Indiana University Press

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The Spymaster, the Communist, and Foxbats over Dimona:
the USSR's Motive for Instigating the Six-Day War

ABSTRACT

The paper will argue that a central motive for the Soviet move was to halt and destroy Israel's nuclear development before it could attain operational atomic weapons; that this Soviet effort was accelerated by a direct message from Israel that despite its official ambiguity, it was bent on acquiring such weapons; that Soviet nuclear weapons were readied for use against Israel in case it already possessed, and tried to use, any nuclear device; and that the direct Soviet military intervention actually began with overflights of Israel's main nuclear facility by Soviet aircraft and pilots, in preparation for the planned attack on this target and/or in order to create such concern in Israel that would ensure its launch of a first strike.

In order to liquidate the nuclear object in Israel, which was completely "unneeded" by the USSR, Moscow embarked on the course of direct disinformation: On 13 May 1967, Moscow informed Cairo about "top-secret data" that 13 Israeli brigades had been moved to the Syrian border. [Report on PressCenter.ru, 26 March 2001][1]

Ever since the Arab-Israeli crisis and war in 1967, it has been generally accepted that the final escalation was triggered in mid-May by a false Soviet warning that Israel was massing troops for an attack on Syria. It has also been conventionally held that this was the unintentional result

of a Soviet error or miscalculation, and that afterwards Moscow endeav-
ored to prevent the outbreak of hostilities, especially avoiding any direct
military involvement.

In 2001, based mainly on new evidence from the former USSR, one of
the present writers proposed the thesis that the Soviet disinformation was
a deliberate strategic move, part of a plan to provoke Israel into a preemp-
tive strike in order to legitimize direct Soviet naval and aerial intervention
in favor of an Arab counterattack; furthermore, that this intervention was
actually set in motion before the unforeseen character and effect of the
Israeli strike led to its being largely (though not completely) aborted.[2]

One of the main objections to this thesis has been its ostensible dis-
proportionality. Soviet policy is perceived as having, by 1967, become suf-
ficiently cautious and responsible to rule out risking a superpower confron-
tation for the sake of gaining any advantage in the Middle Eastern theater
of the Cold War,[3] let alone that it would contemplate launching nuclear
weapons at Israel.[4] This objection has now been refuted by additional
evidence, which also resolves some hitherto mysterious or contradictory
points in the historiography of the 1967 conflict.

The paper will argue that a central motive for the Soviet move was
to halt and destroy Israel's nuclear development before it could attain
operational atomic weapons; that this Soviet effort was accelerated by a
direct message from Israel that despite its official ambiguity, it was bent
on acquiring such weapons; that Soviet nuclear weapons were readied for
use against Israel in case it already possessed, and tried to use, any nuclear
device; and that the direct Soviet military intervention actually began with
overflights of Israel's main nuclear facility by Soviet aircraft and pilots, in
preparation for the planned attack on this target and/or in order to create
such concern in Israel that would ensure its launch of a first strike.

At the time, the nuclear context was denied even in internal US
administration estimates. A postwar NSC document begins by stating
that

> The most significant feature of the role of nuclear capabilities during the
> Israeli-Arab hostilities was the absence of direct impact. In contrast to the
> situation in 1956, the Soviet Union made no indirect nuclear threats, and did
> not engage in 'ballistic blackmail.' . . . The recent belligerents themselves do
> not, of course, have nuclear weapons.[5]

But the idea that *Arab* concern about Israel's impending nuclear arma-
ment was a major cause of the Six-Day War has already been suggested by

the most prominent authorities on Israeli nuclear policy: Shlomo Aronson, Avner Cohen, and the co-authors Ariel Levite and Emily Landau.[6] However, they referred mainly to Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser's warnings that he would launch a preventive war if Israel approached nuclear armament; and to the two photoreconnaissance overflights of its nuclear facility at Dimona, in May 1967, by aircraft that have ever since been conventionally described as Egyptian MiG-21s—an identification this paper will dispute.

Indeed, as early as 1964, the US Ambassador to Egypt wrote to President Lyndon Johnson that "the only trigger for Egyptian–Israeli war" would be "an Egyptian conviction that Israel had started the production of nuclear weapons. If Nasser had proof of this, he might well attempt a preemptive strike."[7] In this, Ambassador John S. Badeau was in effect repeating the threat that Nasser himself voiced four years earlier: "Israel's development of nuclear weapons would prompt the Arab states to launch a preventive war."[8]

While Egyptian plans to bomb the Dimona reactor in 1967 have been known since shortly after the war,[9] most histories have either ignored or downplayed the nuclear issue as a cause of the crisis, and the USSR is hardly mentioned in this context. In his recent history of the war, Michael Oren cited Minister Yigal Alon, who was convinced that "Egypt would strike Dimona the moment America challenged the blockade [of the Tiran Straits]."[10] However, Oren concluded that Israel's *fears* of an Egyptian attack on Dimona did more to precipitate its preemptive strike than any *actual* Egyptian threat.[11] A prominent US authority, Richard B. Parker, went so far as to say that "it never occurred to him that the nuclear issue was of relevance to understanding the Egyptian motives"—on the grounds that none of his Egyptian informants mentioned it, although one of them definitely did so.[12] And all these studies have disregarded or denied a deliberate Soviet role in the war's instigation or conduct.

In his recent account of the Israeli leadership's deliberations in May–June 1967, Ami Gluska confirmed that an Egyptian air strike at Dimona was one of the two perceived threats that were consistently most feared. The other was direct Soviet military intervention. Gluska does not, however, indicate whether Israel made any connection between these two threats, or whether its fears stemmed from specific intelligence.[13]

The almost total subsequent disappearance of *both* these factors from discourse on the war apparently resulted largely from the reticence of Israeli scholars on the nuclear issue and from the successful Soviet cover-up of Moscow's role, which has already been discussed by one of the present authors.[14]

However, recently emerging evidence has not only exposed the Soviet role in causing the crisis and war, but also put it in a nuclear context. For example, a Russian military historian, Col. Valery Yaremenko, recently published an article on the genesis of the Six-Day War entitled "Nuclear War in the Middle East Could Have Been Beneficial for the USSR."[15]

It must be emphasized that the following analysis pertains to the Soviet interest in, perception of, and response to Israel's nuclear program, not to the latter's actual history—of which the present authors have no independent information.

THE DISCLOSURE

A recently published collection of Soviet Foreign Ministry documents includes the following remarkable memorandum:

> On 13 December 1965, one of the leaders of the Israel Communist party, Comrade [Moshe] Sneh, informed the Soviet Ambassador in Tel Aviv about his conversation (9 December 1965) with the adviser to the Prime Minister of Israel, Gariel, in which the latter declared Israel's intention to produce its own atomic bomb.[16]

"Gariel" is the Russian transliteration of the Hebrew name Har'el. The title of "adviser to the Prime Minister" identifies Sneh's interlocutor as Isser Harel, a founder, and for many years the boss, of Israel's General Security Services (Shin Bet) *and* its Mossad intelligence agency, who was appointed in September 1965 as special adviser on intelligence and special operations to Prime Minister Levi Eshkol.[17]

During the 1956 Sinai-Suez crisis, a Soviet nuclear threat directed at Israel, Britain, and France sufficed to halt their offensive against Egypt. This experience was a major factor in impelling Israel, as well as France, to seek a nuclear deterrent.[18] Russian histories claim that "this nuclear ultimatum . . . has, in effect, been hushed up in Western literature."[19] Western historiography has indeed tended to credit US pressure, more than the Soviet threat, for the Anglo-French-Israeli climb down, but this was not the perception in Moscow. The Soviet foreign minister at the time, Dmitri Shepilov, claimed years later that there had been no intention to make good on this threat, but the ploy worked to such a degree that it encouraged Khrushchev to try a similar maneuver in Cuba in 1962.[20]

Despite their failure in Cuba, in the Middle East 1956 was a successful example for the Soviets of how they could employ their nuclear clout

to limit Israeli action against their Arab clients, thus reinforcing these clients' dependence on Moscow—as long as Israel had no counterdeterrent. Preventing Israel from achieving even the semblance of nuclear superiority and a credible reply to any nuclear threat thus became an objective of Soviet policy, in addition to real or feigned anxiety over a direct threat to the USSR's southern fringe.

The claim has been made that the USSR—rather than the Arab states—was the primary target of Israel's nuclear-deterrent project from its outset.[21] Statements to this effect were made by Israeli officials to journalists in the course of the 1967 crisis.[22]

One of the main nuclear threats was perceived by Moscow to emanate from West Germany, and the Israeli aspect soon was put in this context. On 2 January 1958, Soviet Ambassador in Israel A.N. Abramov reported to Moscow:

> There is information that the Israeli government intends to organize in Israel, with the help of West Germany, production of missiles and even atomic weapons. The preliminary agreement on this is being talked about as having been reached."[23]

In 1955, the USSR decided to provide Egypt with an experimental nuclear reactor, a few days *after* the US made a similar agreement with Israel.[24] Whether promoting Egypt's nuclear capability toward the military level was ever envisaged by Moscow, before it adopted a firm anti-proliferation policy, merits further research. The evidence that the USSR did provide Egypt with chemical weapons is not conclusive, but if this supply included more than defensive equipment, it may indicate a preference to limit Nasser to lesser WMD as a substitute for nuclear arms.[25] Containing Israel's nuclear development therefore remained essential for Soviet policy.

Following a *New York Times* exposé about Israel's nuclear program,[26] on 23 December 1960 Nasser issued his first public warning of preventive war,[27] and the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs instructed its ambassadors in Egypt and Israel that:

> Israel's attempt to produce its own nuclear weapons is dangerous[,] . . . will make the situation in the Near and Middle East even more unstable, and is liable to trigger a serious conflict that can spill over the borders of the region.[28]

The document cites "information at hand," which may refer to the results of constant Soviet intelligence efforts in Israel. The KGB *rezident* in Tel-Aviv at the time, Ivan Dedyulya, relates that when posted there in late 1962, he was instructed "to ascertain the . . . progress of work for creating atomic arms in Israel."[29] A former head of the Soviet Foreign Ministry's Middle East Department, Oleg Grinevski, states that "by the mid-1960s, our intelligence had truthful enough data on Israel's nuclear potential."[30] A Russian miltary historian notes that in addition to "cosmic intelligence," the Soviets also knew from "HUMINT" sources about the actual nature of Israel's "textile plant" at Dimona.[31]

At the time he made his disclosure to Sneh, Harel was undoubtedly aware that Israel's nuclear program was high on the priority list of Soviet intelligence. In 1960, he had exposed the physicist Kurt Sitte of the Haifa Technological Institute as an agent of the USSR's Czechoslovak proxies, who reported to his handlers "about nuclear research and the Atomic Energy Commission," earning the sobriquet "the Israeli Klaus Fuchs."[32]

Harel died in February 2003, shortly before the new Russian document collection was published. But the fact that he met Sneh in 1965, in the full awareness that the latter would transmit his comments to the Soviets, is a matter of record—thanks to Harel himself, who wrote that during his tenure as Eshkol's adviser

> I met secretly quite a number of times with Moshe Sneh. . . . We devoted our long conversations to exchanging opinions and impressions about ideology and politics, totalitarianism and democracy, the Soviet Union and Communism, and other matters.[33]

This is part of an entire chapter which, in a book otherwise devoted to his exposure of Soviet spies, Harel devotes to the question "was Moshe Sneh really a Soviet agent?"—which he answers in the negative.

Harel notes that Sneh was denounced to him as a Soviet agent by Sneh's comrades in the left-wing Mapam Party, in which Sneh made a brief stopover in his migration across the Zionist and Israeli political spectrum, ultimately making him become a political outcast as the leader of the Communist Party.[34] Harel considered that the Soviets would logically have preferred to have their agent remain in government. Therefore, although he did put Sneh under surveillance, he determined that "Sneh . . . was never a secret agent infiltrated into the Zionist movement and later into the Zionist left in order to undermine it from within."[35]

However, Harel's conclusion is hardly borne out by recently published CPSU documents:

> It was no coincidence that [Sneh] was elected secretary-general of the League for Friendship with the USSR. . . . Through this organization, Moscow secretly financed its friends in Israel. This public activist collaborated closely with the Soviet special services and supplied them with 'valuable material on the issues of [Israel's] foreign and internal policy' . . . In early 1952, the intelligence service of Mapam, headed by Sneh, informed the Soviet *rezidentura* that Israeli counterintelligence had infiltrated 28 provocateurs into the leadership organs of the Israel Communist Party.[36]

Harel's conclusion also contradicts his own description of Sneh in a preceding chapter of the same book, which is devoted to Harel's exposure of Israel Beer, a former colleague of Sneh's in Mapam, as a full-fledged Soviet spy.[37] For example, Sneh is described there as dismissing the coup plot hatched in Mapam's security department as "infantile" because "when the Red Army arrived all this would be done anyway."[38] And while clearing Sneh of suspicion as an active Soviet agent, Harel does concede sarcastically:

> What is a Communist leader outside the Soviet Union to do when he reports to one of the authorized representatives of that country of peace, and is asked an embarrassing question about the plots being hatched in his own country against the Soviet paradise? Dare he refuse to reply, on the grounds that this would be by nature of espionage? My answer is *No.*[39]

Harel's book confirms, then, that he knew any statement he made to Sneh would be relayed to the Soviet embassy. Indeed, the Soviets themselves took this for granted:

> Apparently, Gariel had been assigned to inform the Soviet leaders, by means of Sneh, about Eshkol's point of view . . . on non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.[40]

By 1965, The Israel Communist Party was in the throes of an ideological rift. Sneh led the faction that tended to legitimize Israel's existence as a Jewish state, a tendency that ultimately led to his deathbed apology for ever having abandoned Zionism.[41] His longstanding relations with Israel's leaders, including Eshkol, were already on the mend, as was his connection

with Harel—who, as head of the Haganah intelligence arm in Tel-Aviv, had saved Sneh from arrest by the British in 1946. But Sneh was still suspect enough for Harel (and, as indicated below, Eshkol himself) to meet him in "secret." At this stage, both factions of the Communist Party were still striving to gain the recognition and backing of Moscow,[42] and Sneh was especially motivated to comply with Soviet expectations, while attempting to reconcile them with the requests of Eshkol and Harel.

