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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 13 October 1980 from the Permanent Representative of  
Israel to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to refer to the message addressed to you by the Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iraq, which was circulated as the annex to document A/35/351-S/14073 of 29 July 1980.

Contrary to the assertion in the Iraqi message, it did not require a "frantic Zionist attack" to alert the world to the dangers inherent in the strenuous efforts made by Iraq over the last few years to acquire nuclear capability. Iraq's attempts to arm itself not only with conventional but also nuclear weapons are common knowledge. They have long been noted by the world press and have also been the subject of serious concern in countless authoritative publications.

Consequently, the assertions in the above-mentioned message are at best frivolous, if not downright disingenuous.

Moreover, Iraq's subsequent conduct has also fully vindicated the conclusion that Iraq's bellicose policies and belligerent behaviour constitute a grave threat to international peace and security.

Only last week, on 10 October 1980, Le Monde of Paris, commented in a leading article:

"The questions which must therefore be raised, and to which answers must certainly be given one day, are the following:

"Can one continue to maintain the fiction that the civilian nuclear deals have no military value whatsoever? /Can one continue to adhere to/ the myth that it is possible to construct, without fear of a very grave accident, nuclear installations in a country prepared to go to war?"

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I attach with this letter some of the other informed opinions which have recently been published about Iraq'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

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ANNEX

Some of the informed opinions recently published about  
Iraq's nuclear programme

1. Jonathan Kandell of the International Herald Tribune (27 June 1980) indicates that, with the help of its oil clients, "the Iraqis have acquired in a piecemeal fashion the nuclear material, technology and expertise necessary to produce and stock-pile several bombs during the next five years".

2. Nigel Ash, writing in the Arab-financed weekly 8 Days (9 August 1980), which is published in the United Kingdom, points out that Iraq's military intentions in the nuclear field were made clear beyond any doubt when Iraq refused to accept the Caramel-type uranium offered it by France. This type of uranium is impossible to convert to military uses. Instead, Iraq insisted on receiving weapons-grade enriched uranium (Osiris).

3. The French daily France-Soir published an article on 5 August 1980 on Iraq's nuclear programme entitled: "Le cri d'alarme d'un savant atomiste français". The warning was issued by an atomic scientist, Francis Perrin, who served as head of the French Nuclear Energy Commission from 1951 to 1971. Referring to the Osiris reactor supplied by France to Iraq, Mr. Perrin explained that "it is fueled by highly-enriched uranium which can be used for the production of an atomic weapon". Expressing the fear that Iraq may revoke international controls on this enriched uranium, Mr. Perrin pointed out another possibility:

"It would not surprise me that Iraq effectively would like, in a few years hence, to be in the position to produce an atomic weapon, probably of plutonium".

France-Soir then continues in describing the nuclear deal:

"This Osiris reactor of Saclay, baptized Osirac by Baghdad, uses enriched uranium, up to 93%. It should be operational next year with a first shipment of 13 kilograms of uranium to be delivered by France at the end of this year. Iraq, one of the great producers of oil, has evidently no need of nuclear electrical power. Why is there, therefore, this desire to possess atomic reactors? This evidently appears suspicious especially in this State which, still being very backward, should look for other priorities in development".