



INTERNATIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS

ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20301

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

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

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

Participants:

Israeli Side

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

United States Side

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

Time: 1530 - 1630 12 November 1968

Place: Assistant Secretary Warnke's Office, The Pentagon

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Ambassador Rabin said that, "weapons serve policy, not vice versa. Since the UAR's goal is to destroy us I would take it with very great concern. Our policy is not to destroy the UAR. You must combine the weapon with the policy."

General Hod observed that a very good example of introduction was when Egypt introduced missiles into the area in 1963, claiming they were capable of hitting anything south of Beirut. Ambassador Rabin said: "My concern with Egypt is with missiles with chemical rather than nuclear war heads. If Egypt were to hit our densely populated areas, even in a limited way, it could be disastrous."

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Prepared by R. J. Murray
Robert J. Murray

(Signed)
Approved by PAUL G. WARNKE
The Assistant Secretary
of Defense (ISA)

Date 12 November 1968

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