In any event, Sneh evidently treated Harel's message as so sensitive that he did not disclose it, or his very meetings with Harel, to his party comrades. A top-secret document in the Prime Minister's Office files, apparently from the security services, reports deliberations at the Politburo of Sneh's faction (Maki) in late March 1966, where "comrades" opined that

> Several indications have been given, both by Eshkol and by [Foreign Minister] Abba Eban, of sincere intentions to seek a way for nuclear demilitarization. . . . There is a reasonable chance that Maki will occupy some position as a mediating factor between the government of the Soviet Union and the government of Israel. This is proved by the recent meetings of Sneh with the prime minister. . . . Sneh proposed to tell the "comrades" in Moscow of these assessments.[43]

Sneh clearly did not signify that he had received an authoritative statement to the contrary. Rather, he agreed that the assessment which he knew to be wrong should be relayed to the CPSU.

By 1967, the Israel Communist Party had formally split, and the CPSU had opted to foster the Arab-nationalist oriented majority splinter, Rakah. On the eve of the Six-Day War, as his close associate reports,

> Sneh was working day and night to prevent the impending war. He utilized his good connections with Eshkol, on the one hand, and Soviet Ambassador Dmitri Chuvakhin, on the other, to try and bring about an Israeli-Soviet dialogue that might stop the erosion toward war.[44]

Further research would be needed to determine whether, by December 1965, Sneh was intentionally helping to promote an Israeli initiative vis-à-vis the USSR, or was still acting as a Soviet informant, or was promoting his own partisan agenda.

Even more enigmatic is Harel's motive for making such a disclosure. Little was ever published about the substance of Harel's work as Eshkol's adviser, except for his unrelenting struggle to regain control of the Mossad

from his successor, Meir Amit.[45] It is unlikely to ever emerge whether Harel included the curious chapter on Sneh in his book by way of apologetics for his meetings with the Communist leader.

Possibly the chapter was even intended to forestall any future exposure of Harel's nuclear message to Sneh. Harel's book appeared in 1987—the year after a former Dimona technician, Mordechai Vanunu, exposed information about Israel's nuclear capability and was imprisoned for 18 years on treason charges.[46] The fact that Harel made a disclosure of similar import to Vanunu's some 20 years earlier casts a new light on Harel's characterization of Sneh. It now seems to declare: My dealings with Sneh were *ex officio* and deliberate; I was not duped by a Soviet agent—not to mention anything worse.

There could be several worse scenarios. One is that Harel's motivation was mainly personal, combined with the political interests of the "clique" he was allied with in the government, led by Golda Meir and Alon. Harel, whose power as head of the Mossad and Shin Bet had been unchallenged, was dismissed by Ben-Gurion in March 1963. The immediate and ostensible reason was Harel's uncompromising campaign against German scientists working on weapons-development projects in Egypt, which the Mossad chief attributed to neglect, if not collusion, by what he considered an inadquately de-Nazified West Germany. His campaign threatened to turn into an open confrontation with Bonn.

In addition to missiles, the Germans in Egypt were suspected of developing WMD. Most references in this context are to chemical, biological, and perhaps radiological weapons. However, according to a counterestimate submitted by Amit, Harel raised the specter of nuclear weapons too.[47] But Ben-Gurion considered Israel's relations with Germany, and Europe in general, too vital to jeopardize over this issue. Harel was mortified and embittered.

In 1965, he had his opportunity: Ben-Gurion resigned and, together with his "boys" Moshe Dayan and Shimon Peres, split with his former party. His successor, Eshkol, felt that Ben-Gurion was undermining his leadership—although he did continue his predecessor's nuclear program. At the "clique's" behest and under pressure from Harel, Eshkol first reopened the German issue. On 1 September, the Ministerial Committee on Defense, after hearing a report from Harel, resolved that, "Operations against the work of German experts in Egypt must be continued and redoubled" and expressed its gratitude to Harel."[48] He considered this a rehabilitation, and now pressed for his full reinstatement. Two weeks later, Eshkol appointed

Harel as adviser with special responsibility for intelligence, and the latter began a ruthless campaign to undermine Amit.

The "clique," and its ally Harel, were opposed if not to the nuclear program itself then at least to its dependence on France—another aspect of Ben-Gurion's European orientation.[49] However, the biographer of both Ben-Gurion and Harel, Michael Bar-Zohar, states that Meir and Harel were opposed to the nuclear project *in its entirety*, and had "proposed to Ben-Gurion certain measures, the practical meaning of which would have been the liquidation of Israel's nuclear program."[50] Bar-Zohar attributes this mainly to Meir's anxiety that the project would damage relations with the United States. Peres, however, has claimed more recently that as early as 1960, Harel cited Soviet antagonism to Israel's nuclear program as a prime concern. After having Peres summoned urgently from abroad to a meeting with Ben-Gurion, "Harel began by reporting . . . reliable information that a Soviet satellite had recently overflown and photographed Dimona. . . . Israel therefore, said Harel, faced a most grave situation."[51]

Six years later, was Harel trying to generate renewed Soviet pressure in order to halt a project he had long striven to stop? Harel's dispute with Peres had by that time also become a turf war over technology acquisition and security responsibility for the nuclear program:

> In 1957 . . . then-Defense Ministry Director General Shimon Peres established the Office for Special Missions, whose task was to secure the reactor. . . . Peres, the rival of Isser Harel, then the head of Israel's intelligence services, wanted to establish a private intelligence organization for himself.[52]

Could Harel have been trying to take advantage of Peres's departure from his powerful defense-ministry position in order to saddle the latter's rival outfit with responsibility for a major leak, and thus to get it disbanded?

The worst scenario regarding Harel's motivation might be that he was not acting in Israel's national interest at all—not even out of a personally biased view. Several Soviet sources report the USSR had a very senior source in the Eshkol administration. Former KGB *rezident* Dedyulya claims that such a source was recruited, whom he calls "N."[53] A similar claim was made to Oren by another KGB Middle East operative, Vadim Kirpichenko.[54]

These ex-Soviet accounts of a highly placed Israeli source conform astonishingly with Harel's figure at this time. KGB Colonel Mikhail

Mukasei relates that immediately after the 1967 war he and his wife Yelizaveta, also a veteran Soviet agent:

> managed to contact an individual who was not only in the know but found out some things for us himself, in matters which were then unclear and complex. He had previously been in government, later he was dismissed, and this angered him very much. He did not understand whom he was working for—we conducted all the debriefings very cautiously. But he really did know a very great deal."[55]

Did Israel's former spymaster become a major KGB source—knowingly or otherwise? This seemingly preposterous notion cannot be entirely ruled out, though it cannot be suggested as probable without further evidence. However, the Soviet Foreign Ministry memorandum of 23 February 1966 treats Harel's remark to Sneh as a *bona fide* message from the highest Israeli authority—and notes that it conflicted with Israel's official policy, which was communicated to Soviet diplomats on several occasions:

> In a conversation with the Sovambassador, the Foreign Minister of Israel Golda Meir stressed that "Israel does not have an atomic bomb, her country is threatened not by atomic, but . . . conventional arms, and Israel adheres to peace and general disarmament." Similar statements were pronounced publicly by Prime Minister Eshkol. If Gariel's remarks on "direction of Israel to create its own atomic bomb" reflect the real intentions of the Israeli government, the honesty of Israel's foreign policy is called into question.[56]

When he met Sneh, Harel still had the ear and the backing of Eshkol (which he was to lose within a few months). He took part in the weekly supreme security consultations that the latter held as Defense Minister, where "the most important subjects were decided, and . . . the most fateful matters were discussed, including matters of life and death."[57]

Harel's disclosure to the Soviets can therefore most charitably be interpreted as a strategic move to confirm, on Eshkol's behalf, that despite the ascendance of Ben-Gurion's critics on the nuclear issue, the exclusion of his leading supporters from government, *and* US pressure, the nuclear project was not being halted nor its objective altered.

Israel's declared policy down to the present, of "not being the first to introduce nuclear weapons into the region," had been cemented in 1964 by its negotiations with the US for the supply of tanks and aircraft, which Washington sought to predicate on Israel's compliance with non-proliferation.

However, the "non-introduction" public policy threatened to reduce the deterrent effect of Israel's reputed nuclear capability.

Israel's awareness of this problem is illustrated by the recently declassified minutes of a talk during July 1969 on this issue between a group of US officials and Israel's ambassador in Washington, Yitzhak Rabin. The Americans demanded "Israel's assurance . . . that it will not *possess* nuclear weapons. . . . Rabin asked: Would the United States "consider a weapon, which had not been *advertised* and tested, to be a weapon that could be used?" [emphasis added][58] Israel thus held that "advertisement" was an essential component of nuclear deterrence: For a weapon to have this effect, the adversary must know that it is available and that the readiness to use it exists.

Given the US position and Israel's own previous commitments, publishing such an advertisement officially was out of the question. The only alternative could be transmitting the message through deniable but credible back channels. Might Harel's declaration have been a deliberate attempt at deterrent "advertising," presumably endorsed if not initiated by Eshkol? Dayan, as Defense Minister after the Six-Day War, has already been reported as proposing precisely such a course of action vis-à-vis the Soviet Union:

> A credible Israeli bomb also would deter the Soviets from taking any steps in the Middle East that would jeopardize Israel's survival. . . . In Dayan's scenario, Israeli intelligence agents would secretly inform their Soviet counterparts as soon as Dimona's assembly line went into full production.[59]

Moreover, according to Hersh, this idea was "understood" by the Israeli leadership from the outset of its nuclear program, and was actually implemented "by 1973," when Israel completed the development of miniature atomic devices.[60]

However, according to this report, the Soviets were informed only *after* Israel's nuclear weapons became operational. This is also true of the Vanunu case: Even if allowing him out of Israel with interior photos of Dimona originally resulted from a field-security failure, after the fact Vanunu was persecuted with such ferocity that the credibility, and the deterrent effect, of his disclosures was ensured.[61]

Harel's apprehension that Israel's yet incipient nuclear capability would put it on a collision course with the USSR had been voiced previously by other Israeli figures, even at cabinet level. The full cabinet never formally discussed, much less determined, Israel's nuclear-weapons policy, but some

ministers used various opportunities to express their opinions and, mainly, objections. In 1958, in a cabinet discussion of a Soviet proposal to declare the Middle East a nuclear-weapons free zone, the respected Justice Minister, Pinhas Rosen, spoke up:

> If we ever decided, or almost decided, to take any steps here toward creating atomic energy for purposes of war, I do not know what is liable to happen . . .

> Prime Minister D. Ben-Gurion: Atomic energy for purposes of peace. I request that you do not repeat your remark.

> Minister P. Rosen: I am very much afraid that we here may become such a country, that Russia will have to want to eradicate us [. . .] Even if I accept that we are not engaged in this today, I can assume that we are potentially capable of it. But I say that this is very undesirable, because it will be very dangerous.[62]

Ben-Gurion did not respond to this prediction. He rejected Rosen's argument that the Soviets would not supply nuclear weapons to Nasser. The Justice Minister was ultimately vindicated on both counts.

By 1965 the Soviets were aware of Israel's nuclear efforts. It is far less certain whether they had precise information as to the *stage* Israel's development had reached. Therefore, when in December 1965 the Soviets received an unambiguous message from an authoritative Israeli source that Israel was *developing* an atomic bomb and *intended* to arm itself with such a weapon, the main news for Moscow must have been not the intent but the fact that it had *not yet been realized*, and that a window of opportunity still existed to prevent its fruition.

