

# Nuclear double standard as the pretext for war against Iran in alliance with Israel

Jean Shaoul  
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For decades, Washington and Tel Aviv have promoted an Iranian nuclear weapons programme as justification for their relentless hostility towards the Islamic Republic.

United States President Donald Trump has repeatedly said, “Iran cannot have a nuclear weapon. It’s that simple,” to legitimise the war of aggression against Iran. The claim has previously functioned as the pretext for sanctions, assassinations, sabotage, cyber-warfare, covert operations, and military assaults.

On this basis also, the US and Israel have demanded the dismantling of Iran’s civilian nuclear infrastructure, the disposal of its enriched uranium, and the closure of its enrichment facilities.

This is dressed up as “non-proliferation”. But its real purpose is the subjugation of a state that refuses to accept US domination of the resource-rich Middle East and Israel’s expansionist policy aimed at driving out the Palestinians and depriving them of their property.

The factual record refutes all claims that Iran is supposedly “within weeks” of possessing nuclear weapons, as has been claimed year after year.

The 2007 US National Intelligence Estimate concluded that Iran halted its structured weapons-design programme in 2003. Successive US intelligence chiefs, including CIA Director William Burns, have reiterated that Iran has made no decision to build a bomb. The International Atomic Energy Authority’s (IAEA) inspectors, including Mohamed ElBaradei, repeatedly reported no evidence of an active weapons programme.

Yet political discourse in the West has so thoroughly obscured the legal framework that few understand a basic truth: under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), Iran is fully entitled to enrich uranium for civilian purposes—energy and medical isotopes—under IAEA safeguards. Thirteen states publicly operate enrichment programmes, including Argentina, Brazil, Germany, Japan, the Netherlands, the UK, the US, Russia, China, India, Pakistan, North Korea, and Iran.

The NPT’s Article IV explicitly guarantees

non-nuclear-weapon states an “inalienable right” to peaceful nuclear technology. While they are prohibited from acquiring nuclear weapons, no clause allows nuclear-weapon states to demand the abolition of safeguarded civilian nuclear programmes. Even states with past weapons-related research—South Korea in the 1970s, Brazil and Argentina in the 1980s—were never required to dismantle their civilian infrastructure.

US opposition to Iran’s nuclear programme only began after the 1979 revolution, which toppled the Shah, Washington’s long-serving client in the Gulf. Under the Shah, the US had actively supported Iran’s nuclear ambitions, selling Tehran its first research reactor in the 1960s and positioning Westinghouse and General Electric to build up to 20 nuclear power plants. The Shah hinted that Iran might one day seek more advanced capabilities if regional conditions required it.

The revolution led to a reversal of US/Iran relations. When the new government expelled US advisers, rejected the American alliance, and supported movements hostile to Israel, Washington responded with sanctions, diplomatic isolation, and asset freezes. It halted fuel shipments, technical assistance, reactor contracts, and access to enriched uranium. What had been “peaceful development” under the Shah was rebranded “potential proliferation” under the Islamic Republic.

Israel’s position shifted just as dramatically. A covert ally under the Shah, Iran became—after 1979—Israel’s primary strategic adversary, challenging its regional dominance and supporting armed groups opposed to Zionist rule. Israel’s intelligence and military planning increasingly centred on Iran’s nuclear trajectory, not because of evidence of weaponisation, but because a technologically advanced, sovereign Iran threatened Israel’s regional ambitions, backed by its nuclear monopoly.

That monopoly is an open secret. Israel possesses a military nuclear programme that is not subject to any inspection regime. It is one of only a handful of states outside the NPT—alongside India, Pakistan, South Sudan,

and North Korea. Eight states have publicly declared nuclear arsenals: the US, Russia, the UK, France, China, India, Pakistan, and North Korea.

Israel's policy of nuclear ambiguity—neither confirming nor denying its arsenal—has been maintained for decades. Analysts estimate Israel holds 80–200 nuclear warheads. The taboo was briefly lifted in 2006, when Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, in a German TV interview, listed “America, France, Israel, and Russia” as nuclear powers. This was widely interpreted as a warning to Iran.

