



Israel and the Bomb

Avner Cohen

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Until now, there has been no detailed account of Israel's nuclear history. Previous treatments of the subject relied heavily on rumors, leaks, and journalistic speculations. But with *Israel and the Bomb*, Avner Cohen has forged an interpretive political history that draws on thousands of American and Israeli government documents -- most of them recently declassified and never before cited -- and more than one hundred interviews with key individuals who played important roles in this story. Cohen reveals that Israel crossed the nuclear weapons threshold on the eve of the 1967 Six-Day War, yet it remains ambiguous about its nuclear capability to this day. What made this posture of "opacity" possible, and how did it evolve?

Cohen focuses on a two-decade period from about 1950 until 1970, during which David Ben-Gurion's vision of making Israel a nuclear-weapon state was realized. He weaves together the story of the formative years of Israel's nuclear program, from the founding of the Israeli Atomic Energy Commission in 1952, to the alliance with France that gave Israel the sophisticated technology it needed, to the failure of American intelligence to identify the Dimona Project for what it was, to the negotiations between President Nixon and Prime Minister Meir that led to the current policy of secrecy. Cohen also analyzes the complex reasons Israel concealed its nuclear program -- from concerns over Arab reaction and the negative effect of the debate at home to consideration of America's commitment to nonproliferation.

Israel and the Bomb highlights the key questions and the many potent issues surrounding Israel's nuclear history. This book will be a critical resource for students of nuclear proliferation, Middle East politics, Israeli history, and American-Israeli relations, as well as a revelation for general readers.

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