A similar assessment of Israel's technical capability had been made by the United States' intelligence community in December 1964; however, its prediction that Israel could explode its first nuclear device within two or three years was qualified by "after it decides to develop nuclear capability."[63] Assuming the USSR's technical information was equal to the Americans', Harel provided the crucial component: that the political decision had indeed been made, and remained in force after the change of leadership.

It would seem extremely unlikely that a person of Harel's experience was unaware of the distinction between informing the adversary before and after the deterrent weapon is procured. But the Soviets appear to have taken his disclosure at face value. Harel's disclosure thus presented the

USSR with the decision whether to act—or to prompt Egypt to act—in a similar way to Israel's strike at Iraq's nuclear potential in 1981. Judging by the susequent chain of events, it indeed appears to have precipitated rather than deterred an attack on Israel.

THE CONSEQUENCES

After reporting Harel's disclosure, the Soviet document of 13 February 1966 continues with a typical propaganda blast about "the threat posed to Israel itself:"

> Only madmen might address such a serious issue . . . from narrow local and nationalist positions . . . [I]f Israel really sets out on the road of creating its own atomic bomb, as stated by Gariel . . . Israel would set out on the road of adventurism and international provocation. . . . The Israeli people . . . would not only have to bear the excessive financial burden but would also suffer the graver consequences.[64]

But the only practical measure proposed for countering the threat is a directive for Chuvakhin:

> Tell Comrade Sneh that in Moscow there is full confidence that Israel's Communists and other progressive forces . . . will in case of need be capable of recruiting broad masses in the country against such a policy.[65]

A committee against nuclear arms did emerge in Israel, including some prominent intellectuals; whether they were knowingly or unwittingly recruited by the Soviets is a question that merits further research. But this committee's impact was negligible—probably due mainly to the almost total gag that was imposed on any news or public debate about the nuclear project.[66]

The magnitude of the problem, as depicted in the Soviet memorandum, appears to call for much more significant counteraction. But whether and how the USSR's leadership decided to respond to Harel's disclosure must be deduced from a careful review of Soviet action. There was indeed a sudden flurry of such activity.

As Cohen puts it, "Dimona became a hot topic in Cairo in the first half of 1966" after "lying dormant" since the previous round of activity in 1960–1961.[67] On 18 January, Chuvakhin transmitted Moscow's

aforementioned instructions to Sneh.[68] The next day, in his first meeting
with Eban as foreign minister, the ambassador brought up the nuclear issue
as the main order of business, stating that "his government was concerned
about the rumors regarding the development of the atomic bomb by Israel."
According to the Israeli minutes of this talk, "The minister . . . denied this
fabrication vehemently."[69]

This might have strengthened the sense, in Moscow, of what a month
later it termed the "question of honesty in Israel's foreign policy."[70] In
January, the US Embassy in Israel reported to Washington a statement by
an unidentified Soviet diplomat that "he believes that Israel is producing
nuclear weapons."[71] For the Americans, as for the Soviets, the key word
here must have been "produc*ing*," since Eshkol had reportedly given the
United States, in return for a pledge of arms supplies, a vague commitment
to restrict nuclear actvity to research and development.[72]

The implementation by the Soviet embassy staff of further measures in
addition to the instructions for Sneh is also suggested by a passage which
was deleted by Israeli military censorship from the daily *Yedi'ot Aharonot*
on 4 February 1966. The paper's political correspondent Aryeh Zimuki
had reported: "The Soviets are lately displaying great interest in the devel-
opment of Israeli nuclear science. Israeli politicians emphasized to them
Israel's wish for general disarmament of the region and for nuclear arms
[to be put] under mutual inspection."

Zimuki's report went on to mention Chuvakhin's visit to the Foreign
Ministry, where "Israeli representatives stressed the need for the region
to be declared as demilitarized of nuclear arms." Israeli censorship was
so strict on the nuclear issue that it excised even a statement which was
already on public record: "In the Knesset, the prime minister declared
Israel's readiness for a general arms solution, including nuclear arms, but
not separately."[73]

At this point (20 February 1966) Nasser weighed in with his second
warning of pre-emptive war.[74] Apparently by analogy with Nasser's previ-
ous such warning in December 1960, current scholarship tends to connect
the Egyptian president's 1966 statement with the *New York Times*'s report
on 7 January: "The US believes that Israel ordered from France 30 ballistic
missiles of intermediate range . . . [this is] indicative of an Israeli intention
to develop nuclear warheads."[75]

However, in the 1960 case, Nasser issued his threat *three days* after the
Times reported that Israel was "secretly attempting to develop a capabil-
ity to produce atomic weapons"[76] In 1966, he did so more than *six weeks*
after the *Times'* publication. During this interval, there were a number of

other developments which might have been as instrumental as the *Times* story in eliciting Nasser's response. These included some extraordinary Soviet moves, including a visit to Egypt by First Deputy Defense Minister Andrei Grechko, in which the nuclear matter was reportedly high on the agenda.[77]

This points to an additional difference between the circumstances of Nasser's warnings in 1960 and 1966: In the first instance, he went public *before* appealing to the USSR for countervailing nuclear weapons. It was only on 10 January 1961—two weeks *after* Nasser's public warning—that officials of the Egyptian Embassy in Washington "persistently demanded" that their Soviet counterparts state "the position the USSR would take if the UAR requested us to provide it with nuclear arms."[78] In contrast, on 4 February 1966, almost three weeks *before* Nasser's second warning, the *New York Times* reported from Cairo that Grechko had, during his visit to Egypt, rejected Nasser's request to supply Egypt with Soviet nuclear weapons, and instead had pledged "the use of Soviet nuclear forces to safeguard Egypt should Israel develop an atom bomb."[79] Events in 1967, which have recently come to light, confirm that the USSR indeed provided Egypt with such an "umbrella."

By February 1966, preparations were in full swing for a visit to Egypt by Soviet Prime Minister Alexei N. Kosygin in May, and the issue of the Soviet nuclear guarantees was evidently raised as a central topic. On the eve of Kosygin's arrival, "diplomatic observers" in Cairo actually told the *Daily Telegraph* that "Israel's capacity for producing atomic weapons is expected to be high on the agenda" and "Nasser will ask Mr. Kosygin for assistance in 'holding the ring' internationally if Egypt acts to make good on Nasser's threat of preventive war. . . . Kosygin is expected to give such assurances."[80] A British Foreign Ministry official told an Israeli diplomat in response that "Egypt will press the USSR for a guarantee against nuclear attack. I fear that during this visit of Kosygin's, the Russians . . . are liable to give something in that direction."[81]

Such a momentous move could only result from a Politburo-level decision.[82] At any rate, details now emerging about the Soviet deployment ahead of the Six-Day War confirm that such a measure was not only pledged but implemented: Well before the overt outbreak of the crisis in mid-May 1967, the USSR began to position nuclear-armed naval forces in the Mediterranean (and later in the Red Sea as well).[83] Remarkably, this deployment was entirely unknown to the US, and thus—unless the Soviets overestimated American intelligence capabilities—appears to have been intended for operational use rather than deterrence.[84]

Was this Soviet guarantee, and particularly its timing, connected with the heightened Soviet concern following Harel's disclosure? Col. Yaremenko recently attributed to "both HUMINT and cosmic intelligence" [satellite imagery] the fact that before the Six-Day War, "Moscow had received highly precise data about this top-secret object [Dimona] . . ."[85]

Yaremenko continues: "It cannot be ruled out that the KGB shared this information with Egypt, especially as the cooperation between the Soviet and Egyptian secret services in this period was sufficiently close."[86] Could Harel's disclosure also have been transmitted to Nasser and prompted his warning, *after* making sure of the Soviet nuclear guarantees? Other references suggest that Egypt inferred, possibly from Harel's message, that Israel had not yet attained operational nuclear weapons. Two days after Nasser's threats of preemptive war were published in the *New York Times*, Egyptian parliament Speaker Anwar al-Sadat visited the White House; the American record says "It was Johnson . . . who referred to the Israeli nuclear weapons program. . . . Sadat did not follow up on Johnson's comment, allowing the conversation to move to other subjects."[87] However, Sadat himself was cited in an Arab paper as having told Johnson that Israel was *still working* on development of a nuclear weapon "according to reports received by Egypt."[88] The same contention was directly voiced by the Egyptian Ambassador in Washington to the Secretary of State on 22 March: "UAR much concerned by intelligence reports that Israel *working toward* production nuclear weapons."[89]

The *New York Times* reported on 7 January that the French missiles being sought by Israel had a range of 500 miles, enough to reach "Egyptian targets;"[90] Aronson notes that this was also perceived at the time as within reach of the southern USSR.[91] However, it also confirmed Harel's indication that this nuclear capability was some time off: The missiles would be supplied only by 1967, and "the appraisal of American officials is that Israel would probably produce an atomic device within two years."[92] The resulting window of opportunity lasting into 1967 was made all the more attractive by the Egyptian and Soviet perception that the IDF would then be at its weakest point in conventional firepower, due to the planned replacement of old European weaponry by new, modern American arms.[93] Indeed, in January 1966 Eshkol is reported to have been extremely concerned about an Egyptian preventive strike; this was hitherto connected to the *New York Times* report, but if Eshkol was aware of, or responsible for, Harel's disclosure, that would provide an even stronger basis for his fears.[94]

Two days after Nasser's public warning, on 23 February 1966, the Soviet memorandum on Harel's message was composed. Ostensibly, it

might simply have been prepared for a Soviet leadership meeting in connection with Nasser's statement and Kosygin's forthcoming visit to Egypt, or for the 23nd CPSU congress that was to begin a month later. It may also have been used as a background brief for talks on "a sensitive issue" pertaining to Soviet naval action in the Mediterranean with a high-ranking Egyptian military delegation, headed by Navy Commander Admiral Suleiman Azzat, that had just arrived in Moscow.[95] It would be the Soviet flotillas in the Mediterranean and the Red Sea that would soon provide the main nuclear "umbrella" for Egypt.

However, the most prominent event on 23 February was a military coup in Syria, which brought the military wing of the Ba'ath party to power. During the crisis in mid-May 1967, and ever since, its origins have been traced to the Syrian coup.[96] The Soviet fingerprints on this coup were obvious even at the time.[97] Within 20 minutes of its inception, the coup elevated a graduate of the Soviet Air Academy, General Hafez al-Assad, to the post of acting Defense Minister;[98] other coup leaders had long been associated with the GRU. Soviet media reports about the coup have been shown by Avraham Ben-Tzur to reflect at least prior knowledge of, and more probably complicity in, its planning.[99]

At the height of the 1967 crisis, on 26 May, Israeli Military Intelligence chief Aharon Yariv stated that "the roots of the current situation are connected to the active Soviet regional initiative" that began "over a year ago."[100] So far, such retrospective comments were understood as referring to the coup in Syria, but the Soviet effort to counter Israel's nuclear aspirations could just as correctly be termed "an active regional initiative." The parallel timing indicates that Moscow's intensified activity on the nuclear issue, and its move to cement its influence over the country which would be used as the trigger for war against Israel, were at least undertaken simultaneously as facets of the same Soviet strategy.

As already noted, in February and early March 1966, the USSR was still attempting, at least in its overt diplomacy, to nudge Israel toward a commitment to non-proliferation by means of relatively conciliatory proposals. Reports in the Arab press about such public appearances of Soviet diplomats in Israel caused some alarm in Arab capitals, which were then engaged in preparations for a summit that Nasser convened in Cairo on 14–17 March, with "the issue of the nuclear danger that Israel poses" high on the agenda.[101]

The Soviet Ambassador in Baghdad reported that the Iraq press also published a series of articles entitled "A strange declaration by the Soviet Ambassador in Israel," "Moscow wants an agreement between the

Arabs and Israel," and so on.[102] On 7 March, while the conference was still in preparation, the first secretary of the UAR Embassy in Moscow remonstrated at the Soviet Foreign Ministry.

> . . . Ivan Dedyulya, a counselor of the Soviet Embassy . . . reportedly declared that he would be glad if the "spirit of Tashkent" were to prevail in the relations between Arabs and Jews and that "the Soviet Union might be prepared to mediate between Arab countries and Israel if both sides were to request it." Such a report . . . caused surprise in Cairo, as in the UAR the USSR's position in the Arab-Israeli conflict is well known . . .

He was reassured that

> In the struggle against imperialist intrigues in the Middle East, the Soviet Union acted and acts on the Arab's side. Nothing had happened to give a reason to think of any change in the clear and firm position of the USSR. . . . The forthcoming visit to UAR by . . . A. N. Kosygin, is a testimony to that.[103]

Preparations for the visit, including the agenda and joint communiqués, were thus under way when the Arabs protested about the perceived mellowing of the Soviet position. Whether this was the direct cause, at this point a significant shift occurred in Soviet behavior. The nuclear issue was presumably one cause, and evidently one manifestation, of this change.

