

# Video: The Real Middle East Nuclear Threat. James Corbett

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*FROM 2018: There is in fact a Middle Eastern nation that is in fact in control of a vast, undeclared stockpile of nuclear weapons. This nation does have the capability of deploying those weapons anywhere in the region. It is not a signatory to the nuclear non-proliferation treaty and its arsenal has never been inspected by any international agency. But this nation is not Iran. It's Israel.*

## Transcript

DONALD TRUMP: I am announcing today that the United States will withdraw from the Iran nuclear deal. In a few moments, I will sign a presidential memorandum to begin reinstating US nuclear sanctions on the Iranian regime. We will be instituting the highest level of economic sanction.

SOURCE: [President Trump Gives Remarks on the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action](#)

When President Trump announced that the US was going to de-certify the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, better known as the 2015 Iran nuclear deal, and reinstitute sanctions on that country, one of the reasons he cited for that move was the presentation of "new" evidence from Israeli intelligence showing that the Iranians had lied about its nuclear program during the negotiation of that deal.

TRUMP: Last week Israel published intelligence documents long concealed by Iran conclusively showing the Iranian regime and its history of pursuing nuclear weapons.

BENJAMIN NETANYAHU: A few weeks ago, in a great intelligence achievement, Israel obtained half a ton of the material inside these vaults. And here's what we got: 55,000 pages; another 55,000 files on 183 CDs. Everything you're about to see is an exact copy

of the original Iranian material.

SOURCE: [Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu gives statement on Iran Nuclear Deal](#)

Theatrical props and dramatic rhetoric aside, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's recent presentation on the "Iranian nuclear deal" in fact contained no new information.

That Iran had explored a nuclear weapons program prior to 2003 has been known and admitted for years. That they have an archive of this information is not a violation of the Iranian nuclear deal completed in 2015. In fact, if anything, Netanyahu's presentation actually proved the exact opposite of what was intended: Namely, that Iran *is* abiding by the terms of that treaty and is *not* covertly pursuing any nuclear weapons activity. That's why they had to go back to 15-year-old information and present it as if it was something new and revelatory.

But here's the *real* head-scratcher in this new round of propaganda over the Iranian nuclear non-threat: There *is* in fact a Middle Eastern nation that *is* in fact in control of a vast, undeclared stockpile of nuclear weapons. This nation *does* have the capability of deploying those weapons anywhere in the region. It is *not* a signatory to the nuclear non-proliferation treaty, and its arsenal has *never* been inspected by any international agency. But this nation is not Iran. It's Israel.

This is the story of the real Middle East Nuclear Threat. You're watching [The Corbett Report](#).

Hand-wringing over Iran's nuclear program is nothing new. It became a mainstay of Western political discourse after an Iranian dissident revealed the Iranian government's plans for a uranium enrichment facility in Natanz in August 2002. But the surprising fact for Americans and others around the world who get their information from the corporate mainstream media, is that Iran's pre-2003 nuclear weapons program has long been known and admitted. Since 2003, when the program was scrapped, not a single piece of evidence has been presented (not even by Netanyahu or the Israeli government) that the Iranian government ever pursued anything other than what it said it was pursuing: a nuclear energy program.

Not that that fact has ever stopped Netanyahu from using any opportunity to use cartoon-level propaganda tactics to convince the world otherwise:

NETANYAHU: In the case of Iran's nuclear plans to build a bomb, this bomb has to be filled with enough enriched uranium. And Iran has to go through three stages.

The first stage: They have to enrich enough of low enriched uranium. The second stage: They have to enrich enough medium enriched uranium. And the third stage and final stage: They have to enrich enough high enriched uranium for the first bomb.

Where's Iran? Iran's completed the first stage. It took them many years, but they completed it, and they're 70% of the way there.

Now they are well into the second stage. By next spring, at most by next summer at current enrichment rates, they will have finished the medium enrichment and move on to the final stage. From there, it's only a few months, possibly a few weeks, before they get enough enriched uranium for the first bomb.

Ladies and gentlemen, what I told you now is not based on secret information. It's not based on military intelligence. It's based on the public reports by the International Atomic Energy Agency. Anybody can read them. They're online.

So if these are the facts, and they are, where should a red line be drawn?

A red line should be drawn right here. Before Iran completes the second stage of nuclear enrichment necessary to make a bomb. Before Iran gets to a point where it's a few months away or a few weeks away from amassing enough enriched uranium to make a nuclear weapon.

