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THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST

ESTABLISHMENT OF A NUCLEAR-WEAPON-FREE ZONE IN THE  
REGION OF THE MIDDLE EAST

Letter dated 10 December 1980 from the Permanent Representative of  
Israel to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

In my letter to you of 13 October 1980 (A/35/537), I had the honour of submitting a selection of informed opinions recently published about Iraq's nuclear programme and the grave danger it poses to international peace and security.

In this regard, it should be noted that Iraq has since closed its nuclear facilities to the inspectors of the International Atomic Energy Agency, thereby violating its international undertakings and providing further evidence of its intentions.

Moreover, in view of the world-wide concern about recent developments in the nuclear field in the Middle East, I should also like to draw your urgent attention to the efforts on the part of another bellicose Middle Eastern Arab State - Libya - to acquire nuclear capability. This is a development of the utmost gravity, especially in the light of Libya's involvement in a number of conflicts in Africa, the Mediterranean and the Middle East.

I attach hereto brief excerpts from a sample of the informed and authoritative reports which have been published about Libya's nuclear programme.

I have the honour to request that this letter and its annex be circulated as an official document of the General Assembly under agenda items 26 and 38.

(Signed) Yehuda Z. BLUM  
Ambassador  
Permanent Representative of Israel  
to the United Nations

ANNEX

Some of the Informed Opinions Published  
About Libya's Nuclear Programme

A

"The Birth of the Islamic Bomb"

(Report of BBC-TV Panorama Investigative Team:  
Excerpts from Transcript released 15 June 1980)

The Pakistani-Libyan negotiations climaxed at the first Islamic conference, held amid great ceremony in Lahora, Pakistan, in February 1974. Almost every Islamic nation was represented, most by their heads of state. Publicly the subject was oil policy. But the most important policy agreement was private, and it was between Khaddaffi and Bhutto.

The two leaders had at last finalized the details of one of the most significant understandings in the history of the Indian subcontinent and the Mideast. Bhutto was to proceed with the development of the bomb. Khaddaffi would help underwrite the attendant expenses. He offered Bhutto an open check. When pressed on whether the amount of Khaddaffi's promised aid exceeded \$50 million, one of our sources said with a shrug, "That's peanuts."

As well as the financial details, the Khaddaffi-Bhutto pact dictated that, after Pakistan had developed its own nuclear industry, it would pass on to Libya training, equipment and technical resources so that Libya, in turn, could become independent in the production of nuclear weaponry.

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While the Pakistani search for nuclear equipment is centered in Europe, its raw fuel needs may yet be fulfilled from another continent. In the heart of the Sahara Desert, in the Islamic Republic of Niger, uranium that Pakistan needs for its nuclear program is mined.

The company mining the uranium is French.

Niger gets a share of the proceeds from the mine's production, almost all of which is sold to the Islamic brother states of Pakistan and Libya. Unofficially, the French say they're powerless to intervene in this arrangement. Niger as an independent state can sell its uranium as it wants: The sale is open, legal, and even registered with the International Atomic Energy Agency.

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The Niger-Pakistan IAEA agreement declares that none of the uranium "shall be used for the manufacture of any nuclear weapon or to further any other military purpose or for the manufacture of any other explosive device."

Large quantities of the uranium Niger sells to Libya are reshipped to Pakistan.

B

"Libya bidding to join nuclear club, scientists warn"

(Nature 7 December 1978, vol. 276, p. 550)

Libya is actively seeking nuclear weapons even though it signed the nuclear non-proliferation treaty three years ago, warns the Federation of American Scientists. The FAS is urging the Soviet Union to cancel an agreement to sell Libya a 400-megawatt nuclear power complex.

Jeremy Stone, director of the Washington-based federation said that Ahmed al-Shahati, who is head of the foreign liaison office of the People's General Congress, told him openly that Libya is still trying to obtain an atomic bomb. "Shahati made no bones about it, saying they would seek all weapons with which to defend themselves," Mr. Stone said of his conversation in Tripoli in October. "To be sure I understood, I asked again: were they seeking to maintain the right to get a bomb or actually trying to get the bomb itself? It was the latter."

The Soviet Union, whose policy is only to sell nuclear technology to countries that have ratified the non-proliferation treaty, announced the Libyan contract in October. The Russians are currently negotiating safeguards with the International Atomic Energy Agency to prevent nuclear fuel being diverted from the Libyan reactor to make weapons. Professor George Rathjens of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, who is chairman of the FAS, estimated that the Libyan plant would produce enough fissionable material to produce "a couple of dozen" bombs a year.

In a letter to Anatoliy Dobrynin, the Soviet Ambassador in Washington, Mr. Stone asked: "Can the Soviet government rely upon the Libyan government to comply with the terms of the future IAEA safeguards agreement if Libya cannot be relied upon to comply with the treaty itself?"

Libya's nuclear ambitions were well known in the early 1970's, when its leader Muammar al-Qaddafi reportedly tried to buy nuclear

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weapons from China and later said he wanted to purchase the bomb from anyone who would sell it to him. Mr. Stone said these attitudes did not change when Libya cynically ratified the treaty to become eligible for the Soviet reactor.

The FAS has also written to President Carter, asking him to take the matter up with the Russians and raising the possibility of international sanctions against Libya. There is not much the US can do on its own, Mr. Stone said, apart from sending home the 2,000 Libyan students in American colleges and universities (10% of whom are studying nuclear science).

C

"Qaddafi's great aim for Libya

is a nuclear capability of its own"

(by John K. Cooley, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace;  
Christian Science Monitor, 12 November 1980)

Libya's leader, Col. Muammar Qaddafi, seems to be seeking an independent nuclear capability for Libya.

Third-world diplomats who have talked with senior Libyan military officers gave the following account of Libya's nuclear preparations.

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Colonel Qaddafi and the late Pakistani president Zulfikar Ali Bhutto (who was executed in 1979) discussed possible Libyan access to any possible "Islamic bomb" developed in Pakistan's crash nuclear weapons program. In 1977 and possibly 1978, the Colonel sent planes carrying hundreds of millions of dollars in untraceable Libyan cash to provide financing for the Pakistani project, now well advanced near Islamabad.

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Industrial sources here report that rather than trying to emulate Iraq or Brazil by buying a complete system, the Qaddafi approach will be to obtain bits and pieces. Included will be a nuclear-fueled electric power generating plant from various Western firms, a reprocessing plant to make plutonium from Niger, and Chad uranium, which Libya is now fighting in Chad to secure.

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