Moscow's stress on diplomatic action for halting Israel's nuclear development, which figured prominently in Soviet activity in the weeks immediately following Harel's disclosure, was dropped—so suddenly that the embassy in Israel itself was left out of step. On 15 March, in a discussion with the Director General of the Israeli Foreign Ministry, Soviet Ambassador Chuvakhin again suggested that Israel's ". . . joining a declaration on disarmament of the region from nuclear arms would be a first step towards defusing the tension."[104]

Even before Chuvakhin included this recomendation in his periodic report to Gromyko, media reports about his public appearances touched off Arab remonstrations with Moscow, and his superiors demanded that the ambassador explain "what could serve as a base for such kind of publications of the Iraqi press." On 19 March, the head of the Near and Middle East Department A. Shchiborin rejected Chuvakhin's clarifications, and blamed the latter's speech for Iraqi press accusations that "Moscow seeks an agreement between the Arabs and Israel:"

> The impression is created, that Comrade Chuvakhin . . . does not always take into consideration the specifics of the Middle East situation, the specifics of the Arab-Israeli conflict, and also the character of relations between the Soviet Union and the Arab states. We think it is advisable to draw Com. Chuvakhin's attention to the neccessity of displaying special caution and greater flexibility in his appearances.[105]

Apparently, this reprimand had not yet reached Chuvakhin when he sat down on 21 March to complete his lengthy periodic report to Gromyko, and he compounded the error:

> At the moment Israel is . . . giving to understand that if the superpowers were to reach an agreement on halting the supply of conventional arms to Middle Eastern states, then Israel might support the proposal to declare the Middle East a non-nuclear zone. . . . Such formulation of the issue possibly might not fully correspond to the Soviet Union's interests, but nevertheless it might . . . constitute a step forward toward resolving the issue of nuclear arms nonproliferation.[106]

But in Moscow, the option of promoting Israel's accession to the nascent NPT or a regional denuclearization agreement had apparently lost its relevancy. As Kosygin's trip to Cairo approached, there was a parallel escalation of Soviet and Arab rhetoric on both the nuclear issue and a new line which was to become a regular feature in Soviet disinformation until it became the overt trigger for the crisis and war in 1967: allegations of Israeli troop concentrations on the Syrian frontier.

On 18 April, a Syrian delegation, headed by the prime minister and including General Assad, left for Moscow on a special Soviet plane.[107] On the same day the *New York Times* again reported: "Nasser Threatens War on a Nuclear Armed Israel." On 9 May, the *Times* continued the drumbeat with: "Nasser Cites Need for Nuclear Arms." This may have been connected with a preparatory visit to Cairo by First Deputy Foreign Minister Vasili Kuznetsov, which according to US perceptions dealt with regional disarmament as a Soviet initiative (like Chuvakhin, the Americans may have been one step behind Soviet policy).[108] Between these two *Times* reports, on 2 May the Syrian delegation signed a treaty in Moscow,[109] and on 8 May, a Soviet newspaper published the first of many Soviet claims about aggressive Israeli preparations toward Syria. Although this TASS dispatch from Damascus was ostensibly legitimate fare for the Soviet national press, it was approved for publication at this stage only in the provincial *Sovietskaya Kyrgyzia*.[110]

Kosygin began his state visit to Cairo on 11 May. A week later, his reference to Israel in an address to the Egyptian National Assembly sounded as a barely veiled threat, which was noted verbatim and studied in Jerusalem: "The question of nuclear arms non-proliferation directly pertains to the question of ensuring the security of Egypt and of all the Arab countries, as forces may possibly appear in the Middle East that will dream of obtaining such weapons."[111] Kosygin's further comment that "the U.A.R. . . . is contributing to checking the atomic arms race . . ." appeared to suggest in Jerusalem that an agreement of cooperation on the nuclear issue had been reached.[112]

Eshkol deemed it necessary to reply, in a Knesset speech on 18 May, at least to the part of Kosygin's speech that dealt with nuclear weapons (as well as Nasser's threats): "Israel has no atomic arms," he said, "and will not be the first to introduce such arms into our area."[113] The official "non-introduction" stance, which was formulated for US consumption, was thus first enunciated publicly in a Soviet context—even though the USSR had already been informed by Harel to the contrary.

But the nuclear issue was dropped entirely from the joint communiqué issued at the conclusion of Kosygin's visit, and indeed from subsequent Soviet diplomacy. Overall, the Research Department at Israel's Foreign Ministry noted that "the declarations were typified by the scarcity of references to us. Those that did appear were as a rule general and even cautious. . . . It can be hoped that there will be no change in the process discerned recently of an improvement of style in the USSR's attitude."[114]

Meeting Secretary of State Dean Rusk on 26 May, Soviet Ambassador Anatoly Dobrynin said that "to his knowledge," there had not "been any discussion of this [nuclear] subject with Cairo . . . but it was possible that this had come up during the recent visit of Mr Kosygin to Cairo." Dobrynin expressed skepticism as to whether Israel or the UAR would be interested in a nuclear-free zone. "The Secretary said . . . we were convinced that the Israelis were not planning to make nuclear weapons. Ambassador Dobrynin expressed some skepticism."[115] By 18 June, the US Ambassador in Israel reported that his counterpart Chuvakhin stated to him "the USSR believes that Israel is *not* at work on developing nuclear capability [emphasis added]."[116]

Thus, as Cohen points out, Dimona now "disappeared from public discussion."[117] However, this was not because Israel's response had assuaged Moscow on the nuclear issue. In December 1968, the Soviet Ambassador to the UK still listed to Lord Sieff, at their meeting in London, two "Israeli sins"—both of them connected to the nuclear issue. One concerns "the

Israeli refusal to join NPT." The other was a perceived Israeli threat to destroy the Aswan Dam.[118] But during or around the Kosygin visit, the Soviets appear to have made an abrupt decision to play down this issue, and instead to precipitate a conflict that might be used to end Israel's nuclear development.

Israeli officials quickly sensed an abrupt turn away from the briefly conciliatory Soviet approach. The most prominent change was the sudden outburst of Soviet accusations that Israel was supposedly preparing to attack Syria. This came into the open in the Party organ *Pravda* on 21 May, following Kosygin's return from Egypt, where he had pressed for a mutual defense pact between Cairo and Damascus, to be guaranteed by Moscow.[119] But its initial appearance in the provincial press, before Kosygin left for Cairo, indicates prior planning. On 25 May it became official policy, when a protest was urgently and formally presented by Deputy Foreign Minister Vladimir Semyonov to Ambassador Katz in Moscow.

By 1 June, Eshkol's leading adviser on Soviet affairs, Sha'ul Avigur, forwarded to the prime minister's attention a top-secret memo received the same day from New York:

> The sharp Soviet offensive on Israel in the press, with the TASS report and the statement made to the Ambassador in Moscow, has caught us amazed and perplexed . . . we are still asking: what happened with the improvement in relations, with "Kosygin's restrained policy in Cairo?" The situation requires us . . . to shake free of illusions and overoptimistic, unfounded assessments.[120]

Writing in retrospect on 24 October, Ambassador Katz himself concluded: "Beginning from March 1966, a change . . . occurred in the USSR's attitude to Israel, a deliberate political change for the worse."[121]

However, in none of these moves did the USSR again stress the nuclear issue, preferring to play up Israel's alleged designs on Syria. The French ambassador in Damascus reported at the end of May that his veteran Soviet counterpart "in recent weeks seemed to be trying to intensify the Syrians' fears of an Israeli attack, and several times informed them about Israeli concentrations near the border."[122] In Israel, this shift was received with some surprise, as it had been understood that the nuclear matter was the prime Soviet and Arab concern, and that during Kosygin's visit to Egypt "presumably, they talked about ways to deny Israel nuclear weapons, including Nasser's threat of a pre-emptive war. . . . Why [then]," an Atomic Energy Commission official wrote on 6 June 1966 to a Foreign

Ministry colleague, "has the USSR chosen to attack Israel on the matter of Syria rather than on the nuclear arms danger?"[123]

Over the following year, it turned out that this first allegation of Israeli troop concentrations against Syria was not a singular exception, in a period that was indeed characterized by border clashes. It was the first in an escalating series that culminated in the notorious disinformation on 13 May 1967. There is now evidence to support Cohen's hypothesis that this final, fictitious warning about Israeli troop concentrations, was a preplanned "pretext for another policy objective" that included the elimination of Dimona.[124]

This crescendo of warnings was accompanied by the extensive political and military preparations that were undertaken by the USSR for a Middle Eastern conflict. As one of the present writers has detailed in previous papers, the Soviet military buildup was only partially known to Israel and the West at the time, and was largely disregarded in later historical descriptions—particularly its nuclear-weapons component, more of which will be detailed below. It paralleled Moscow's efforts to achieve the other necessary condition for an anti-Israeli operation—military coordination and, ultimately, alliance among Israel's Arab neighbors, along the lines of a Soviet-originated plan. The claims about Israel's designs on Syria, which Moscow egregiously made no effort to prove or even to adapt to Israel's actual strength, were brought to a climax by the Soviets when the two opposing timelines (the military and political groundwork, in contrast with Israel's presumed approaching nuclear capability) met, not at the ideal moment, but at the most propitious one that could be realistically expected.

In the present writers' opinion, the final countdown toward this moment began around February 1967. The Lebanese newspaper *Al-Hayat* published, and the Associated Press spread worldwide, a report that Israel had tested a nuclear device.[125] An authoritative Israeli source has since obliquely confirmed that a test of this sort actually occurred:

> On 2 November 1966, an especially significant test took place . . . that brought one of the main weapons systems closer to the final stages of its development and manufacture. . . . The success of this test was complete, as it gave us unambiguous experimental proof that the system . . . was in working order.[126]

In view of recent Russian claims that the Soviets had excellent intelligence on Israel's nuclear progress, they may well have had independent

information about this event before the published report. A recent Russian account confirms that the Soviets knew Israel's plutonium production was approaching the quantity necessary for a bomb, and that "work began in the spring of 1967" toward assembling one.[127] The United States had a similar assessment: On 17 February, "regardless of what was actually tested . . . the CIA disseminated new intelligence reports suggesting that Israel continued to produce bomb components, and that 'assembly of a nuclear weapon could be completed in 6–8 weeks'."[128] It was only over a month and a half later that Eshkol denied the test had taken place.[129] By then, however, Arab and Soviet response was in full swing.

As it did a year before, following Harel's disclosure, this response started with public declarations. "One of the arguments used by Jordan for a new summit conference was that it was vital to confront Israel before she should possess atomic weapons."[130] On 5 February, Nasser warned the *Observer*: "If the Israelis proceed with the production of an atomic bomb, the final solution will be a preventive war to avert and eliminate this danger."[131] That, however, was the final such blast; as in the previous round, media silence was now imposed on the nuclear issue, and practical measures took over. The USSR accelerated its preparations for war and its moves to provide the promised nuclear "umbrella" for its Arab allies.

In late February or early March, the Soviet nuclear submarine K-172 was sent from the Northern Fleet's arctic base to the Eastern Mediterranean, where it was positioned close to Syria. Its commander, Nikolai Shashkov, relates that before sailing, he received *oral* orders from Soviet Navy Commander S. Gorshkov to fire nuclear missiles at Israel "if the Americans and Israelis started to land on the Syrian coast." The coded password to take such action would be transmitted from Moscow, and in order to receive it the submarine had to rise to radio depth every two hours. "I was very limited by the range of my missiles. It did not exceed 600 km. I was forced . . . to zig-zag in dangerous proximity to the American aircraft carrier groups."[132]

A crew member of another nuclear submarine, K-125, which was based in Alexandria "to protect Soviet ships delivering arms to Syria," recounts that similar orders were received at the beginning of the war: "If Israel drops an atomic bomb on Egypt or Syria—nuclear missiles should be fired on it [Israel] in order to obliterate it."[133] Yet a third nuclear submarine, K-219, is reported to have arrived in the Eastern Mediterranean "on the eve of the crisis."[134]

Surface ships of the Soviet Mediterranean fleet were also reportedly supplied with tactical nuclear weapons. A historian of the Soviet navy

quotes "Navy personnel" that "during the crisis, shells with nuclear battle components were delivered to the cruiser *Slava* [the flagship of the Mediterranean flotilla]. I . . . tend to support the version that there were such shells. In any case, there is verified information that a special transport with ammunition for the *Slava* was sent from Sevastopol." This writer concludes that "apparently this transport delivered special shells. Otherwise, why rush a transport? Did the cruiser lack its battle complement? *Slava* was not in the Med for training!"[135]

This accelerated naval buildup extended beyond the Mediterranean. In August 1966, "well-informed" reports about two visits of "apparently conventional" Soviet submarines to the Yemeni port of Hodeida six and eight months previously merited a special, top-secret memo to Israel's prime minister.[136] An official history published by the Institute of Military History at the Russian Ministry of Defense now asserts that the Soviet ships and submarines sent into to the Red Sea were also armed with nuclear weapons, in case Israel should use the same as a last resort—which indicates an expectation of such an eventuality.[137]

In the authors' opinion, the above instances attest to the fulfillment of the Soviet nuclear guarantee that Kosygin pledged in Cairo a year before. Moreover, in Moscow, parting from Egyptian War Minister Shams Badran on 28 May 1967, Grechko himself confirmed: "Our fleet is in the Mediterranean, near your shores. We have destroyers and submarines with missiles and *arms unknown to you*. Do you understand fully what I mean?"[138] Aboard submarine K-172, Captain Shashkov also knew the Arabs were aware of his presence in the Mediterranean, and that "in a critical situation, the Soviet Union would support them by any means, including nuclear. [They] also guessed from where the strike on Israel would come—from the sea".[139]

In parallel, other preparations for implementation of the Soviet-initiated military plans went into high gear. As early as 1975, Ben-Tzur demonstrated that the steps taken by Egypt to provoke a war with Israel, including the eviction of UNEF and the closure of the Tiran Straits, were inspired by the Soviet military in November 1966 and formed the framework of what he termed: the "Grechko-Amer plan".[140] More recently, and likewise based on Arab sources, Oren also concluded that the Egyptian "Conqueror plan" (which called for provoking Israel into a first strike) was developed in 1966 with the help of Soviet advisers, utilizing a strategy for a "comprehensive" counterattack "that will shift the battle onto evemy territory, hitting its vital areas." This strategy was called "shield and sword"[141]—the motto of the KGB.

