March 30, 1961

Memorandum from Secretary Rusk to President Kennedy, 'Dimona Reactor in Israel'

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Summary:

Rusk updates the President on US requests to Israel to visit the Dimona reactor, and provides a related chronology.

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MEMORANUUM FOR THE PRESEDENT

Subject: Dimona Reactor in Israel

On March 27 you inquired regarding the status of the promised invitation for American experts to visit quiatly the Iarsell nuclear reactor at Dimons. Deputy Under Secretary Beger Jones promised to provide you with a reply. This invitation was first promised to us by Prime Minister Ben-Surion on January & through Ambasuedor Boid.

The enclosed chronology regarding the Pinone reactor shock that the Separtment has been reminding the Israel Soveriment at approximately weekly intervals through Ambasandor Harman of the importance of an early "quiet" visit by Americans to Manona.

Following your telephone call, Assistant Secretary Lewis Jones called in Ambassador Harmen and again told him that we are anxiously waiting the Israeli invitation (see memorandum of conversation enclosed). On this occasion Harman, who personally shares our belief that the visit should take place soon, reitorated the difficulties occasioned by the internal political crisis in Israel. He said, and our Hebessy at Tel Aviv confirms, that the Israeli leaders are profoundly pressenpied by their internal political problems. This is perticularly true of Prime Minister Ben-Surion, who is personally in charge of Israel's atomic energy program.

When Jones urged Herman to make a new effort to hasten the invitation, Harman said he would do so but that in any case it was unlikely that any decision could be taken in Isreel during the next few days. Netween April 3 and April 10 is Passover Neek, when little work is done in Israel.

The Department believes that Herman is probably right regarding the unlikelihood of the Termelis issuing an invitation prior to April 10, although our latest demarche to Herman using your name is likely to be helpful to this end.

We believe that Ben-Surion fully intends to issue the invitation. Part of his difficulty is (a) that, having given his word, he does not like to be pushed by the United States, and (b) he is personally in the greatest internal political difficulty of his career. He probably

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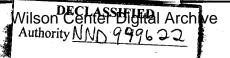
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feels that his problems may be compounded if his encaies have something new to pin on him arising out of his handling of the Dimons reactor affair. It is for the latter reason that when the visit takes place it should be a quist one regarding which there should be no Smited States publicity.

1. Chester Bowles

Aatlag Secretary

Ane Lesures:

- 1. Shrosplagr.
- 2. Copy of Memorsadum
 - of Conversation,

S/S - RO Mar 30 1961 is true copy of signed original

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W. S. Harris a.

HISTORY OF UNTITED STATES INTEREST IN DEPART B ANOMIC EMERCY ACTIVITIES

July 12, 1955 U.S.-Isreel Atoms-for-Peace Aproxist Figned.

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U.S. egreed to assist one measurant rescarsh reactor st Hubal Rebin, mear Tel Aviv.

1960

- June 14 Reberry Tel Aviv referred in a despatch to "resors" that Prouch wave collaborating with Israelis in an stonic energy project near Bearsbeba.
- To Expansy officer inquiries, Isrcalis said, "Textile Assant Plast".
- August 2 Babasay Tel Aviv reported U.S. technicisms impression" that French-Israeli storic snargy project being built mear Beersheba.
- Sectomber To U.S. Services Attaches' inquiries, Israelis said, "Motallurgical research installation".
- September 19 CIA referred to Angust 2 report, noted no confirming information, requested field obtain emergers to specific questions.
- Ostober 19 State Department instructed field to provide more information.
- Neveraber 30 Bebasey Tel Aviv reported confirmatory views of visiting Dr. Henry J. Comberg of Phoenix Project, University of Michigan.
- December 1 Philip Ferley, Special Assistant for Avonic Emergy st the State Department, debriefed Dr. Gouberg in Washington.

Mesavhile UK also became concerned, made telescopic photograph available to U.S. intelligence agencies.

- December 2 Association and by U.S. Joint Atomic Energy Inter-Agency Constitue that a 200 megawatt reastor appeared under construction near Beersheba.
- December 3 Joint AEC Constitues in Congress notified.
- December 4 Similar conclusion reserved from United Kingdom.
- December 4 Israel AKC official Dargamen for first time confirmed to Embassy Tel Aviv that a project is under construction, disclosed proposed public statement.

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- December 6 Secretary Herber held meeting re courses of estima, proposed [sreeli sistement not considered consistent.
- December 7 Subject discussed by Operations Coordinating Board.
- December 8 Parley briefed Joint ABC Consittee.
- December 8 National Intelligence Estimate 100-8-50 attested gravity of potential repersussions.
- December 8 Secretary Herter notified UE Asbassedor that U.S. planad to ask Israelis about project, obtained permission to use UK photograph.
- December 9 Secretary called in Ambassador Avreham Harman who undertook to inquire.
- December 9 Secretary also expressed our concerts to French Charge d'Affeires.
- December 10 Secretary departed for MATO meetings in Paris.
- December 13 Time magazine reported a "small power" was developing a muclear capability.
- December 16 Tip-off story in London Daily Express.
- December 17 Harmon expressed to the Department the hope that ABC Chairman MoCome would evoid possent in his upcoming TV-cost.
- December 18 MuCome on TV said U.S. had asked Israel for information.
- December 19 Washington Post certicd extensive and fairly accurate story on U.S. estime with respect to Isreal's storic monry activities.
- December 19 Secretary returned from Paris and conferred with President.
- December 19 Department issued statement saying Marsan called in December 9.
- December 20 Harman ser Secretary.
 - 1) