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France, nuclear nation, champion of proliferation.

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Israel, it seems, has a wish to call on France's help in building a nuclear power plant, in which Jordan is said to be interested. A communiqué of Agence France Presse dated 8 March said that Israel's Minister of Infrastructure, Uzi Landau, was to announce this wish on 9 March, on the occasion of a conference on access to non-military nuclear technology which is taking place now in Paris with the support of the OECD and the IAEA.

As this communiqué reminds us, *"Israel is not a signatory of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and has made it known that it would not subscribe to a Middle East Nuclear-Free Zone (a proposal supported by US President Obama). Israel has never admitted having a nuclear arsenal, but foreign experts say that Israel possesses 200 nuclear warheads and also long-range missiles."*

Israel also refuses to submit its nuclear installations, notably that at Dimona, to inspections by the IAEA, yet insists vociferously, in the name of respect for the NPT rules which it has not signed, that Iran should be subjected to sanctions and if necessary military attack, under the presumption that Iran too wants to obtain the bomb.

Let us not forget that France played a decisive role in allowing Israel (with US blessing) to obtain nuclear weapons in the 1960s. She did the same with South Africa (which later dismantled its 5 bombs and joined the NPT). France also provided Iraq with the "Osiraq", the plutonium-making reactor which - if Israel hadn't destroyed it in June 1981 - would have enabled Saddam Hussein to get the bomb, and which did encourage Iraq to pursue a nuclear programme until the Gulf War. France signed agreements with the Shah of Iran for nuclear cooperation and the provision of enriched uranium (Eurodif), agreements that she later reneged on, thus giving some justification for the Islamic Republic's current desire to produce its own nuclear fuel.

Despite this, as an oil-rich nation, Iran could have done without any nuclear power plant, and still could - Iran could help prepare the transition from oil by developing renewable sources of energy. We suggested this to the Iranians' representatives in France in 2006. It would have spared Iran from any suspicion of wanting to divert fissile materials to military uses.

Israel, for its part, has probably no oil but certainly plenty of sunshine, like Iran and the Middle East in general. Israel would do better to become, *"a laboratory and experimental domain for most of the alternatives"* to fossil fuels. Such was the wish expressed by President Simon Peres on 18 September 2007: *"We want to shift from hydrocarbon-based energy to solar energy... It's better to count on the sun than on the Saudis."*

Neither of these nations needs nuclear power plants, no more than they need nuclear weapons. All the Middle East needs is peace, disarmament, sustainable development, social justice, a healthy and non-radioactive environment. These are things which nuclear technology, both military and civilian, helps to destroy.

If Israel has enough wealth to build nuclear plants, let that money be used instead for decontaminating the earth of Gaza which was pummelled during "Operation Cast Lead" with GBU-39 radioactive bombs heavy with depleted uranium.

As for France, she should stop playing at being a sorcerer's apprentice, and stop trying to spread her nuclear products and military hardware all over the world, to Brazil and Israel and also to Senegal, the Maghreb or the United Arab Emirates.

ADDENDUM : How Israel-Infos and one Israeli minister reply to an ACDN article published a few hours earlier.

On 9 March, "Israel-Infos" replied (*See below*) to the ACDN article above, by rewriting it and not saying so. The article had been posted on our site and distributed to press and media during the previous night...

Readers will note that Shimon Peres is quoted, as in our article, but only as the "supervisor" of the Dimona reactor which *"France helped to build in the 1950s"*- and not a father of the Israeli bomb which it obtained in the 60s thanks to this reactor, nor as the person who spoke his words on 18 September 2007. In fact those words contradict Israel-Infos' assertion that *"Israel fears a future shortage of electricity, and has neither oil nor hydroelectric production, **nor alternative sources of electricity production.**"*

Apparently our article also reached the ears of Israel's Minister of Infrastructures during his days in Paris. He felt obliged to declare (according to Israel-Infos):

"Nuclear technology has many positive uses that can serve the cause of peace and cooperation" said Uzi Landau, emphasizing that *"civilian nuclear technology has many secure aspects that are not harmful to the environment"*.

However the minister did not, it seems, find a reply to what we said about Iran and Gaza.

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Israel wants to acquire a French nuclear power-plant

by Sarah Cohen (unauthorised translation by Peter Low)

Uzi Landau, Israel's Minister of Infrastructure, participating in an international conference on civilian nuclear technology being held in Paris under the auspices of the OECD and the IAEA, intends to call on France for the construction of a nuclear plant which will be used particularly for electricity production... Landau came to this conference with the idea of a shared project to be developed by Jordan and Israel, with France providing the technology.

It seems that this intention had already been expressed some months ago to Jean-Louis Borloo, France's Minister of Energy.

Israel's nuclear programme is a touchy subject, however: Israel is not a signatory of the Non-Proliferation Treaty and has always opposed in principle the idea of a nuclear-free Middle East, while remaining very tight-lipped about its own nuclear military capability (experts estimate that Israel has 200 nuclear warheads and also long-range missiles).

Israel fears a future shortage of electricity, and has neither oil nor hydroelectric production, nor alternative sources of electricity production.

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"Nuclear technology has many positive uses that can serve the cause of peace and cooperation" said Uzi Landau, emphasizing that "civilian nuclear technology has many secure aspects that are not harmful to the environment".

It was France, in the 1950s, that helped Israel to build the Dimona reactor, a project then supervised by Shimon Peres who is the current Israeli president.