The corresponding Syrian plan, "Amaliyat Nasser" (Operation Victor) as found by Israeli forces on the Golan Heights, was also developed with the participation of Soviet advisers. The Syrian plan ostensibly calls for coordination only with the Egyptian operation, but it features a provision for Syrian forces, after breaking through northern Israel, to link up with an "Egyptian" naval landing force near Haifa.[142] As no evidence has emerged of such a landing being prepared by Egypt, this appears to confirm recent Russian disclosures about an abortive Soviet *desant* (landing) aimed at several points on the Israeli coast, including Haifa—a clear indication of the Soviet link between the two plans, as well as preparation for a direct Soviet intervention.[143]

The fact that the elimination of Israel's nuclear facilities was a major operational target of these plans emerged shortly after the war. But evidence has recently accumulated that the Soviets were involved in determining these targets, in preparing the strike against them, and in its planned implementation.

In 2001, one of Gromyko's top Middle Eastern experts quoted a statement that the Soviet Foreign Minister made 20 years before:

> In mid-May [1967] 2 Egyptian MiGs performed a reconaissance flight over Dimona. But, to Nasser's surprise, they returned home intact, nonwithstanding the fact that the reactor was under the special protection of the American Hawk missles. A little more than a week passed, and they again overflew Dimona, and again the Israeli AA defence was idle. After that Marshal Amer—a decisive and even aggressive man, gave orders to bomb Dimona and other important objects in Israel's territory. But at our request, Nasser annulled that order.

> The Soviet leadership was not aware of the Egyptian intent to destroy Israel's nuclear potential. We only knew about the intent to land a surprise blow on important objects in Israel's territory, with no concrete details. . . . I think that had we imagined clearly at the time that the main target of this strike [was] to eliminate Israel's nuclear potential, we would not have dissuaded Nasser—on the contrary.[144]

The source for this statement of Gromyko's, Grinevsky, adds:

> By the mid-1960s, our intelligence already had truthful enough data on Israel's nuclear potential . . . There is information that for Egypt, one of the triggering motives for the 1967 war indeed was the intent to defeat Israel

before it acquired the capability to use nuclear weapons in the battlefield. In Egypt's military plans Dimona was marked as one of the main targets. Only [Israel's] sudden blow on the Egyptian airfields and Egypt's rout in this six-day war saved Dimona from annihilation and Israel from radioactive contamination. Thus nuclear arms turned from a deterrent into the main cause of war in the Middle East."[145]

How credible, then, is Gromyko's claim that the Soviet leadership knew nothing of, much less was responsible for, Dimona's central place in the Egyptian attack plan?

This account of the USSR's prevailing on Egypt not to launch a first strike on Israel refers to 25–28 May 1967, when War Minister Shams Badran held intensive talks in Moscow. Badran's main mission was to obtain clearance for launching a first strike—a major deviation from the original strategy. The last surviving Soviet participant of Badran's talks describes him as presenting the Soviets with detailed plans, including maps of the intended targets.[146] It is *prima facie* inconceivable that the main target should have been concealed. However, there is now also direct evidence that it was at least shared with the Soviets, if not prepared by them.

Consider this hitherto little-noticed detail in the original Israeli post-war report on Dimona being marked on the maps of the Egyptian plan, "which was about to be effected by the Egyptian Air Force on the morning of 26 May:"

> In the operational orders detailing the targets to be attacked, the research centers [Dimona and Nahal Sorek] were not marked as atomic reactors, but were apparently included in the category of Hawk missile launching sites, on the assumption that the Israeli reactors are protected against aerial attack by batteries of these missiles.[147]

Dimona was indeed the first site in Israel to be protected by Hawk missiles when the United States began to supply them to Israel in 1965.[148] The dates indicate that the maps found at Sinai air bases were the same as those presented by Badran in Moscow. In addition to Gromyko's reference to the Hawk missiles protecting Dimona, there is a precisely corresponding description of the targets on the maps that were issued to Soviet strategic-bomber pilots on 3 June 1967, when they were put on alert, as described by their commander, General Vasili Reshetnikov: The targets were marked by their geographical coordinates, and identified as Hawk complexes.[149] The

designation of Dimona as a Hawk site alone was thus an identical feature of operational maps used by both the Soviets and the Egyptians.

As Grinevsky and other sources connect this targeting of Dimona with the "bold and highly extraordinary"[150] reconnaissance flights over the nuclear facility on 17 and 26 May 1967, it must now be asked whether there was more than Israeli military folklore to the possibility that Soviet pilots performed these overflights.[151]

During the crisis of May 1967, news of these incidents was totally suppressed by Israel. A recently published State Department document (telegram) confirms the Israelis' apprehension at the time: "They frightened by fact four MiGs overflew Israel yesterday and Israeli Airforce not able intercept."[152] But the volume's editors do not point out that Dimona was either the target of the sortie or the cause of Israeli concern. A contemporary assumption of a Soviet role is apparently reflected in the initial, very partial published mention of the first of these flights, which was made by Bar-Zohar shortly after the war: that "one MiG-21 equipped with Russian cameras" overflew Dimona on 17 May.[153] Since the intruders were never engaged, let alone shot down, the provenance of the camera could only have been attributed by Israeli sources.

The flight of 26 May was not disclosed until 1979, in Rabin's memoirs.[154] Dimona was not mentioned as the target in any publication until 1980, when Michael Brecher, based on a statement he received from military intelligence chief Yariv in 1977, identified it as the target of the first flight. He rated it as such a "grave threat to [Israel's] deterrent capability" as to suggest that it marked the beginning of the crisis.[155] *Both* flights were explicitly connected with Dimona for the first time in Levite and Landau's 1994 study.[156] In the first detailed publication about the 26 May flight, Oren wrote in 2002: "four MiG-21s at 55,000 feet had passed over and photographed the reactor. Israeli pilots scrambled and Hawk missles were fired, but neither could intercept the MiGs. . . ."[157]

Most recently, Gluska obtained an authoritative version of the 26 May overflight:[158] Unlike the previous versions, which though widely diverging on the number of planes, their route, etc., all spoke of MiG-21s, Gluska's version does not specify the model. The official IAF website today mentions that "a *mystery* enemy plane, which *seemed* to be a MiG-21, made occasional appearances on Israeli radar screens. . . . the IAF Staff was concerned that . . . it was taking reconnaissance photographs of the Israeli 7th Regiment, which was arrayed along the border with Egypt."[159] The contemporary assessment that the intruders were some variant of the MiG-21 is reflected

in the website's report that Israel's single exemplar of this model, and its leading test pilot, were put on alert to attempt an interception of any subsequent flight—which never materialized.[160]

While varying widely on the number, course, and target of the intruders, all the above accounts agree that they completely outclassed both Israel's first-line fighter jet at the time, the Mirage IIIC (for speed) and its Hawk anti-aircraft missiles (for altitude), both of which tried but failed to intercept the intruders. This does not conform with the known specifications of the Mirage IIIC and the MiG-21, in which the latter had only a marginal advantage, if any; its better acceleration and climb at takeoff should not have made such a crucial difference for flights detected before their entry into Israeli airspace. MiG-21s were shot down by both Israeli systems on other occasions. Indeed, on 9 January 1966, Rabin had calmed Eshkol's fear of an attack on Dimona: "We have advance warning of every [enemy] plane that takes off. It has never yet happened to us that planes got across the border."[161] Rabin wrote later of the 17 May flight: "This was the first Egyptian aerial penetration of Israeli territory since 1956."[162] After the war (but while the overflights were still being kept secret) "authoritative sources" still told *Ha'aretz* that "if they [the Egyptians] had managed to take off in order to attack the reactors, the Egyptian planes would have been shot down before they reached the range permitting an attack."[163] Even allowing for some victorious braggadocio, this indicates that the ability to overfly Dimona with impunity was more than Israel attributed to Egyptan pilots and/or the MiG-21s they were flying.

There have long been veiled indications of Soviet involvement in photoreconnaissance over Israel in this period. A contemporary report, based on testimony at the trial of Badran and others after the war, states that the Soviet warning to Egypt in mid-May included detailed aerial photographs which "Soviet intelligence" provided to Nasser.[164] At the Washington conference on the war in 1992, Naumkin made a unique and cryptic reference to a visit by a GRU operative "named Ryevsky" who came to Cairo "in the middle of May, and who had some meetings there . . . there might have been some information passed by him."[165] Cohen holds that the 17 May overflight "was not the first time that Egyptian jets flew over Dimona."[166] Such prior information is confimed by Yaremenko's report that a full-scale model of the Dimona facility was built in the Egyptian desert—which could not have been accomplished after the May 1967 overflights—and Egyptian pilots practised bombing it with live amunition.[167]

But a dramatic series of new Russian disclosures now confirms that by May 1967, the Soviets were flying in the Middle East and, unbeknownst

to either Israel or the United States, an aircraft that was easily capable of the performance described in the Dimona overflights. A retired Soviet Air Force general who was personally involved relates that two prototypes of what was to become known as the MiG-25 were based in southern Yemen in 1967.[168] This model had made its first test flight in 1964, but was first glimpsed by Western observers only on 9 July 1967; at the time of the Dimona overflights, it had not yet even been assigned its Soviet designation, much less its NATO appellation (Foxbat) and had never yet been detected in flight.[169] However, an official Russian military history stated recently that "The MiG-25 . . . was used in the late 1960's on the Egyptian-Israeli front as a reconnaissance aircraft."[170]

The senior test pilot who flew the Yemen-based MiG-25s, Major General Aleksandr I. Vybornov, claims he made two photoreconnaissance flights from Egypt over Israel in 1967, which the IAF tried but failed to intercept. Each of these flights was made at the express orders of the Soviet Defense Minister,

and the films were immediately flown to Moscow.[171] The 50,000–55,000-ft altitude ascribed to the Dimona overflights was at the upper limit both for Egyptian and Israeli fighters, but for the MiG-25 it was well below its ceiling. A recent, detailed Russian history of the MiG-25's development puts the first operational test of its photoreconnaissance version in March 1967, at a speed that still did not reach its ultimate performance of close to Mach 3, but already far exceeded the MiG-21's maximum of under Mach 2.[172]

Hitherto, the first documented appearance of the MiG-25 in the Arab-Israeli theater was the arrival of a Soviet squadron of four MiG-25s in Egypt in 1971–72, when Israeli air defenses were again incapable of intercepting them.[173] But as late as the early 1970s, Israel was still incapable even of identifying the MiG-25, and the intruders were erroneously described as MiG-23s.[174] Indeed, the Israeli military may have subsequently developed a more precise idea of the Dimona overflights than it had at the time, or has so far disclosed. When the present authors presented their MiG-25 hypothesis to a former IDF intelligence officer who specialized in the Soviet military, he confirmed that the intruders were "definitely MiG-25s. MiG-21s would have been shot down."[175]

Would such direct aerial intervention been at variance with Soviet practice? Western historiography has hitherto held that in 1956, Soviet aircrews and other personnel in Egypt were ordered to refrain from any direct involvement in the Suez Campaign and were even evacuated.[176] But a recent official Russian publication claims that "Soviet pilots-instructors

fought too" and specifies that "the Soviet pilots took part in attacking the positions of Israel's 202nd Paratroop Brigade."[177] Moshe Dayan confirms that six MiG-15s took part in this action, the only aerial attack in the campaign that caused serious damage and casualties.[178] There was thus a precedent for Soviet pilots even going into direct combat against Israel, which was famously repeated in April–July 1970.[179]

Previously, the only direct evidence directly linking the 1967 over-flights with the Soviets was attributed by Oren to Rabin, who "revealed that strange radio signals had been sent by the MiGs, perhaps to strategic bombers."[180] The role of Soviet strategic bombers in the 1967 crisis and war has so far been murky and downplayed, with the exception of Reshetnikov's aforementioned disclosure of their preparation on 3–4 June for a strike at Israel. Oren's statement appears to indicate they were active in the region beforehand. This also emerges from the assertion by the survivors of the USS *Liberty*, who related that monitoring these bombers were the central object of their original mission.

