

May 26, 1963

MEMORANDUM FOR  
THE PRESIDENT

Here at last is State's scenario for handling Israeli demands. Though I've prodded them unmercifully, and delay is partly their fault, I'll plead: (a) they've found it hard to adjust to the prospect of a commitment we've avoided for fifteen years; (b) this problem is incredibly ramified; and (c) the situation in the area is much calmer (through Israeli pressure) in so far as

The scenario (Tab A) accepts that we must give greater security assurances to Israel but proposes linking them to a facit nuclear and missile cutoff agreement to be broached via a special embassy to both Israel and the UAR (Tab B). BG's insistence we inspect UAR as well as Israeli nuclear facilities gives us an opening here. I for one am convinced that Israel will go ahead with nuclear weapons unless we give her a security guarantee.

State proposes in effect entering into a quiet negotiation with the Israelis, conditioned upon their agreement to (a) call off their pressure campaign; (b) preserve secrecy; (c) agree not to move to West Bank while we're talking; and (d) cooperate in nuclear inspection. This is a tall order, but a good opening bid.

The negotiations are envisaged as lasting several months, and ending up either in a UAR-Israeli arms limitation agreement plus security guarantee, or in a nuclear limitation/security arrangement with Israel alone.

The form of guarantee envisaged (Tab C) is an executive agreement or Presidential letter rather than a treaty, essentially to avoid Congressional problems. It of course falls far short of demands in BG's latest letter, especially BG's clear idea that alliance means US arms aid.

Tab D is the proposed interim letter to Nasser calming him down. I think it falls far short of what's needed and will try a redo.

This whole problem area is so fraught with risk that we ought to make haste as slowly as we can. If we can get the Israelis to lay off public agitation in return for opening a private dialogue this should buy us time to feel out what they'll accept and what we can get in return. Given the HAVERI refugee episode of last year, we want to avoid giving if possible before we've taped down the quid pro quo.

*R. W. Komer*  
R. W. KOMER

50-10-00  
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May 14, 1963

TO : The Secretary

FROM : NSA - Phillips Talbot

SUBJECT : Arms Limitation in the Near East

The President's RSM No. 131 of March 28, 1963, instructed the Department to develop proposals for accelerating the development of advanced weapons in the Near East. The RSM was issued at the time a small working group was being formed under the direction of NSA and including CIA and AUSA participation to formulate an arms limitation arrangement and recommend a practical course of action. An outline summary of these recommendations is attached.

The proposal takes into account the lessons learned from a previous secret probe with Kanner and Ben Gurion (the IRM Anderson Blarlock) as well as more recent studies in NSA and W/P of the pros and cons of establishing a serious exploration with the UAR and Israel of a practicable arrangement to prevent further escalation of unconventional weapons in the Near East.

Our Plan of Action envisages a highly secret probe of UAR and Israeli willingness to cooperate with us to increase their security (V). We believe both sides have important reasons to do so (IN). If we are successful, we have much to gain (VI). If the attempt fails, we believe it will do little harm, if it can be kept secret, and could have useful side effects (IX).

In assessing the chances for success, we recognize that the proposed U.S. probe has only a reasonable chance of success but we believe it would be highly opportune since: 1) Israel has renewed its request to obtain a security guarantee; 2) the presence of German experts in the UAR has led to a public furor; 3) both the UAR and Israel have recently indicated their interest in a U.S. initiative (in both of W/P and Kanner of the White House); 4) [redacted] estimates that Israel, unless deterred by outside pressure, will attempt to produce a nuclear weapon sometime in the next several years and could detonate a domestically developed nuclear device late in 1965 or 1966; 5) while the UAR has a much publicized atomic program, Israel will shortly overtake the slight UAR lead; and 6) these trends are highly dangerous and, if allowed to continue unchecked, reduce U.S. capability to act.

Attachments:  
Outline summary.

NSA: NSASPH/Chapman  
5/14/63

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MAY 1962 EDITION  
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**SUBJECT: Near East Arms Limitation and  
Control Arrangement - Plan of Action**

I. Recommendations:

That the U.S. seek an unobtrusive, reasonably simple, arrangement in the Near East designed to prevent Israel and the UAR from acquiring, as a minimum, (1) nuclear weapons and (2) surface-to-surface strategic missiles. Given the tremendous stakes involved, there should be an immediate confidential probe of Israeli and UAR willingness to cooperate toward this end.