Now each day, that point is getting closer. That's why I speak today with such a sense of urgency.

*SOURCE: [Israel PM Benjamin \(Bibi\) Netanyahu Address to United Nations Sept 27, 2012](#)*

Of course, Iran was not pursuing nuclear weapons, and Netanyahu's Wile E. Coyote bomb and red-line warnings bore no greater semblance to reality than the cartoon propaganda surrounding Saddam's "weapons of mass destruction." Not only did the IAEA [repeatedly confirm](#) that Iran never diverted any nuclear material into any military program, but even the US intelligence community itself conceded that Iran was [not trying to build a nuclear bomb](#). Most remarkable of all was Mossad's [own assessment](#) that Iran was "not performing the activity necessary to produce weapons."

As I detailed earlier this year in "[We Need to Talk About the Iran Protests](#)," fearmongering over Iran's non-existent nuclear weapons program was the basis for an extraordinary series of measures against the country in recent decades. These measures include "[NITRO ZEUS](#)," a full-scale military cyberattack against Iran, the best-known element of which was Stuxnet, the military-grade cyberweapon [co-developed by the United States and Israel](#) that specifically targeted Iran's nuclear enrichment facility at Natanz.

Iran's non-existent nuclear program also provided the pretext for sanctions aimed at crippling the country's economy, including the [de-listing of Iranian banks](#) from the Swift Network connecting the world's financial institutions.

The fearmongers even went so far as to [plant evidence of nuclear weapons](#) involvement on Iran to further justify these attacks.

But the great irony is that there really *is* a nuclear armed nation in the Middle East. It is not a signatory to the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty. It does not allow inspections of its arsenal. It does not even officially acknowledge its stockpile of nuclear weapons. It has even resisted the push for an international treaty recognizing a nuclear-free zone in the Middle East. And that country is Israel.

Sometimes ranked as the world's [sixth largest nuclear superpower](#), Israel actively pursued a nuclear program from the time of its inception as a state in 1948. By the late 1950s, they had begun building a reactor and reprocessing plant at Dimona with [British](#) and [French](#) aid. And by 1967, a classified CIA report estimated that Israel would be capable of producing a nuclear warhead in "[six to eight weeks](#)." Shortly thereafter, it is believed, Israel began producing and stockpiling a nuclear arsenal.

OLENKA FRENKIEL: It was the young Shimon Peres, back in the '50s who negotiated a secret deal with the French to buy a nuclear weapons reactor like theirs. But while Dimona was going up, intelligence reports reached Washington that Israel was building an atom bomb.

Despite claims that Dimona was for peaceful purposes only, Israel's leader, Ben Gurion, was summoned to Washington. President Kennedy feared an arms race in the Middle East and demanded inspections. But when inspectors finally entered the plant in May 1961, they were tricked. They were shown a fake control room on the ground floor. They were unaware of the six floors below where the plutonium was made.

PETER HOUNAM, freelance journalist: Well, this was something of great pride and almost a legendary story in Dimona, according to Vanunu. When the Americans came they were completely hoodwinked. All the entrances, including the lift shafts, were bricked up and plastered over, so it was impossible for anyone to find their way down to the lower floors.

FRENKIEL: After Kennedy's assassination, the pressure on Israel was off. His successor, Lyndon Johnson, turned a blind eye. Then, in 1969, Israel's Golda Meir and President Richard Nixon struck a deal, renewed by every President to this day. Israel's nuclear programme could continue as long as it was never made public. It's called "nuclear ambiguity."

The term "nuclear ambiguity," in some ways it sounds very grand. But isn't it just a euphemism for deception?

SHIMON PERES, former Prime Minister of Israel: If somebody wants to kill you, and you use a deception to save your life, it is not immoral. If we wouldn't have enemies, we wouldn't need deceptions. We wouldn't need deterrent.

FRENKIEL: Was this the justification for concealing the floors of the plutonium reprocessing areas from the Americans, the inspectors, when they came?

PERES: You are having a dialogue with yourself, not with me.

FRENKIEL: But that's been documented in a number of books.

PERES: Ask the question to yourself, not to me.

FRENKIEL: But, I mean, is it not true?

PERES: I don't have to answer your questions, even. I don't see any reason why.

FRENKIEL: Ambiguity is a luxury unique to Israel. Today the country's an inspection-free zone, protected from scrutiny by America and her allies.

*SOURCE: [Israel's Secret Weapon](#)*

Although estimates vary, it is now believed that Israel has somewhere between 75 and 400 nuclear warheads and that it possesses the capability to [deliver these warheads to Iran](#).

