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Israel's Nuclear Weapons - the definitive proof

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"The Guardian reveals the existence of a nuclear deal between Israel and South Africa."

Under this heading, *Le Monde.fr* has published an article which we reproduce below in full, as an annex to this page, together with the original article from *the Guardian,* so as to allow readers to decide for themselves.

The Guardian article, accompanied by reproductions of parts of the South African document, should mark the final end of Israel's "policy of ambiguity."

The article in *Le Monde,* however, in its electronic version, while reporting the Guardian piece, dwells on "Israel's denial" and neglects to specify 1) that the agreement between Israel and South Africa provided that both parties deny its very existence, and 2) that Israel has unsuccessfully lobbied the current South African regime to prevent the declassification of the documents, dating from the apartheid era, which Sasha Polakow-Suransky unearthed. So Israel has become the only one of the parties to respect the pact of silence - the one that still has an interest in doing so.

There is therefore no need to accord any credibility to this kind of denial, any more than there was reason to believe the IDF spokesman in 2009, when he denied the use of phosphorous shells during " Operation Cast Lead", a use visible to everyone, before he later fell back on this "justification": "They are being used, but these weapons are not prohibited."

There was also no reason to believe Israel that if it were to deny (which it hasn't yet done, doubteless preferring silence to a denial that it couldn't maintain) that the US-made GBU-39 bombs used at the same time on the Gaza Strip were heavily radioactive. See our Report on the use of radioactive weapons in the Gaza Strip during the Operation Cast Lead (December 27, 2008 to January 18, 2009)

Furthermore, *Le Monde* does not tell us who took the photographs published in 1986 by the Sunday Times. But the Guardian article that Le Monde is supposedly reporting names Mordechai Vanunu and gives him all the credit for this revelation:

"The existence of nuclear weapons programs of Israel was revealed by Mordechai Vanunu to the Sunday Times in 1986. He provided photographs taken inside the Dimona nuclear site and provided detailed descriptions of the processes involved in production of some nuclear materials, but without providing written documentation."

For making public this evidence, admitted as undisputed by experts, Mordechai Vanunu was kidnapped by Mossad, tried behind closed doors and sentenced to 18 years in prison, eleven of them in total isolation, which he served in Israel jails. Is this the reason why Le Monde prefers not to mention the name of the "whistle-blower"? It is true that in naming him, Le Monde would have been forced to mention that Mordechai Vanunu has now been sent back to prison, on or before Sunday May 23, 2010.

To consign the name of Mordechai Vanunu to the dustbin of history, means also letting the man languish in silence in Israel's prisons, along with Salah Mahouri (See our letter to the Ambassador of Israel in France calling for Mordechai Vanunu's freedom of emigration and the release of Salah Hamouri).

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Since now we can no longer wonder whether or not Israel is a nuclear state, it is permitted to wonder a lot about certain silences perpetrated by *Le Monde,* along with others...

PS:

REPORT FROM LE MONDE by Audrey Fournier (unauthorised translation)

"According to documents from South Africa which the Guardian has obtained, Israel offered to sell nuclear warheads to South Africa in 1975, long before the end of apartheid.

"The publication of these documents, unearthed by Sasha Polakow-Suransky, an American scholar who has written a book about the ties between Israel and South Africa, confirms the revelations made shortly after the end of the apartheid regime by a former officer of the South African Navy, Dieter Gerhardt, who was jailed in 1983 for spying for the USSR. He had spoken on his release of an agreement named "Chalet", signed between Shimon Peres and Pieter Willem Botha, the respective Ministers of Defence of Israel and South Africa. Classified top secret, the agreement, which was ultimately not implemented, included the provision of eight missiles with nuclear warheads to South Africa, along with strengthened military cooperation between the two countries. But until now, no written document had come to light proving its existence.

DENIAL BY ISRAEL

"These revelations greatly embarrass Israel, which has promptly denied the contents of the Guardian article, at a time when negotiations are taking place in New York about non-proliferation in the Middle East." There is not an ounce of truth in the Guardian article", said Ayelet Frisch, spokesperson for Shimon Peres. "We deplore the fact that this newspaper did not seek any comment from the president's office. If it had, it would have discovered that the story is wrong and baseless," she said. She also refused to comment on the authenticity of the documents referenced by Sasha Polakow-Suransky and published by the Guardian.

"A little later in the morning, the Israeli presidency issued a statement stating that " there was no Israeli document or Israeli signature signature on any document indicating that such negotiations took place, " and that the Guardian's conclusions were "based on a selective reading of South African documents and not on concrete facts."

"The article also cast a bad light on Israel's ambiguous position, which for decades has consisted of not denying the presence of nuclear weapons in its arsenal, but not openly admitting their existence. The British daily also stresses that its information discredits the discourse maintained by the Israeli leadership, which says that access to nuclear power should be refused to countries deemed unreliable, such as Iran.

"The existence of nuclear weapons by Israel has been proven since 1986: Britain's Sunday Times then published photographs showing the interior of the Dimona nuclear site, a site that has allegedly produced more than two hundred nuclear warheads, and gave detailed descriptions of the procedures used for the manufacture of nuclear components. But again, no written document had been presented to corroborate this information."

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