> The primary concern . . . was to learn more about several Soviet TU-95 bombers that had been stationed in Egypt by the Soviet government. The assignment: find out whether the aircraft . . . were in reality merely Soviet long range bombers stationed on Arab soil and under Soviet control. [On] 8 June, . . . at 2:00 [shortly before the Israeli attack] . . . our intercept operators . . . identified Soviet pilots talking to Moscow.[181]

Whether the strategic bombers were actually present, or were a mistaken description of the unfamiliar MiG-25, the first, sudden appearance of a hitherto unknown Soviet aircraft with awesome and unmatchable performance might also have been a reason for dispatching the *Liberty*—a possibility that definitely merits further research.

In any case, the significance of the MiG-25's identification with the Dimona overflights far exceeds a technical distinction. It demonstrates conclusively that these flights were carried out by Soviet pilots, and that the Soviet leadership committed the USSR's most advanced and secret aircaft. Moreover, this was hardly necessary for reconnaissance purposes only (with the possible exception of pinpointing and testing the Hawk batteries). The possibility that these flights were deliberately meant by Moscow to signal that it was targeting Dimona, and thereby to intensify pressure on Israel for a pre-emptive strike, seems highly reasonable—and, as indicated by Gluska and others, the flights indeed contributed greatly to achieving this purpose.

This is especially true of the flight on 26 May, while the talks with Badran in Moscow were in progress. A still-prevalent concept holds that, in the talks with Badran as well as in a message to Nasser on May 27, the Soviets dissuaded Egypt from *any* attack on Israel. The present authors have already demonstrated that these Soviet efforts were rather meant to ensure that Egypt complied with the original "Conqueror" plan, and took the offensive only after Israel was provoked into a first strike. Former senior Soviet officials also state, that despite the disastrous results, "It must be said to Nasser's credit that he never reproached the Soviet leadership nor the Soviet Union for having restrained him, 'tied his hands,' at the critical moment."[182] "While on the official level the Egyptians never reproached us for the USSR's interference with the realisation of their intents, in unofficial talks I have occasionally heard such statements as: If Egypt had undertaken preventive actions, the development of the war would have been different."[183] Sending the MiG-25 over Dimona might well have been aimed at proving to the Egyptians that the USSR was fully committed to the plan and working to provoke the Israelis.

Yaremenko has recently written explicitly that Amer did not *cancel* the order to bomb Dimona, but only *postponed* it until 7 June.[184] The present writers have demonstrated that Soviet preparations, especially just before the Israeli first strike, indicate an expectation that it would occur on 5 June.[185] The Soviets were then in readiness to assist the Egyptians in implementing the counterstrike plan, with Dimona being a main target.

However, the Soviets were apparently aware that their move might not prevent—indeed, might cause—Israel's detonation of some nuclear device. Recent Russian historical works claim that the deployment of Soviet nuclear arms in the Red Sea and Mediterranean was motivated by a possible use, in a critical situation, of Israel's WMD, "the existence of which was never denied by Tel-Aviv."[186] In this, the Soviets now appear to have been not far from the truth. As one leader of Israel's program, Munya Mardor, wrote:

> From personal diary, 28 May: . . . The crews were assembling and checking the weapons system, of which they had managed to complete the development and production ahead of the war . . . [and] had managed to bring into operational readiness.

Mardor relates that these crews had been working around the clock for several days, probably reflecting Israel's concern at Egypt's intention to

launch its planned offensive, including a strike at Dimona, on 26 May.[187] In his latest study, Cohen puts this disclosure into context:

> As claimed in foreign publications . . . During the period of high alert before the war, considering the anxieties about a "worst case [referring to preparations for a gas attack]," Israel, by a concentrated effort, improvised a usable "weapons system" out of its capabilities. . . . On the eve of the Six-Day War, according to published reports . . . Israel improvised two nuclear explosive devices, as a last resort. [188]

Countering any such Israeli move was a main objective of the Soviet Navy's preparations. Despite the Arabs' defeat, recent Russian writing has held that "the existence of the Mediterranean Eskadra in 1967 practically determined the end of the Six-Day Arab-Israeli War.[189]

The abundance of recent accounts about Soviet nuclear weapons put in readiness in case Israel used one casts a new light on the claim made 10 years ago by Shimon Peres, that on 2 June 1967:

> I submitted . . . a certain proposal which, in my opinion then—and in my opinion today, nearly three decades later—would have deterred the Arabs and prevented the war. My proposal . . . was considered—and rejected. [190]

In view of the Soviet preparations as now known, adoption of the proposal Peres clearly hints at would almost certainly have led to catastrophic results—a nuclear strike at Israel. What did thwart the Soviet-Egyptian plan, and saved Israel's nuclear project from attack, was the unexpected elimination of Egyptian air power by Israel's air strike—even though the Soviets deliberately provoked Israeli pre-emption and quite accurately predicted its timing. But Israel's nuclear capability would remain a prime concern for Soviet strategy, which held that "So long as the adversary nation or alliance, which launched the war, has not been deprived of the capability to produce nuclear weapons and the means for their delivery . . . the enemy will be able to resist and cause casualties."[191]

NOTES

1. "Secret Materials: Soviet Intelligence Provoked War" [Russian, unsigned] http://presscenter.ru, 26 March 2001. This report was followed the next day by an article by Oleg Frolov, which points to the same conclusion.

2. Isabella Ginor, "The Russians Were Coming: The Soviet Military Threat in the 1967 Six-Day War," *Middle East Review of International Affairs (MERIA)*, Bar-Ilan University, 4(4) (December 2000) 44–59; http://meria.idc.ac.il/journal/2000/issue4/ginor.pdf. Further evidence has since been presented in Ginor, "The Cold War's Longest Cover-up: How and Why the USSR Instigated the June 1967 War," *MERIA*, Herzlia Interdisciplinary Center, 7(3) (September 2003) 34–59; http://meria.idc.ac.il/journal/2003/issue3/ginor.pdf and in Ginor and Gideon Remez, "Un-Finnished Business: A never-sent diplomatic note confirms Moscow's premeditation of the Six-Day War," paper presented at the Sixth Nordic Conference on Middle Eastern Studies, Copenhagen, 9 October 2004, http://www.diis.dk/graphics/Events/2004/Middle_East/Ginor-Remez.pdf.

3. See e.g., Richard B. Parker, *The Politics of Miscalculation in the Middle East* (Bloomington, IN, 1993) 12.

4. See *Infra*, notes 137ff.

5. Undated, but placed between documents of 16 and 17 June 1967*Foreign Relations of the United States,* (hereafter, *FRUS*) XIX, 2004, 305, 512.

6. Shlomo Aronson and Oded Brosh, *The Politics and Strategy of Nuclear Weapons in the Middle East: Opacity, Theory, and Reality, 1960–1991, An Israeli Perspective* (New York, 1992). Aronson states: "It may be that the Egyptians were misled into believing that the Soviets would support some limited which would include the destruction of Dimona." Aronson, *Nuclear Weapons in the Middle East: From Ben-Gurion and Back* (Jerusalem, 1995) 2:69 [Hebrew]. However, in a subsequent publication, "Israel's Nuclear Programme, the Six Day War and its Ramifications," *Mediterranean Studies*, 1999, 3, back-cover summary, Aronson noted that "the Soviet role is not fully clear, nor fully documented." Avner Cohen, *Israel and the Bomb* (New York, 1998) 259, 410n4. Ariel Levite and Emily Landau, *Israel's Nuclear Image: Arab Perceptions of Israel's Nuclear Posture* (Tel-Aviv, 1994) 42 [Hebrew]; for a shorter, English version, see "Arab Perceptions of Israel's Nuclear Posture, 1960–1967," *Israel Studies,* 1(1) (1996) 34–59, 48.

7. Cohen, *Ibid.*, 243, 251n24: memorandum quoted from *FRUS*, XVIII, Arab-Israeli Dispute, 1964–1967 (Washington, 2000) 637.

8. "Nasser threatens Israel on A-Bomb," *New York Times*, 24 December 1960.

9. *Ha'aretz* (Tel-Aviv) 22 June 1967, 1; Aluf Benn, "The First Nuclear War," *Ha'aretz*, 11 June 1993 [Hebrew].

10. Michael B. Oren, *Six Days of War: June 1967 and the Making of the Modern Middle East* (Oxford, 2002) 122.

11. Oren, *Ibid.*, 75, 76. Citing Aronson, *Nuclear Weapons in the Middle East,* and Seymour M. Hersh, *The Samson Option* (New York, 1991), Oren notes: "Several respectable authors have posited that Nasser sought to precipitate a conventional showdown with Israel before it could develop non-conventional weapons. My own research has shown no evidence whatsoever to support the theory." 348n30.

12. Cohen, *Israel and the Bomb*, 263nn17,18, 411. Tahsin Basheer, "Nasser miscalculated badly, but he defended the area against atomization." in Richard B. Parker (ed), *The Six-Day War: A Retrospective* (Gainsville, FL, 1996) 250.

13. Ami Gluska, *Eshkol, Give the Order! Israel's Army Command and Political Leadership on the Road to the Six-Day War, 1963–1967* (Tel-Aviv, 2004) 71, 147, 173, 189, 220, 222, 224, 226–228, 244, 249, 352–366 among others [Hebrew].

14. Ginor, "The Cold War's Longest Cover-up."

15. *Vremya Novostei* (Moscow), 5 June 2002.

16. Memorandum of the Department for Middle Eastern Countries of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the USSR on Israel's Intent to Possess Atomic Weapons V [italy]. V. Naumkin *et al* (eds.), *The Middle Eastern Conflict, Vol II, 1957–1967, from Documents of the External Policy Archive of the Russian Federation* (Moscow, 2003) doc217, 487–489 [Russian].

17. Though the most accurate transliteration of the name is Isar Har'el, the more familiar English form Isser Harel is used throughout this paper, except when it appears otherwise in direct quotations.

18. Cohen, *Israel and the Bomb,* 54, 55. Soviet Prime Minister Nikolai Bulganin's notes are reproduced in *The USSR and Arab States* (Moscow, 1961) doc. 81–83, 259ff [Russian]; and the one to Israel only, in Moshe Zak, *Israel and the Soviet Union: a Forty Years' Dialogue* (Tel-Aviv, 1988) 181, 182 [Hebrew].

19. Alexei Vasilyev, *Russia in the Near and Middle East: from Messianism to Pragmatism* (Moskva, Nauka, 1993) 47 [Russian].

20. *Ibid.,* 50, 51.

21. Hersh, *The Samson Option,* 139, 174–179.

22. Lester Velie, *Countdown in the Holy Land* (New York, 1969) 210–213.

23. Naumkin, *The Middle Eastern Conflict,* vol. II, doc. 63, 166.

24. *Ibid.,* vol. I, doc. 84, 306. Memo from the Middle East Department in advance of Shepilov's visit to Egypt, 18 July 1955. The Israeli-American agreement was signed on 12 July; Cohen, *Israel and the Bomb,* 360n11.

25. A Soviet-made decontamination chamber and related items were captured by Israel in Sinai during the June 1967 war, and were described as "equipment for protection against *nuclear*, bacteriological and chemical warfare." The nuclear aspect, however, was quickly dropped from Israeli accounts, as were early press reports about "ingredients for the manufacture of poison gas." *Middle East Record 1967* (Jerusalem, 1971) 233.

26. "Israel was secretly attempting to develop a capability to produce atomic weapons." John W. Finney, "U.S. Misled at First on Israeli Reactor," *New York Times*, 20 December 1960.

27. "Nasser threatens Israel on A-Bomb," *New York Times*, 24 December 1960, 6.

28. Naumkin, *The Middle Eastern Conflict,* vol. II, doc. 148, 358, 359.

29. Ivan Dedyulya, "In the Promised Land" in V.N. Karpov (ed.) *Foreign Intelligence* (Moscow, 2000) 209 [Russian].

30. Oleg A. Grinevsky, *The Script for World War III* (Moscow, 2002) 111 [Russian].

31. V.A. Yaremenko, "Nuclear War in the Middle East Could Have Been Beneficial for the USSR" (*Vremya Novostei* (Moscow, 5 June 2002). See also note 15 *Supra*.

