

# Israel's Nuclear, Biological and Chemical Weapons

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Global Research, April 20, 2024

17 May 2012

Region: [Middle East & North Africa](#)

Theme: [Militarization and WMD](#)

In-depth Report: [Nuclear War](#)

*Of relevance to the recent Iran-Israel confrontation and the ongoing debate on Israel's nuclear weapons capabilities , this article by the late Stephen Lendman first published in May 2012 outlines the features of Israel's nuclear weapons, focusing on the revelations of Mordechai Vanunu.*

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Israel's long known open secret is its formidable nuclear arsenal. Less is known about its chemical and biological weapons (CBW) capability. More on that below.

In 1986, Dimona nuclear technician Mordechai Vanunu revealed documents showing what many long suspected.



Israel had been secretly developing, producing and stockpiling nuclear weapons for years.

Experts called his information genuine. They revealed sophisticated technology able to

amass a formidable nuclear arsenal. Today it's more potent than ever.

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## Video on Israel's Dimona Nuclear Weapons Facility

English subtitles

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In his 1991 book titled ["The Samson Option: Israel's Nuclear Arsenal and America Foreign Policy,"](#) Seymour Hersh discussed its strategy to launch massive nuclear counterattacks in response to serious enough threats.

In his 1997 book titled ["Open Secrets: Israeli Nuclear and Foreign Policies,"](#) Israel Shahak said Israel won't hesitate using nuclear or other weapons to advance its "hegemony over the entire Middle East."

In 2006, former Prime Minister [Ehud Olmert](#) told Germany's Sat. 1 channel:

"Iran, openly, explicitly and publicly, threatens to wipe Israel off the map. Can you say that this is the same level, when they are aspiring to have nuclear weapons, as America, France, Israel and Russia?"

Later he denied what viewers clearly heard him say. Calls for him to step down followed. So did accusations of ineptitude for acknowledging Israeli nuclear weapons publicly.

Israel always stuck to its nuclear ambiguity position. Olmert later backtracked. Damage control didn't assuage criticism. Opposition party members called him irresponsible.

Meretz party member Yossi Beilin said:

"The prime minister's amazing statement regarding nuclear capability indicates a lack of caution bordering on irresponsibility."

Olmert's approval rating plunged. Aides tried frantically to limit damage. His spokesman, Miri Eisin, said his comments didn't mean Israel had or wants nuclear weapons.

Of course, the cat was out of the bag after Mordechai Vanunu revealed it 20 years earlier. Damage control made things worse. Vanunu welcomed Olmert's admission, accidental or otherwise. He hoped he said it intentionally, saying:

"For 20 years, they tried to deny me and my story, but the policy of cheating and lying didn't succeed."

Changes are taking place, he added. He hoped his situation would improve. It didn't. He still chafes under repressive Israeli policies. Practically under house arrest, he's harassed. His fundamental rights are denied. He wants his citizenship revoked and permission to leave, but Israel won't grant either right.

He's a legend in his own time. He only wants to live free. After what Israel put him through for decades, he deserves that much and more.

Israel refuses to discuss its nuclear capability. Others are less reticent. On May 4, [Haaretz](#) headlined "Israel's atomic arsenal could fall victim to a new US nuclear policy," saying:

Visiting Hiroshima last February, escorts "drew (Israeli Defense Secretary Ehud Barak's) attention to a map of the world listing the number of nuclear warheads in the possession of the atomic powers. There is a number next to Israel's name, too: '80.' Barak did not respond."

Most experts believe Israel has hundreds of warheads and sophisticated long-range delivery systems.

"According to a (late 1990s) secret document of the Pentagon's Defense Intelligence Agency....leaked during the period of the George W. Bush administration, Israel had '60 to 80' nuclear warheads in 1999."

The Pentagon updates its data regularly. It keeps close watch on all nuclear powers and suspected ones like North Korea.

Israel never signed the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT). In 1969, Nixon and Prime Minister Golda Meir mutually agreed that Israel's nuclear capability wouldn't harm relations. In 1998, so did Clinton and Netanyahu. In 2009, Obama continued past policy.

Expect change eventually. Israel's belligerency over Iran's peaceful nuclear program may "boomerang" on its military one.

## Israel's Chemical and Biological Weapons (CBW)

Israel signed the 1993 Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), but didn't ratify it. It never signed the 1972 Biological Weapons Convention (BWC). Its policy is CBW ambiguity.

In 1993, the US Congress Office of Technology Assessment WMD proliferation assessment included Israel as a nation having undeclared offensive chemical warfare capabilities. In 1998, former Deputy Assistant Defense Secretary [Bill Richardson](#) said:

"I have no doubt that Israel has worked on both chemical and biological offensive things for a long time. There's no doubt they've had stuff for years."

Israel tests new weapons in combat. Against Lebanon in 2006 and Gaza during Cast Lead, it used direct energy weapons, chemical and/or biological agents, and others producing injuries and symptoms medical professionals never previously saw.

