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# Belief Israel Has A-Bomb Said Factor in U. S. Policy

NEW YORK (AP) — The New York Times said today that the government, for at least two years, has conducted Middle East policy on the assumption that "Israeli either possesses an atomic bomb or has component parts available for quick assembly."

The Times said part of the assumption was based on reported testimony by Richard C. Helms, director of the Central Intelligence Agency, at a closed-door hearing of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee July 7.

Helms was reported to have said that the American estimate was that Israel has the technical capacity to make atomic weapons.

"In the early and middle

sixties, such estimates were reportedly qualified by the provision that Israel had the capacity to produce such weapons in 12 to 18 months, than later 6 to 9 months, and finally, the time lapse was dropped entirely," the paper said.

"The absence of any reference to any such time delay, according to well-informed sources, indicated the official belief that Israel had the fissionable material and the mechanisms ready for rapid assembly, if not actual weapons as well."

The Times said, however, that American sources emphasize there are no indications that Israel has deployed any of her mobile surface missiles, and that they have

no reason to believe Israel would use atomic weapons except in the most dire emergency.

The paper said that both former President Lyndon B. Johnson and President Nixon are understood to have gotten intelligence estimates that Israel could assemble an atomic bomb quickly, and that some senior officials believe she has already done so.

"But the United States Government has been so sensitive to the grave implications of the issue that it has not developed a fully coordinated national intelligence estimate, which would circulate within the Government, that says directly that Israel does have atomic weapons," the Times reported.