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From Dimona to Tehran

Exposing nuclear double standards in Middle East

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OPINION EXCLUSIVE

Tensions have surged recently as Israel's hostile rhetoric and direct military action against Iran have thrust the nuclear issue back into the global spotlight. Israeli leaders like Benjamin Netanyahu have justified their strikes by claiming that Iran is making significant advances toward a nuclear weapon. Yet US intelligence agencies and even the director general of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) have not backed Israel's claims of imminent Iranian nuclear weaponization.

This pattern exposes a familiar modus operandi: using Iran's transparent and peaceful nuclear program as a pretext for fabricated threats, thereby green-lighting aggressive acts while glossing over Israel's clandestine nuclear arsenal. This double standard, which subjects a Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) member to intense inspections while exempting a non-member from scrutiny, lies at the heart of structural discrimination in the non-proliferation regime.

Israel's nuke program has been shrouded in secrecy and deliberate ambiguity since its inception. Conceived by former Israeli prime minister David Ben-Gurion as a self-sufficient deterrent, the Dimona reactor was developed in absolute secrecy—a textbook case of systematic norm-breaking—backed by Western powers.

In 1957, France covertly supplied Israel with a nuclear reactor and an underground plutonium reprocessing plant—bypassing IAEA safeguards entirely. The construction of these facilities at the Negev Nuclear Research Center (near Dimona) between 1958-1960 was concealed even from Israel's main ally, the United States.

This clandestine supply chain exposed a shadow network of Western collusion in developing Israel's nuclear arsenal. In a secret 1959 agreement, Norway supplied 20 metric tons of heavy water to Israel through British channels. Britain independently provided strategic metals like lithium-6, a critical component for thermonuclear weapons. The US contributed long-range bomber guidance systems that enabled nuclear strike capabilities, while Germany later delivered Dolphin-class submarines capable of launching nuclear-armed cruise missiles—effectively completing Israel's nuclear triad.

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Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian (R) speaks during an exclusive interview with Al Jazeera aired on July 23, 2025.
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