The existence of this stockpile, while known to governments around the world for decades,

was only revealed to the public in 1986, when *The Sunday Times* published photographic proof and a detailed account of Israel's secret nuclear weapons program. That story was provided by Mordechai Vanunu, a technician at the Dimona facility, who spent decades behind bars for his part in revealing this truth to the world.

NARRATOR: On October the 5th, 1986, *The Sunday Times* announced they had evidence to prove that Israel had become the world's sixth biggest nuclear power, having developed their arsenal beneath the Negev desert at Dimona. Photographs like this were given to *The Sunday Times* by a former technician at Dimona, Mordechai Vanunu.

[. . .]

Mordechai Vanunu's family, Moroccan Jews, settled in the Negev in the early '60s, inspired by the idea of being a part of Israel. Vanunu did national service in the army. Then, while he worked at Dimona, he began studying philosophy. He became active in student politics. He opposed Israel's invasion of Lebanon. Vanunu came to believe that Israel's nuclear development program was immoral. He left Dimona and, eventually, Israel itself.

Vanunu arrived in Sydney armed with photographs he'd taken inside Dimona. Here, he turned his back on Judaism and became a Christian. He met Oscar Guerrero, a Colombian journalist who urged him to sell his secrets to *The Sunday Times*. His evidence was processed at a local photo shop. Vanunu talked openly about what he'd done.

It's said that by the time Vanunu arrived in London on September the 12th, 1986, Australian intelligence had already alerted MI6 and the CIA, and Mossad—Israeli intelligence—had already begun questioning his family in Israel. *The Sunday Times* disguised their informant and moved him from place to place for protection. But in Leicester Square one day, Vanunu met a blonde who called herself "Cindy," a beautician from Florida. Meanwhile, Oscar Guerrero, eager to profit from what he knew, turned to *The Sunday Mirror*. Vanunu's photograph appeared on page one. Vanunu began to despair. At this point, Cindy was able to lure him to Rome to spend the weekend with her at her sister's apartment. Not once did Vanunu suspect that Cindy was a Mossad agent and that this was the beginning of a plot to kidnap him.

In Rome, the tactics of the Mossad agents changed dramatically.

MEIR VANUNU: In the apartment, two Israeli agents attacked him and bit him and strangled him really hard. And then chained him, injected drugs [in]to his body. And later on he woke up in a small cell on a boat. The boat went to Israel for a few days and he arrived to Israel on the 7th of October, 1986.

NARRATOR: Vanunu was assumed dead until he turned up weeks later in Tel Aviv. Vanunu himself, on his way to court, gave the first clue of what had happened to him. Scrawled on his hand was the message "Vanunu was hijacked from Rome, Italy. 30.9.86. BA 504."

SOURCE: [Vanunu's exposure of Israels nuclear program](#)

But a key element of this story is missing from the handful of documentaries that do acknowledge Israel's nuclear stockpile. Namely, that these weapons were not merely

developed by Israeli scientists working in isolation, but with the aid of a nuclear smuggling ring that helped develop and advance Israel's arsenal by stealing important nuclear technologies from their "ally," the United States. These smuggling rings and their activities have been known about and even investigated by the FBI for decades, but largely kept secret from the public.

It has fallen to researchers like Grant F. Smith of [IRMEP.org](http://IRMEP.org), author of [\*Divert!: NUMEC, Zalman Shapiro and the Diversion of US Weapons Grade Uranium into the Israeli Nuclear Weapons Program\*](#), to piece together the story from the documents that have been released. On The Corbett Report in 2012, Smith revealed the name of one of the high-powered Israeli officials who was at the heart of a plot in the 1970s to smuggle 800 nuclear triggers from the United States.

GRANT F. SMITH: In terms of the FBI uncovering a multi-node network, this one happened to be centered in California. MILCO was a company that was incorporated in 1972 by a man named Richard Kelly Smyth. He was discovered sending 800 krytrons, which are dual-use items that could be used to trigger nuclear weapons. When he was discovered doing that, he skipped bail in the mid-1980s and disappeared until he was picked up by Interpol in the early part of 2000.

And so the story is interesting and explosive, because after multiple attempts and denials, we had a document release in which the key contact, or one of the key contacts, that Smyth was meeting with to set up sales in Israel was none other than Benjamin Netanyahu. And so the document—which I'm kind of holding up right here for the people who are on video—actually names Benjamin Netanyahu as being an employee of Heli Trading Company, which was the node in Israel that would receive Ministry of Defense requisitions that they would pass on to MILCO.

