

Secret Cooperation: Israel Deploys Nuclear Weapons on German-Built Submarines

By [Global Research](#)

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The Dolphin class submarines are built for Israel in a shipyard in Kiel (March 2012 photo).

A German shipyard has already built three submarines for Israel, and three more are planned. Now SPIEGEL has learned that Israel is arming the submarines with nuclear-tipped cruise missiles. The German government has known about Israel's nuclear weapons program for decades, despite its official denials.

Germany is helping Israel to develop its military nuclear capabilities, SPIEGEL has learned. According to extensive research carried out by the magazine, Israel is equipping submarines that were built in the northern German city of Kiel and largely paid for by the German government with nuclear-tipped cruise missiles. The missiles can be launched using a previously secret hydraulic ejection system. Israeli Defence Minister Ehud Barak told SPIEGEL that Germans should be "proud" that they have secured the existence of the state of Israel "for many years."

In the past, the German government has always stuck to the position that it is unaware of nuclear weapons being deployed on the vessels. Now, however, former high-ranking officials from the German Defense Ministry, including former State Secretary Lothar Rühl and former chief of the planning staff Hans Rühle, have told SPIEGEL that they had always assumed that Israel would deploy nuclear weapons on the submarines. Rühl had even discussed the issue with the military in Tel Aviv.

Israel has a policy of not commenting officially on its nuclear weapons program. Documents from the archives of the German Foreign Ministry make it clear, however, that the German government has known about the program since 1961. The last discussion for which there is evidence took place in 1977, when then-Chancellor Helmut Schmidt spoke to then-Israeli Foreign Minister Moshe Dayan about the issue.

The submarines are built by the German shipyard HDW in Kiel. Three submarines have already been delivered to Israel, and three more will be delivered by 2017. In addition, Israel is considering ordering its seventh, eighth and ninth submarines from Germany.

The German government recently signed the contract for the delivery of the sixth vessel. According to information obtained by SPIEGEL, Chancellor Angela Merkel made substantial

concessions to the Israelis. Not only is Berlin financing one-third of the cost of the submarine, around €135 million (\$168 million), but it is also allowing Israel to defer its payment until 2015.

Merkel had tied the delivery of the sixth submarine to a number of conditions, including a demand that Israel stop its expansionist settlement policy and allow the completion of a sewage treatment plant in the Gaza Strip, which is partially financed with German money. So far, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has met none of the terms.

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