

December 20, 1960

**State Department telegram 3311 to U.S. Embassy
London, 20 December 1960, Secret**

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OUTGOING TELEGRAM Department of State

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Amembassy PARIS PRIORITY 2609
Amembassy LONDON PRIORITY 3311

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Harmon requested urgent unpublicized meeting with Secretary. Presented reply to inquires made Dec 9 and reported Deptel 441 (rpts Paris 2460 and London 3186). Stated Israel building additional research reactor in Negev of 24 megawatt size. This reactor not of size for industrial importance and is intended solely to develop scientific knowledge for peaceful purposes as part of broad program Negev development. Like similar reactors in other countries construction this reactor is step toward future Israeli capability to build own power reactor. Begun one year ago and will take 3 or 4 years to complete. Materials acquired from other countries including France. reveal Israel has taken commitment to supplying countries not to ~~give~~ sources of supply because of their fears of Arab boycott. While assistance received from others, reactor is being built under direction Israeli scientists. Harmon referred to French announcement of scope of French-Israeli cooperation and French statement regarding peaceful utilization this reactor. Stated he was instructed make same assurance regarding peaceful use.

Secretary asked specifically what would be disposition of plutonium since this was crux of safeguards. Harmon said he would have to ~~obtain~~ seek information

Drafted by: S/AE:PJFarley:reg 12/20/60
Telegraphic transmission and classification approved by: S/AE P. J. Farley

Clearances:

NEA - Mr. Jones (in substance)
S/S - Mr. Veljotes

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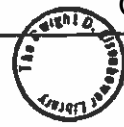
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this point. Stated reactor when completed would be open to students from friendly countries. Said/US assisted reactor/ useful only for study purposes and large research reactor needed to prepare number of trained people for eventual industrial use atomic energy. Reactor would cost \$5 million a year exclusive of local costs. US estimates of size of reactor mentioned at Dec 9 meeting wrong. Capacity is 24 megawatts rather than 100 to 300 megawatts. Stack appearing in photographs is water tower since this is water cooled rather than air cooled reactor. Stated Ben Gurion would make public statement on Dec 21. Department representatives asked whether 24 megawatt capacity was thermal or electrical rating and whether any power generation would be included. Harmon said he would inquire. In answer to further inquiry stated Ben Gurion statement would make clear that this was only additional reactor under construction. Agreed report suggestion that during period of construction selected foreign scientists might be invited visit installation.

Harmon said in view public attention this ~~might~~ matter and Dept release Dec 19 concerning lack of Israeli response he felt obligated tell press today he had made reply and Ben Gurion statement would follow tomorrow. He expressed hope US would on basis this reply and Ben Gurion statement ~~a~~ issue further statement laying this matter to rest. Secretary pointed out further questions had been raised and not rpt not feasible for US state questions fully answered. Harmon reiterated he was instructed to give us full assurances regarding the peaceful purpose of this reactor and expressed concern that leaving matter open would continue cause further questions and speculation. Secretary referred to Israeli affirmative vote on IAEA safeguards in Sept general conference and urged full statement regarding safeguards over use of any plutonium produced in reactor.

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Dept

Secretary said ~~he~~ would not make any comment until receiving Ben Gurion statement but would probably have to say something at noon Dec 21.

Several references made to unfortunate volume press leaks and speculation. Secretary emphasized Dept had sought privacy and had only made statement Dec 19 as result TV statement previous day concerning US inquiry and also radio MOSCOW charges US aiding Israeli nuclear weapons program.

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