

March 28, 1969

**Letter from Secretary of State William P. Rogers to
Secretary of Defense**

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Summary:

In his 28 March reply Secretary Rogers agreed that the computer issue needed more examination along with a further review of policy on sensitive technology exports, but he virtually blew off Laird's request for a meeting and for deliberation outside of NSC channels. Instead, he advised that the Israeli nuclear problem be studied by the NSC Under Secretaries Committee.

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THE SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON

March 28, 1969

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Dear Mel:

I have your letter of March 17 and Dave Packard's of March 14 regarding the Israeli nuclear weapons problem.

We are inclined to doubt that the acquisition of the second CDC 6400 would significantly affect the time span for completion of the design phase for a nuclear weapon, or materially influence the capability of the Israelis to acquire such a weapon. However, there is enough of a difference of view about the facts of this matter to indicate that it should be studied further before making a final decision.

I suggest, therefore, that there be an urgent inter-agency review where all information on the facts which are available to the agencies concerned can be considered in order to facilitate an evaluation of the significance of any added computers for Israel at this phase of its nuclear program. Such a review might be carried out on an urgent basis within the ACEP structure.

I agree with Dave's idea that the present procedures for clearance of sensitive export items related to nuclear weapons and strategic delivery systems should be reexamined. We are currently preparing a proposal for a complete redraft of NSAM 294, the drawing up of more comprehensive guidelines covering critical countries and items, and the establishment of a mechanism to see that the policy is effectively implemented. Alex Johnson's office has been

The Honorable
Melvin Laird,
Secretary of Defense.

Sec Def *[initials]*
8 APR 1969

ASD/ISA has for app of 12/15/68 and will prepare reply for you w/ signature.

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in touch with Defense on this question, and we plan to suggest that the problem be considered by the Inter-departmental Political/Military Group within the very near future.

I certainly share your view on the seriousness of the problem which would be created for the United States by introduction of nuclear weapons into the Middle East. I have asked Elliot Richardson to have this item placed on the agenda for early discussion by the Under Secretaries Committee.

Sincerely,


William P. Rogers

*Good subject
only - not
the details or
specifics*

cc:

Secretary of Commerce
Assistant to the President for
National Security Affairs
Director, Central Intelligence Agency

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