Careful study has been given to this problem in recent months. There is reason to believe that such an effort would have some prospect of success and should be tied to Israel's efforts to obtain a security guarantee. Properly handled and if necessary if the negotiations can be protracted, the effort, even if unsuccessful, would not harm U.S. interests in the area and useful side benefits would be derived from the attempt.

II. The Advanced Weapons Problem:

A. The Israelis, unless deterred by outside pressure, 

B. The UAR's compulsion to counter such a development is likely to bring it into increasing dependence on the Soviet Union for its security.

C. Both Israel and the UAR are also devoting increasing efforts to the development of strategic missiles.

III. The An Approach May:

A. It is easier to establish controls over weapons which are not yet in the possession of either side.

B. The danger of pre-emptive attack increases as both sides learn of each other's advances in sophisticated weapons development. Both have expressed to the United States their great concern with the weapons development of the other.

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-2-

D. As progress for developing sophisticated weapons come to fruition, the ability of the U.S. to control any hostilities which might occur between Israel and the USSR will decrease.

E. Repeated public and private expressions of concern by U.S. officials at the danger of arms escalation and nuclear proliferation in the area require early exploitation of the problem.

F. The rise in U.S. domestic pressures against arms escalation in the Near East, particularly against the USSR missile efforts make such an approach increasingly urgent.

G. If the U.S. is to move ahead on a security assurance for Israel, the commitment Israel seeks from us must be made conditional on an Israeli commitment to us not to develop nuclear weapons or offensive missiles; such a commitment may be impossible to secure in the absence of a parallel assurance from the USSR.

IV. Mr. Nassir and Ben Gurion Might Respond Favorably:

Although the proposed U.S. probe will encounter serious obstacles, the following factors have considerable weight in support of a favorable response:

A. Nassir

1. Has a great deal to gain since Israel has both a head-start and a far greater capacity in the nuclear field and will soon overtake the USSR in missile development, whereas the USSR's ultimate advantages lie in conventional fields;

2. Is not asked to give up existing weapons;

3. Will wish to obtain U.S. estimates of Israeli capabilities and monitoring of French investments since he now lacks capabilities in these areas;

4. Will wish to be responsive to the U.S. since he will perceive advantages in encouraging the flow of U.S. aid and avoiding undue military and economic dependence on the Communist bloc;

5. Will foresee some future tactical advantage in building his stature in the Arab-Eastern bloc as a world statesman opposed to nuclear testing and nuclear proliferation; and

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- 3 -

6. Is under considerable and growing strain to allocate his small economic resources to development in order to cope with his rapidly increasing population and to meet his rising expectations.

8. Ben Gurion

May well be harder to convince than Nasser since Israel wishes to rely primarily on its own military capabilities. However, Ben Gurion might be persuaded to give up a desirable, immediate increase in Israel's capability for the following reasons:

1. Will be more receptive to firm U.S. pressure since he is aware that Israel is, ultimately, dependent upon the U.S. for security and so seeks to increase U.S. involvement;

2. Recognizes the extent of U.S. opposition to nuclear proliferation and will seek to maximize his advantages within this context if he cannot circumvent it;

3. Might recognize that while early development of nuclear weapons offers Israel some major defensive advantages, it could be quickly nullified by forcing USSR to turn to the Soviets on Castro-like terms, and by providing the Soviets, or even Okinawa, with a golden opportunity for providing a nuclear guarantee for the Arab Near East;

4. Due to Israel's proclaimed peaceful aims and desires to build a national home, wishes to divert funds to developmental projects if this can be done in security; and

5. Will perceive no danger to Israel alone, if successful, Israel's security will be enhanced; he may think that, if unsuccessful, what Israel regards as U.S. flirtation with Nasser will likely be ended.

If the U.S. is prepared to provide a security guarantee conditioned upon Israeli agreement to an arms limitation arrangement, this should also be a powerful incentive.

7. Content of the Initial Approach:

A. Designation of a secret Presidential emissary who, because of his reputation of identification with the President, will be attractive to both sides. He should arrive in Cairo for a three-day visit early in June, thence proceeding to a third country and returning via Israel.

B. The emissary

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44

8. The emissary during the initial approach would seek to impress on Kanner and Ben Gurion the serious concerns of the U.S. Government over the Near East arms race and the inherent risks if it continued to nuclearize Israel.

(1) Purpose would be to probe the motivations and ways to establish a simple and constructive arrangement which would (a) ensure both the UAR and Israel that unconventional armaments are being excluded and (b) would not entail interferences with efforts necessary for national security or programs for peaceful research in the fields of atomic energy and outer space.

