

UK Admits Israel Has Nuclear Weapons

LONDON, Nov. 20--Former British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw has become the first member of the British cabinet to go on public record and formally admit that the Zionist regime has an arsenal of nuclear weapons.

"I don't think it is a secret. I have never pretended that they haven't got nuclear weapons, certainly they have got a nuclear arsenal and it is a working assumption," said Straw.

The House of Commons leader made the admission after he was challenged about the government's failure to acknowledge let alone deal with Tel Aviv's nuclear weapons in an interview with the Muslim News, to be published Friday.

When he was foreign secretary, Straw insisted that he had talked about Israel's illegal capability, which Britain helped to create nearly 50 years ago, in the same breath as India and Pakistan.

"If you want a nuclear free Middle East, which I do, you don't get proliferation, you stop proliferation, and then you ultimately deal with the fact that Israel has nuclear weapons, and I'm on record about that a lot," he said.

In his interview, the House of Commons leader also said that he accepted that there was a continuing blaring injustice over Israel's 50-year occupation of Palestine.

"I have always thought, the glaring injustice of the Middle East crisis -- Israel and Palestine -- has caused a great anger among Muslims," he said.

"Resolving the Israel-Palestine situation is one of the most urgent priorities of all," Straw said, but like Prime Minister Tony Blair, he denied that Britain's foreign policy had increased the threat of terrorism in the UK.

He admitted that the situation in Iraq following the joint US-UK invasion was dire, but insisted that it



Former British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw

cannot be the motivation for Bin Ladin and his group because they were going before that.

The former foreign secretary, who was replaced in May, also acknowledged that with the benefit of hindsight there are plenty of things one could have done better in Iraq.

"The preparations for the post war situation in Iraq were not nearly as good as they should have been," he said adding that there was time lost in the very crucial three months between the fall of Saddam.

"It was partly lost because in the United States a decision was made that the lead over reconstruction of the country should be given to the Department of Defense rather than to the State Department, and that was a great error," Straw said.

This, he suggested, was one of the things which the British government would have done differently in Iraq, but said that the UK had only limited influence over that rather than a huge influence.