



But Sasha Polakow-Suransky, the American academic who uncovered the documents while researching a book on the military and political relationship between the two countries, said the denials were disingenuous, because the minutes of meetings Peres held with the then South African defence minister, PW Botha, show that the apartheid government believed an explicit offer to provide nuclear warheads had been made.

Polakow-Suransky noted that Peres did not deny attending the meetings at which the purchase of Israeli weapons systems, including ballistic missiles, was discussed. "Peres participated in high level discussions with the South African defence minister and led the South Africans to believe that an offer of nuclear Jerichos was on the table," he said. "It's clear from the documentary record that the South Africans perceived that an explicit offer was on the table. Four days later Peres signed a secrecy agreement with PW Botha."

While Peres's office said there are no documents with his signature on that mention nuclear weapons, his signature does appear with Botha's on an agreement governing the broad conduct of the military relationship, including a commitment to keep it secret.

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