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THE ADVANCED WEAPONS PROGRAMS OF THE UAR AND ISRAEL

The Problem

To estimate likely developments in the advanced weapons programs of the UAR and Israel over the next several years, and the probable consequences of such programs.

Conclusions

A. [15-1/2 lines of source text not declassified]

B. We believe that Israel is undertaking the development of a 250-300 nautical mile (n.m.) surface-to-surface missile (SSM) system. A wholly independent Israeli effort to develop and produce such a missile with a payload of 2,000 to 3,000 pounds would probably require three to four years and great expense. However, there is evidence that Israel expects to rely on France for substantial assistance. If Israel acquires full access to French technology, components and test facilities, it probably could produce a limited number of missiles with a range of about 250 n.m., a payload of some 4,000 pounds, and an elementary guidance system in about two years (1965). [1-1/2 lines of source text not declassified] (Paras. 11-15)

C. The United Arab Republic (UAR), alone or in combination with other Arab States, does not have the capability of producing a nuclear weapon in the foreseeable future. The UAR is attempting to develop an SSM with a range of about 200 n.m. Despite the many difficult problems the UAR faces in its missile program, it may be able to deploy a small number of these weapons by mid-1964, assuming continued help by the West German technicians and a continuing supply of foreign components. We estimate the payload of this missile at only about 500 pounds and its CEP as large. The military value of such a weapon would be small. However, the UAR has a missile program going and has gained experience in the production of missiles. With access to outside help and components, it probably could in a few years produce a more effective weapon. (Paras. 18-24)

D. Despite continuing accusations by both the UAR and Israel that the other is developing chemical, biological, and radiological weapons of mass destruction, we have no evidence to confirm these charges.

Both countries could, however, produce small quantities of chemical or biological warfare devices designed for clandestine use. Neither country can produce radiological warfare weapons. (Paras. 16-17, 25)

E. The purely military significance of any missile system either Israel or the UAR could produce is likely to be modest for some time to come, although if Israel develops a nuclear bomb its military capability will be greatly increased. The political and psychological impact of the advanced weapons programs is more important than the purely military effect and is already being felt. If Nasser could not devise a counter to an Israeli nuclear threat on his own, he probably would turn to the USSR to try to ensure his protection, and the Arabs would blame the West, including the US, for the increased Israeli threat. Israel, likewise, would become increasingly activist in its dealings with the Arabs. The factors which have inhibited a new outbreak of Arab-Israeli hostilities in recent years still apply. Nevertheless, as the advanced weapons programs progress, tensions will probably rise on both sides. In an atmosphere of this kind, there would always be the possibility that one or the other side would initiate hostile action to safeguard its ultimate security. (Paras. 26-33)

[Here follows the Discussion section of the Estimate.]