(2) Primary emphasis would be on nuclear weapons and offensive missile systems but the emissary would also be prepared to discuss other areas such as bacteriological and chemical warfare which we do not consider a major threat. Bacteriological warfare is not a realistic threat.

9. The approach would be flexible:

(1) No formal agreement expected between the UAR and Israel; however, U.S. bilateral arrangements with each party would be expected as a minimum.

(2) Would suggest that the key for controlled armaments is a quiet competent third party (i.e., the U.S.) for both the negotiating and implementing phases.

(3) Would be prepared to indicate that the U.S. stands ready to take appropriate action, either by Presidential letter incorporating a unilateral statement of policy without binding legal force or an executive agreement to support the independence and integrity of each country. It would specify that in the event of aggression or threat of aggression, the two governments would immediately determine, in accordance with the constitutional processes, what action might be appropriately taken. This agreement would terminate automatically if the bilateral arrangements for arms limitation were abrogated or violated.

(4) Would support development of independent detection capabilities of Israel and the UAR (in order to double check

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statements given by a third party) as well as use of IAEA or other comparable arrangements -- the more effective these are, the better the U.S. role has to be.

(C) Would be prepared to discuss possible U.S. participation in atomic energy or solar space programs of both sides as one form of verification (and as prestige booster for their cooperation).

D. Fourth countries would not be informed of the initial approach.

#### VI. What We Would Eventually Hope to Accomplish:

A. While the primary would describe different alternative schemes for arms limitation -- both public and private, unilateral and multi-lateral -- we would ultimately hope to wind up with the following largely secret arrangements:

(1) An undertaking by both sides not to develop, test, manufacture, or import nuclear weapons or surface-to-surface missiles which would be "strategic" in terms of the Near East.\*

(2) Peaceful nuclear programs and scientific space research programs would be declared and subject to safeguards, with the nuclear program preferably subject to IAEA safeguards.

(3) A cooperative arrangement for prompt access for U.S. technicians to any potential production facility for nuclears or missiles considered suspicious by the U.S. or the other country; refusal to allow access would be considered prima facie evidence of violation.

B. The non-inspiration requirement would preclude stationing on the territory of the two countries foreign troops equipped with such arms. The non-development and testing requirement would also preclude either side from conducting this activity within a third country.

C. The inspection systems devised to accomplish this purpose would not be elaborate or formalized. A few technical personnel would be assigned to our Embassy. Visits by technical personnel would be supplemented by normal U.S. intelligence gathering capabilities.

#### VII. After

\* The US's present missiles are largely show pieces which it might prefer for that purpose. Present US missile development would be re-directed toward prestigious outer space programs.

VII. After the Initial Approach

A. If both sides wish further exploratory talks, a small staff would be sent to the field to lay groundwork for the second visit.

B. A fourth country would be brought into the picture if the nature of the response justified it.

C. While negotiations must remain absolutely secret, certain aspects of this approach may become public if an arrangement is developed. We would seek to keep the specifics secret and would advise with Moscow possible steps to protect his position with Arab public opinion if the arrangement should surface.

VIII. Fourth Countries:

A. France: The absence of hard information on the close French-Israeli technical relationship in the nuclear and missile field remains a major handicap. While it is doubted that the French would provide Israel with a nuclear device, possible covert arrangements with the French in the nuclear and missile field outside Israel is a potential problem. Moscow will probably realize he is better off if the U.S. gives him assurances that it will seek to stop any existing covert arrangement than if it does nothing; also, the safeguards outlined above should identify Israeli activities well before Israel has an operational capacity from the west.

B. Soviet Union: The Soviets are unlikely to supply the USR with a nuclear weapon and have avoided thus far supplying large missiles. Attempts by the Soviet Union to disrupt any arms limitation arrangement would have to be accepted as a calculated risk if it becomes public. However, Soviet opportunistic would be diminished considerably if the USR does not feel compelled to turn to the U.S.S.R. to gain parity with Israel in the nuclear and missile field.

IX. Risk Benefits Even if Approach Fails:

A. Even if we do not succeed, we will have a better idea of conditions and likely sticking points by both sides for an arms control arrangement. If we should undertake another initiative in the future, we will have an important point of reference.

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-2-

B. Education effort. Both Ben Cardon and Messer will have a better appreciation of the problems, economic costs, and risks involved if they try to develop unconventional weapons.

C. We will have greater freedom of action in the Near East to pursue unilateral means to stop nuclear escalation.

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