

**December 9, 1960**  
**Telephone Call Logs of Secretary of State Christian  
Herter**

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**Original Language:**

English

**Contents:**

Original Scan

He has the whole story. The Ambassador seemed concerned but pleaded he knew nothing about it. The Secretary said whether he does know and is just being poker faced is something he does not know. The Secretary said we would let Lord Hood know when we heard something.

5:50 p. m.

The Secretary telephoned Mr. Lebel of the French Embassy (the Amb. had departed for Paris) and said he had had a talk with the Israeli Ambassador re a matter which has us worried and which he did not understand. The Sec. explained we had received from our Amb. in Tel Aviv a few days ago saying he had <sup>had</sup> a talk with the Chairman of the AEC in Israel and the latter had said that Ben Gurion was going to announce the creation of a new university in Beersheba and associated with it would be an experimental nuclear reactor which Israel had designed with some French help. The opening would take place in a month or so and it was indicated that McCone would be asked to attend. The Secretary said we had ascertained that there has been under construction since 1958 a reactor which is at least ten times as large as claimed. He said we were not sure this was a separate one. The Secretary said it appeared from the design that it was not intended for power but for plutonium which in a comparatively short time would give them considerable weapons potential. The Sec. said that in view of the fact that we had heard from Tel Aviv that there would be a release put out, we were asking the Israeli Ambassador what the whole story was. He said that it looked different from what might appear in the release. The Secretary said that anyone knowledgeable in technical matters might look at the pictures and see something different from what was happening. The <sup>Israeli</sup> Ambassador said he knew nothing about this and Lebel said he knew less than nothing. Lebel said he would notify Paris at once of the interest we take in the matter and that the photograph was something quite different. The Secretary said it looked ten times larger than what they are announcing and that the purpose is for isotopes doesn't make any sense since they already have an experimental reactor big enough to take care of that. Furthermore, it is supposed to be water-cooled and there is no water in the Negev. It doesn't seem to be built for power purposes. Lebel said he could imagine the reaction it could have here. The Sec. said we didn't recognize it until the dome was built on for the reactor what it was all about. The Sec. said we had an interest in the economy of Israel and it would cost from forty to eighty million dollars it would appear. Lebel said he of course would notify Paris and would suppose that Couve de Murville would follow it up with the Secretary in Paris. The Sec. said since the French were mentioned in the release, he thought they would want to know what he had said to the Israeli Ambassador.

s/s  
for  
data  
to  
EUR  
NSA  
S/AE

~~5:55~~ 5:55 p. m.

Mr. Flemming telephoned the Secretary and said he was grateful to the Sec. for suggesting he go to Princeton and participate in the meeting in connection with the American Council on Education. He said he had enjoyed it very much. It was well run and a good meeting. He said there were a number of things that had come up and that it had occurred to him that the Administration might

No  
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