And so the interesting thing about this, of course, is the high-profile nature of Benjamin Netanyahu [and] the fact that the smuggling ring ringleader has been identified as Arnon Milchan, a person any American knows for his movie productions, such as *Pretty Woman* and other favorites, who is running this and who a recent book has named as being a top economic espionage spy for LAKAM, who worked under Benjamin Bloomberg and Rafi Eitan. But the FBI document that we published on July 4 related to [an antiwar.com story](#), which was really short and direct. And its core focus was on the fact that in a period when Netanyahu was building himself up as a leader in the terrorism industry—hosting major conferences, having just returned from his studies in the United States, hosting major conferences in the Jonathan Netanyahu Terrorism Institute, named after his brother who was killed on the raid on Entebbe.

Here's a person who was supposed to be working as a furniture company executive, and yet these documents, which are very credible because of what they were, which is testimony from Richard Kelly Smyth after he was returned from his exile overseas and finally forced serve a prison sentence. These were the statements he made to an FBI agent in a district attorney office when they debriefed and wanted to know what the extent of the nuclear technology smuggling network was, and—boom!—there's Benjamin Netanyahu.

SOURCE: [Corbett Report Radio 214 - Israel's Nuclear Smuggling with Grant F. Smith](#)

Benjamin Netanyahu. And now this unindicted nuclear smuggler is lecturing Iran about a 15-



year-old, long-acknowledged nuclear weapons program that never produced a single nuclear weapon.

Even more worryingly, Israel's nuclear knowledge has not only helped to arm its own nation, but actually helped to proliferate nuclear weapons to Pakistan through the so-called Khan network. One of the men who helped to transfer the nuclear triggers used in the construction of the Pakistani bomb was [Asher Karni](#), an orthodox Jew living in South Africa who had been a major in the Israeli army prior to emigrating to Cape Town. Upon his arrival there in 1985, he began teaching the Torah at the local synagogue and educating Jewish youth, encouraging them to relocate to Israel.

In 2004, U.S. authorities arrested Karni for his role in supplying the nuclear triggers, and in 2005 he was sentenced to three years in prison. It has never been officially explained why this Israeli citizen and former Israeli military officer was interested in helping proliferate nuclear technologies to Pakistan.

But perhaps the greatest irony of all is that it is Iran who has been arguing for decades that the Middle East should be a nuclear-free zone. The idea was first floated by the Shah in 1969 and was [first formally proposed](#) by Iran in a joint UN General Assembly resolution, but the idea failed to garner any support. The idea was again raised by then-Iranian [President Ahmedinejad in 2006](#) and yet again by then-Iranian Foreign Minister [Mottaki in 2008](#), but these calls to banish nuclear weapons from the Middle East have not even been acknowledged by the West, let alone seriously considered.

Now more than ever, the prospect of a nuclear-free Middle East seems the only way to prevent a nuclear conflagration that threatens to draw in the world's superpowers, and yet this idea is being ignored by Israel and its staunchest ally, the United States.

Why does Israel refuse to declare its nuclear weapons stockpile?

Why do they refuse to sign on to the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty?

Why do they refuse IAEA inspections of their nuclear facility?

Why did they kidnap and imprison Mordechai Vanunu for 18 years for providing the proof of this nuclear program?

And perhaps most importantly, why does the United States, the only country who could single-handedly force NPT compliance from Israel, still refuse to even admit the openly-acknowledged status of Israel as a nuclear power?

Don't hold your breath waiting for these questions to be answered by the teleprompter readers on the nightly news.

Still, as even many in the mainstream are now admitting, Netanyahu's presentation on Iran's nuclear non-secrets is a cheap display of political theatrics. The only thing he ended up doing is underlining the point that Iran, unlike Israel, fully cooperated with the IAEA, lived up to its obligations as a signatory to the nuclear non-proliferation treaty, and, pointedly, has not violated the 2015 nuclear deal.

And now that the United States has allowed the Israeli tail to wag the American dog once again by de-certifying that Iranian deal without valid cause, negotiators in North Korea and

elsewhere will be watching, reminded yet again that a promise from the American empire isn't worth the signed agreement it's written on.

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*Featured image: Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu delivers a speech on Iran's nuclear programme at the defence ministry in Tel Aviv on 30 April 2018 (Source: MEE)*

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