32. Isser Harel, *Soviet Espionage: Communism in Israel* (Tel-Aviv, 1987) 169–175 [Hebrew] Harel also describes another Soviet spy he exposed, Israel Beer, as having passed on information on "one of the State's most secret enterprises." *Ibid.*, 122, 135; Michael Bar-Zohar, *Spies in the Promised Land: Isser Harel and the Israeli Secret Service* (London, 1972) 183–187, 204. Bar-Zohar's accounts of the Beer and Sitte affairs are virtually identical with the corresponding parts of Harel's own book, published 15 years later; Dr. Bar-Zohar told the authors (21 August 2004) that his biography was based on Harel's prepared notes.

33. Harel, *Ibid.*, 189. Harel's chapter on Sneh is conspicuously absent from Bar-Zohar's book.

34. *Ibid.*, 181–192.

35. *Ibid.*, 192.

36. G.V. Kostyrchenko, *Stalin's Secret Policy: Power and anti-Semitism* (Moscow, 2001) 418n96, 735, quoting two documents from the former Central Archive of the CPSU [Russian]. Chuvakhin reported on 3 February 1965 that Sneh informed him on "trends among ruling circles" on security issues. Naumkin, *The Middle Eastern Conflict,* vol. II, doc 204, 455–8.

37. Harel, *Soviet Espionage,* 93–168.

38. Beer's version under interrogation, as quoted in Harel, *Ibid.*, 138.

39. *Ibid.*, 191.

40. Naumkin, *The Middle Eastern Conflict,* vol. II, doc. 217, 487–489.

41. Moshe Sneh, *The End as the Beginning, Selected Writings 1967–1972* (Tel-Aviv, 1982) 271, 272 [Hebrew].

42. For a full discussion of Moscow's role in the Israeli party's split, see Yehuda Lahav, *The Soviet Union and the Split in Maki* (Tel-Aviv, n.d.) [Hebrew].

43. Untitled, unsigned top-secret document, 30 March 1966, Israel State Archive [hereafter, ISA], div. A, box 7228, file 7.

44. Yair Tzaban, afterword to Sneh, *The End as the Beginning,* 300.

45. The single accessible file bearing Harel's name in the archives of the Prime Minister's Bureau for that period contains only his expense account reports; ISA, box 6304, file 1081, div. G.

46. *The Sunday Times* (London) 5 October 1986.

47. Meir Amit, *Head On* (Or Yehuda, 1999) 123, 124 [Hebrew].

48. ISA, Box G 6253/11, protocol September 1, 1963.

49. Cohen, *Israel and the Bomb*, 137, 141.

50. Michael Bar-Zohar, *Ben-Gurion: A Political Biography* (Tel-Aviv, 1977) 3:1522, 1523 [Hebrew]; Shimon Peres, *Battling for Peace: Memoirs* (London, 1995) 136.

51. Peres, *Ibid.*, p. 138. Peres apparently misdates this incident. Among other anachronisms, the USSR's first spy satellite was launched only on 19 December 1963; Igor G. Drogovoz, *The USSR's Missile Force* (Moscow, 2005) 294 [Russian].

52. Ronen Bergman and Gil Meltzer, "The Silencer," *Yediot Aharonot,* 7 Yamim Supplement, 6 August 2004 [Hebrew]; Ian Black and Benny Morris, *Israel's Secret Wars: the Untold History of Israeli Intelligence* (London, 1991) 417, 418.

53. Dedyulya, "In the Promised Land," 209, 229.

54. Mordechai Haimovich, "A Spy in the Cabinet?" *Ma'ariv,* 2 June 2004 [Hebrew].

55. Nikolai Dolgopolov, "Anonymity—the best award," *Trud-7* (Moscow) 27 (September 2001) [Russian]; taken from the Internet: www.trud.ru/01_Today/27/200109271782601.htm

56. Naumkin, *The Middle Eastern Conflict,* vol. II, doc. 217, 487; on 30 March 1963, Soviet Charge d'Affaires A.S. Likhachev reported a similar exchange with Meir, in doc171, 395.

57. Eitan Haber, *Today War Will Break Out: The Reminiscences of Brig. Gen. Israel Li'or, Aide-de-Camp to Prime Ministers Levi Eshkol and Golda Meir* (Tel-Aviv, 1987) 48 [Hebrew].

58. Department of State Memorandum of Conversation, "Israel's Nuclear Weapon and Strategic Missile Policy," 29 July 1969. NARA, NSC Country Files ME_ISRAEL 60x605; Rabin reported this conversation, but with no mention of the "advertisement" issue, in his memoir *Service Notebook* (Tel-Aviv, 1979) 251 [Hebrew].

59. Hersh, *The Samson Option*, 176, 177. The report is unattributed.

60. *Ibid.,* 220.

61. For further discussion of Vanunu's contribution to Israel's nuclear deterrence, see Gideon Remez, "If You Knew What Vanunu . . . How Israel's Nuclear Whistleblower Actually Promoted Its Ambiguous-Deterrence Policy," *Ma'ariv International* (Tel-Aviv) 10 February 2004; "Conspiracy or Ineptitude: Vanunu Lesson," *Australian Jewish News* (Melbourne) 28 November 1986; "Vanunu: A Conspiracy Theory," *The Jewish Exponent* (Philadelphia) 5 December 1986.

62. ISA, *Transcripts of the Meetings of the Eighth Cabinet,* 27/318, 2 February 1958, 25, 26.

63. Aronson, *Nuclear Weapons in the Middle East,* vol. II, 29, 30, citing a document at the LBJ Library, NSF, Committee on Nuclear Proliferation, box 1–2, problem 2, item 1.

64. Naumkin, *The Middle Eastern Conflict,* vol. II, doc. 217, 488.

65. *Ibid.,* 489.

66. Avner Cohen, *The Last Taboo* (Tel-Aviv, 2005) 132 [Hebrew].

67. Cohen, Israel and the Bomb, 261.

68. Naumkin, *The Middle Eastern Conflict,* doc217, 489.

69. Eliezer Doron, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (hereafter, MFA), to Embassy in Moscow, 19 January 1966, secret. ISA, divHZ, box 4048, file 28.

70. Naumkin, *The Middle Eastern Conflict,* vol. II, doc. 217, 487; on 30 March 1963, Soviet Chargé d'Affaires A.S. Likhachev reported an earlier, similar exchange with Meir, doc171, 395.

71. Zaki Shalom, *Between Dimona and Washington* (Beer-Sheva, 2004) 311n60 [Hebrew].

72. Hersh, *The Samson Option,* 135–139, reports that in June 1964, Johnson and

Eshkol agreed that "The United States would become Israel's supplier of arms as long as Israel did not *produce* nuclear weapons."

73. Untitled, unsigned secret document, 4 February 1966. ISA, div. A, box 7228, file 7. Eshkol included the same proposal in a "personal message" to Kosygin [Eli'ezer] Doron to Israel Embassy, Moscow, secret, 28 January 1966, ISA div. A, box 7228, file 7.

74. Hedrick Smith, "Warning on Bomb Given by Nasser," *New York Times,* 21 February 1966.

75. John WFinney, "Israel Said to Buy French Missiles," *New York Times,* 7 January 1966.

76. John W Finney, "U.S. Misled at First on Israeli Reactor," *New York Times,* 20 December 1960.

77. Hedrick Smith, "Soviet said to offer Cairo Atom Defense," *New York Times,* 4 February 1966, cited in Cohen, *Israel and the Bomb,* 257, 409n49.

78. Naumkin, *The Middle Eastern Conflict,* vol. II, doc. 147, 356, 357,

79. Smith, *"Warning on Bomb Given by Nasser"*; Avigdor Dagan in *Moscow and Jerusalem: Twenty Years of Relations Between Israel and the Soviet Union* (London, 1970) 172n29 attributes this report to United Press International.

80. Eric Downton, "Nasser Wants Russian Help Against Israel," *The Daily Telegraph* (London) 10 May 1966. The report features Israeli references to the Aswan Dam as "number one target" as a primary motivation for Kosygin's expected compliance.

81. Yehuda Tagar, Israel Embassy, London, to Middle Eastern Department, MFA, Jerusalem, 11 May 1966. The official quoted is [Sir Alan?] Goodison, Deputy Director, Middle East, Foreign Office.

82. Victor Israelyan, *Inside the Kremlin During the Yom Kippur War* (University Park, PA, 1995) 192.

83. Maj. Gen. Vladimir A. Zolotaryov *et al. Russia (USSR) in Local Wars and Military Conflicts in the Second Half of the 20th Century* (Moscow, 2000) 185, 187 [Russian]; for details see Ginor, "The Cold War's Longest Cover-up."

84. "[CIA Director Richard] Helms 'was quite positive in stating there were no nuclear weapons in the area.' General Wheeler said he was less well informed 'but more skeptical.'" Memorandum for the Record, National Security Council meeting, Washington, 24 May 1967, *FRUS,* XIX, 90.

85. Yaremenko, "Nuclear War."

86. *Ibid.*

87. Cohen, *Israel and the Bomb,* 261n10, 410, citing Memorandum of Conversation, the White House, 23 February 1966, NSF: UAR, Box 159, LBJL.

88. Aronson, *Nuclear Weapons in the Middle East,* 2:36, 84n43, quoting *Al-Yaum,* Beirut, 1 May 1966 as cited in IDF intelligence "Hatzav" digest of Arab media, 15 May 1966.

89. Telegram from the Department of State to the Embassy of the United Arab Republic Washington, 24 March 1966, 3:46 P.M. Secret. Uncleared. NARA, RG

59, Central Files 1964–66, POL UAR-US; http://www.state.gov/www/about_
state/history/vol_xviii doc 282Emphasis added.

90. Finney, "Israel Said to Buy French Missiles," *New York Times*, 7 January
1966.

91. Aronson, *Nuclear Weapons in the Middle East,* 2:19.

92. Aronson cites Pierre Pean, *The Two Bombs* (Paris, 1981) [French] in *Nuclear
Weapons in the Middle East*, 2:19.

93. Gluska, *Eshkol, Give the Order!* 74, 75.

94. Eshkol's archive, file on meetings with chief-of-staff, cited from Gluska,
Ibid., 228, 477n44.

95. Avraham Ben-Tzur, *Soviet Factors and the Six-Day War* (Tel-Aviv, 1975)
34n20 [Hebrew].

96. *Ibid.,* and Solomon M. Schwarz, *The Soviet Union and the Arab-Israeli War
of 1967* (New York, 1969) [Russian].

97. Ben-Tzur, *Soviet Factors and the Six-Day War,* "The Coup in the Shadow
of the Congress; the Congress in the Shadow of the Coup," 26–60.

98. Digest of Radio Damascus broadcasts 23 February 1966, *Ibid.,* 27.

99. *Ibid.,* 26, 27.

100. Gluska, *Eshkol, Give the Order!* 297, 298.

101. *Al-Gumhuriya* (Cairo), 12 March 1966, cited by Levite and Landau, *Isra-
el's Nuclear Image,* from HATZAV (IDF intelligence review of Arab sources)
18.3.1966, 112/586.011; 64n9. Telegram 2379 from Ambassador Lucius D. Battle,
to Secretary of State, 19 March 1966, "copy in sanitized form." LBJ Library, NSF,
UAR File, containers, 159–161, item 20, cited in Aronson and Brosh, *The Politics
and Strategy of Nuclear Weapons in the Middle East,* 96, 323n28.

102. Naumkin, *The Middle Eastern Conflict,* vol. II, doc. 219, 490, 491.

103. *Ibid.,* vol. II, doc. 218, 489, 490: report by Middle East Dept. counselor
F.N Fedorov.

104. ISA, HZ. 4048/28, untitled, 18.3.1966, Avi Pazner, MFA, Jerusalem, to
Israeli missions in Paris, Rome, Brussels, and Cologne.

105. Naumkin, *The Middle Eastern Conflict,* vol. II, doc. 219, 490–1.

106. *Ibid.,* vol. II, doc. 220, 495, 496.

107. Ben-Tzur, *Soviet Factors and the Six-Day War,* 86.

108. Y[osef] Govrin, Israel Embassy, Moscow to Director, East European
Department, MFA, Jerusalem, 4 May 1966, ISA, div. HZ, box 4049, file 5.

109. Ben-Tzur, *Soviet Factors and the Six-Day War* 86; Moshe A. Gilboa, *Six
Years—Six Days: Origins and History of the Six-Day War* (Tel-Aviv, 1968) 85.

110. Schwartz, *The Soviet Union and the Arab-Israeli War of 1967,* 95.

111. Undated document entitled "Kosygin's remarks on 17," ISA, 4049/5 HZ.
Nasser's statements had already been the subject of an Israeli cabinet discussion
on 15 May. ISA, Div. A, box 7228 box 7.

