerning the secrecy of this undertaking is satisfactory to us.

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It is understood that we can now proceed to negotiate the technical and financial details of this transaction.

Sincerely,

Paul C. Warnke
Paul C. Warnke

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