Days later, US Defense Secretary designate Robert Gates told the Senate that Iran might seek nuclear weapons because it was “surrounded by nuclear powers”—naming Pakistan, Russia, and Israel. His remark was a rare open acknowledgement by a US official of Israel's nuclear status.

The taboo was broken again in November 2023, when Israeli Heritage Minister Amichai Eliyahu said in a radio interview that dropping a nuclear bomb on Gaza was “an option.” The Israeli government scrambled to contain the fallout, suspending him from cabinet meetings.

Israel's nuclear programme dates to the 1950s, when Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion established the Dimona reactor with French assistance, supplemented by heavy water from Norway and the UK. With the newly established Zionist state—founded by force of arms upon the ethnic cleansing and dispossession of most of the Palestinians who lived there, and surrounded by hostile states—Ben-Gurion viewed nuclear weapons as the ultimate security guarantee, so long as no other state in the region possessed them.

By the mid-1960s, Israel had produced weapons-grade plutonium and assembled a nuclear device on the eve of the 1967 War. The Kennedy administration attempted to restrain Israel, insisting on inspections, but after Kennedy's assassination these efforts collapsed. By 1968, the CIA informed President Johnson that Israel had achieved nuclear capability; the administration did nothing.

Seymour Hersh's *The Samson Option* (1991) provided the first detailed account of how Israel built its arsenal through systematic deception of its allies, while successive US administrations tolerated or enabled it. The “Samson Option” refers to Israel's doctrine of massive nuclear retaliation in the event of existential defeat—a threat reportedly invoked during the early stages of the 1973 War to secure rapid US resupply.

Avner Cohen's *Israel and the Bomb* (1998) showed that President Richard Nixon formalised Israel's nuclear status in a secret 1969 bargain with Prime Minister Golda Meir: the US would not pressure Israel to sign the NPT or declare its arsenal, and Israel would not test or publicly acknowledge nuclear weapons. Western intelligence agencies knew of Israel's arsenal but kept silent because

Israel was a key regional ally.

Washington has repeatedly blocked Arab states from raising Israel's nuclear programme at the IAEA. Even after the Nixon–Meir bargain became public, US President Barack Obama refused to confirm or deny Israel's nuclear status.

In 1981, Israel bombed Iraq's nuclear plant at Osirak, and a Syrian facility in 2007. It has sabotaged Iran's nuclear plants and assassinated its nuclear scientists to ensure its status as the sole nuclear power in the Middle East.

The most dramatic breach of Israel's secrecy came in 1986, when Mordechai Vanunu, a technician at Dimona, provided photographs and technical details to the *Sunday Times*, revealing a far larger and more advanced programme—including thermonuclear weapons—than previously known. Mossad agents kidnapped Vanunu in Rome, returned him to Israel, and he was tried in secret and imprisoned for 18 years, much of it in solitary confinement. He has been repeatedly re-arrested since.

The US is treating Iran, which has no nuclear weapons and is legally entitled to civilian nuclear technology, as an existential threat, while it shields Israel, which possesses a sophisticated, undeclared nuclear arsenal outside any inspection regime, from scrutiny.

Tehran has repeatedly denied seeking nuclear weapons and was in full compliance with the 2015 international agreement on nuclear enrichment. It only began enriching uranium to 60 percent after the first Trump administration unilaterally withdrew from the agreement in 2018, while the European powers that were also party to the deal did nothing to support it.

Trump has declared, with the language of the mobster he is, that if Iran does not “make a deal”, the US would “go and just blast the hell out of them and finish them forever.”

As the *World Socialist Web Site* has warned, “Such statements define the logic of the escalation now underway: a war of annihilation. Once the decision is made to wage an illegal war for domination of strategic chokepoints, the pressure to escalate acquires a momentum of its own.”



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