112. Dagan, *Moscow and Jerusalem,* 172.

113. *Ibid,* 173; Cohen, Israel and the Bomb 269n49, 413. James Feron, "Mideast

Atom Curb Is Urged by Eshkol," *NYT*, 19 May 1966, 1, 14; "Eshkol: We Will Not Be the First to Introduce Nuclear Weapons to the Middle East," *Ha'aretz*, 19 May 1966.

114. Yael Levin, Research Department, to Israel Ambassador, Ottawa, 22 May 1966. ISA, div. HZ, box 4049, file 5.

115. http://www.state.gov/www/about_state/history/vol_xviii/zd.html Zaki Shalom (p. 211), in describing this document, also notes that "surprisingly, Dobrynin sounded relatively complacent."

116. Shalom, *Betwen Dimona and Washington,* 218.

117. Cohen, *Israel and the Bomb*, 261.

118. [Aharon] Remez, Ambassador in London, to MFA, Jerusalem, 20 December 1968, secret. ISA div HZ, box 4221, file 5.

119. Walter Laqueur, *The Road to War* (London, 1969) 62.

120. Unsigned top-secret memo, "New York, 1 June 1966," with cover note from Avigur to Eshkol on same date (or 7 June, handwriting unclear). ISA div. A, box 7228, file 7. Avigur was director of Nativ, the clandestine agency for contact with Soviet Jewry.

121. Katriel Katz to Arie Ilan, Head of East European Department, MFA, 24 October 1966, ISA, HTZ 4049/7.

122. Avi Pazner, MFA, Jerusalem, to M[ordechai] Gazit, West European Department 3 June 1966, top secret; quoting the first secretary of the French embassy in Israel. ISA div. HZ, box 4049, file 5.

123. AEC external relations manager Shmuel Bendor to Yosef Tekoa, 6 June 1966, secret. ISA div. HZ, box 4049, file 5.

124. Cohen, *Israel and the Bomb,* 260.

125. *Ibid.*, 403n42; cited in *Ha'aretz*, 26 February 1967.

126. Munya M. Mardor, *RAFAEL: On the Path of Research and Development for Israel's Security* (Tel-Aviv, 1981) 409 [Hebrew].

127. Oleg Frolov, "Tainy proshlogo: KGB sprovotsiroval 'shestidnevnuyu voinu'," www.presscenter.ru, 27 March 2001.

128. Cohen, *Israel and the Bomb*, 232403, n43, citing Memorandum from Ambassador Bunker to Rodger P. Davies, "NEA Views on the Israeli Desalinating Project," 17 February 1967, RG 59, CFPF, 1967–69, E 11–3 ISR 1–1–67, Box 603A, USNA.

129. *Ha'aretz*, 4 April, 1967; Cohen, *Ibid.*, 403n42.

130. Radio Amman, Feb 3, [1967], BBC February 6. *MER* 1967, 162.

131. Levite and Landau, *Israel's Nuclear Image*, appendix 6, 55.

132. Nikolai Cherkashin, *The Everyday Life of Russian Submariners* (Moscow, 2000) 173–178 [Russian].

133. Yehudit Yeheskeli, "We Awaited the Order to Launch an Atomic Missile at Israel," *Yediot Aharonot*, 8 May 1992.

134. Valeri Mustyats, "The Crew's Mistake," *Duel* (Moscow) issue 41, 12 of October 1999 [Russian].

135. Aleksandr B. Shirokorad, "*The Fleet that Khrushchev destroyed*," (Moscow, 2004) 410 [Russian]. On page 411, he cites P. Komoyedov (ed), *Headquarters of the Russian Black Sea Fleet, 1831–2001: An Historical Study* (Simferopol, Ukraine, 2002) 80 [Russian].

136. Top-secret memo to prime minister from Research Department, MFA, 29 August 1966. ISA, div A, box 7228, file 7.

137. Zolotaryov, *Russia (USSR) in Local Wars and Military Conflicts*, 187.

138. Parker, *The Politics of Miscalculation in the Middle East*, 31, 32.

139. Cherkashin, *The Everyday Life of Russian Submariners*, 176.

140. Ben-Tzur, *Soviet Factors and the Six-Day War*, 166–169.

141. Oren, *Six Days of War*, 65.

142. Yehezk'el Hame'iri, *On Both Sides of the Heights* (Tel-Aviv, 1970) 58 [Hebrew].

143. Ginor, "The Russians were Coming."

144. Gromyko's statement is dated 15 July 1981. Grinevsky, *The Scenario for World War III* (Moscow, 2002) 108 [Russian].

145. *Ibid.*, 111, 112.

146. Pogos [Pavel] Akopov, "The Middle East in the Year 1967," 17 May 2004, Mir Rossii website www.mirros.ru/politics/1967, unedited video interview, July 2002, in the authors' archive.

147. *Ha'aretz*, June 22, 1967, 1. The report is attributed to "our science correspondent," which appears to indicate that its source is the AEC rather than the IDF.

148. Cohen, *Israel and the Bomb*, 269.

149. For the full quotation, see Ginor, "The Cold War's Longest Cover-up." In Vasili Reshetnikov's published memoirs *What Has Been, Has Been* (Moscow, 1995) republished (Moscow, 2004) [Russian], reproduced at http://militera.lib.ru/russian/reshetnikov_vv/index.html, 460–463, he clarifies that the main targets were the objects *protected* by Hawk batteries, not these batteries themselves. For details see Ginor, "The Cold War's Longest Cover-up."

150. Levite and Landau, *Israel's Nuclear Image*, 41.

151. The prevalence of such rumors at the time was confirmed to the authors by family members of several contemporary Air Force pilots.

152. Report by the US Ambassador in Israel to the Secretary of State, 27 May 1967, *FRUS* XIX, doc82, 156.

153. The overflight of 26 May is not mentioned at all. Bar-Zohar, *Embassies in Crisis* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ, 1970) 36, 37.

154. Rabin, *Service Notebook*, 1:165.

155. Michael Brecher with Benjamin Geist, *Decisions in Crisis: Israel, 1967 and 1973* (Berkeley, CA, 1980) 104, 104n38, 230, 231,

156. Levite and Landau, *Israel's Nuclear Image*, 41.

157. Oren, *Six Days of War*, 99. As Oren groups his notes for several paragraphs at a time, it is difficult to attribute this information to any specific source.

158. Gluska, *Eshkol, Give the Order!* 300, 301. His description rests partly on a statement by then-Minister Moshe Carmel in 1989 about "shock" and "fear that

the Egyptians had struck first and begun the war, or a bombing of the reactor." 495n17.

159. http://www.iaf.org.il/Templates/Aircraft/Aircraft.IN.aspx?lang=EN &lobby ID=69&folderID=84&docfolderID=220&docID=18343&currentPageNumber=2

160. The pilot's own account appeared (with no mention of Dimona) in his memoirs: Danny Shapira, *Alone in the Sky* (Tel-Aviv, 1994) 256 [Hebrew].

161. Eshkol's archive, file on meetings with chief-of-staff, cited in Gluska, *Eshkol, Give the Order!* 228n44, 477.

162. Rabin, *Service Notebook*, 1:137.

163. *Ha'aretz,* June 22, 1967, 1.

164. Gilboa, *Six Years—Six Days,* 100.

165. Parker, *The Six-Day War,* 65.

166. Cohen, *Israel and the Bomb,* 269. Other sources cited above mention "several" flights; the IAF website is the only source that gives a precise number: eight.

167. Yaremenko, "Nuclear War."

168. V. Vakhlamov, "Aleksandr Vybornov," *Zhurnal As [Ace Journal],* 1 (1993) [Russian] the article was reproduced at http://aces.boom.ru/all3/vyborn_ai.htm

169. Maj.-Gen. (ret'd) Georgy A. Bayevski, "Secret Mission in the Skies of Sinai," first published in *Vestnik Vozdushnogo Flota* and reproduced at www. foxbat.ru/article/mig25_2/mig25_2_1.htm [Russian]; R. Prasannan, "Goodbye, MiG-25," *The Week* (India,) 29 September 2002, reproduced at www.the-week. com/22sep29/events1.htm .

170. Zolotaryov, *Russia (USSR) in Local Wars and Military Conflicts,* 296.

171. Vakhlamov, "Aleksandr Vybornov." Vakhlamov implies that these flights occurred shortly after the war. However, Vybornov mentions witnessing the Israeli air attack on an Egyptian airbase, indicating that his three-month tour of duty began before the war.

172. Sergey Babain, "MiG-25R (E-155R; Product 02; "Foxbat-B"): A Supersonic Photoreconnaissance Aircraft" [Russian]http://sergib.agava.ru/russia/mikoyan/mig/25/r/mig25r.htm

173. Bayevski, "Secret Mission in the Skies of Sinai"; Andrei Pochtaryov, "Middle Eastern Triumph of the 'Flying Foxes,'" *Krasnaya Zvezda* (Moscow, 17 August 2002), [Russian] www.redstar.ru/2002/08/17_08/4_01.html Col (ret'd) Stanislav V. Gribanov, *Vengeance Is Mine,* (Moscow, 1998) 318, 319 [Russian]; Viktor Yu Markovsky, "We Prepared the War" [Russian], first published in *Aerohobby* magazine, reproduced at www.foxbat.ru/article/mig25/mig25_1.htm; Anatoly M. Sinikchiyants, *Winged Sons of the Fatherland* (Moscow, 2002) 341–347 [Russian]; Anonymous, "63rd Aviation Detachment: Combat operations of the MiG-25 in Egypt", www.testpilot.ru/russia/mikoyan/mig/25/r/63.htm [Russian].

174. Department of State Telegram 187110, 12 October 1971, Secretary of State to Embassy Tel-Aviv, "Rabin and Sisco on MiG-23 Flight," SecretNARA, NSC Files, Country Files ME-Israel, Box 609.

175. Interview on 9 November 2005. The source cannot be named.

176. Galia Golan, "The Soviet Union and the Suez-Sinai Crisis," in Moshe Shemesh and Ilan Troen (eds), *The Suez-Sinai Crisis, 1956: Retrospective and Reappraisal* (Sde-Boker, 1994) 261 [Hebrew], quoting John Ericson in P. Calvocoressi, *Suez: Ten Years After* (London, 1967) 49; J.M. Macintosh, *Strategy and Tactics of Soviet Foreign Policy* (London, 1962) 186; Hugh Thomas, *Suez Affair* (London, 1966) 129. However, in a recently published telegram dated 3 November 1956, Shepilov speaks of "Soviet military specialists now in Egypt" and states that "of course they will stay to continue their work." Naumkin, *The Middle Eastern Conflict,* 1, doc. 319, 550.

177. Zolotaryov, *Russia (USSR) in Local Wars and Military Conflicts,* 174.

178. Moshe Dayan, *Diary of the Sinai Campaign* (Tel-Aviv, 1965) 90, 96 [Hebrew].

179. Isabella Ginor, "'Under the Yellow Arab Helmet Gleamed Blue Russian Eyes': Operation *Kavkaz* and the War of Attrition, 1969–70," *Cold War History Journal,* III, 1 (October 2002) 129–156.

180. Oren, *Six Days of War,* 99.

181. James M. Ennes, Jr., *Assault on the* Liberty (New York, 1980) reproduced at http://ussliberty.com/about.htm; Ennes, "Remembering the USS Liberty: The Secret War Against the Jews—A Litany of Lies," *Washington Report,* June 1995, 21, 90; http://www.washington-report.org/backissues/ 0695/9506021.htm. Contemporary Israeli and other reports list only Tu-16s as the Egyptian Air Force's heaviest bombers. Arieh Avnery, *Red Sky* (Tel-Aviv, n.d[1974?]) 19 [Hebrew].

182. Akopov, "The Middle East in the Year 1967," 17 May 2004 [Russian]; Mir Rossii website www.mirros.ru/politics/1967.

183. Karen N. Brutents, *Thirty Years on the Old Square* (Moscow, 1996) 374 [Russian].

184. Yaremenko, *Nuclear War.*

185. Ginor and Remez, "Un-Finnished Business."

186. Zolotaryov, *Russia (USSR) in Local Wars and Military Conflicts,* 187.

187. Mardor, *RAFAEL,* 498, 499.

188. Cohen, *Taboo,* 47, 48, 154; Aluf Benn, "Israel Put Nuclear Weapons on Alert on the Eve of the Six-Day War," *Ha'aretz,* 8 August 1996.

189. V. Polovinkin and V. Ovchinnikov, "Should Russia Be a Naval Superpower?" *Obozrevatel',* 5 (1999) 100 [Russian], http://www.navy.ru/news/news99.htm, both writers are professors and members of the Russian Academy of Sciences.

190. Peres, *Battling for Peace,* 167. Peres declined to publicly answer questions about whether he meant a nuclear test; Aronson, "Israel's Nuclear Programme," 111.

191. Among a series of undated articles cited from "Soviet military journals in recent years" in "Lt. Col. L. Merhav" (ed), *Soviet Military Thought* (Tel-Aviv, 1969) 41 [Hebrew].