For example, bodies with dead tissue had no apparent wounds. Corpses were found shrunken. Civilians had heavy lower limb damage requiring amputations. Nonetheless, unstoppable necrosis followed (death of cells and living tissue) followed by death.

Internal wounds had no trace of shrapnel. Corpses were blackened but not burned. Some badly wounded victims didn't bleed. The Palestinian health ministry said Israel used a new type explosive in Gaza. It contained toxins and radioactive materials. They burned and tore victims' bodies from the inside. They also left long term deformations.

A Palestinian doctor accused Israel of using chemical ammunition that burns and injures soft tissue, but can't be traced by X-rays. Severe internal wounds were reported. Unknown gases believed to be nerve agents were used. Those affected lost consciousness for about 24 hours. They experienced high fevers and muscle rigidity. Some needed urgent blood transfusions.

In Gaza, white phosphorous was used. It burns flesh to the bone. Depleted uranium spread radioactive contamination. Close-range explosives caused severe injuries, requiring amputations. Children had legs cut off, abdomens sliced open, or died because nothing could save them.

In June 2011, [CounterPunch](#) contributor Saleh El-Naami headlined "Exposing Israel's Most Dangerous Secret," saying:

Only authorized personnel have access to the Israeli Institute for Biological Research (IIBR). Israel calls it "a governmental, applied research institute specializing in the fields of biology, medicinal chemistry and environmental sciences."

Others reveal IIBR is "where Israel develops its biological and chemical weapons and prepares for any eventuality of biological or chemical warfare." Its facility is Israel's "most top-secret military installation...."

Official censorship prohibits anything discussed about it. One exception only occurred after long-term employee Avisha Klein sued "for harassment and emotional abuse."

She was part of a team developing mustard gas protective ointment. During proceedings, more information came out.

IIBR has hundreds of scientists and technicians. Its many departments specialize in chemical and biological weapons research, development and production. One is a poison used for assassinations.

In 1977, Prime Minister Menachem Begin ordered Mossad to eliminate Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine leader Wadie Haddad. He was fond of Belgian chocolates. Mossad coated some with "a slow-acting poison, and had them delivered to Haddad...."

The substance had "undetectable properties." Haddad's health deteriorated. Flown to East Germany for treatment, he was diagnosed with leukemia and died on March 29, 1978. Thirty-two years later, the truth came out. IIBR's poison killed him.

Other assassinations were conducted the same way. IIBR specializes in toxic substances and protective vaccines. Anthrax research got attention. Israel feared enemies might use it.

IIBR works closely with Israeli military and intelligence operations. They list priorities. IIBR works on them.

"For example, information that has come to light during the coverage of Klein's suit reveals that many years ago the Israeli military establishment was concerned that Arab states might use such chemical agents as mustard gas in an potential assault against Israel and, therefore, instructed the institute to develop a chemical substance to minimise the effects of the gas."

Israeli soldiers were used to test vaccines. Some experienced “permanent physical damage.” Lawsuits for damages were filed. Victims want recognition as disabled veterans and appropriate compensation. Pressure got IDF officials to announce experiments on Israeli personnel would end.

The Nuremberg Code prohibits medical experiments without human subjects voluntarily consenting. Recruitment must exclude “coercion, fraud, deceit, and (provide) full disclosure of known risks.”

Experiments are prohibited “where there is an a priori reason to believe that death or disabling injury will occur.” Those permitted must be expected “to yield fruitful results for the good of society, unprocurable by other methods or means of study....”

In 1948, Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion ordered European Jewish scientists recruited who could “either increase the capacity to kill masses or to cure masses; both are important.”

Avraham Marcus Klingberg became a chemical and biological weapons (CBW) expert and IIBR deputy director.

Avraham Marcus Klingberg was also recruited. He became the father of Israel’s nuclear weapons program in charge of the Israeli Atomic Energy Commission (IAEC). Ben-Gurion was determined to have a nuclear option and other non-conventional weapons to counter numerical Arab advantage.

In his farewell address to the Israeli Armaments Development Authority (RAFAEL), he defended the strategy saying:

“I am confident, based not only on what I heard today, that our science can provide us with the weapons that are needed to deter our enemies from waging war against us.”

He and Shimon Peres became leading forces behind Israel’s nuclear, biological, and chemicals development program. Strict secrecy was maintained. Staff were forbidden to discuss anything related to their work. Prohibitions remain strict.

Truths eventually leak out. One day much more will be known. Vanunu was harshly punished to deter other whistleblowers. Bradley Manning faces similar treatment. In his case, life in prison may result.

Nonetheless, some who know tell others. Suppressing vital truths everyone needs to know remains hard to do forever.

Much is known about Israel’s nuclear program. Perhaps CBW disclosures will expose secrets too important to hide.

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Stephen Lendman’s legacy will live

*Consult the late Stephen Lendman’s book entitled “How Wall Street Fleeces America: Privatized Banking, Government Collusion and Class War”*

<http://www.claritypress.com/Lendman.html>

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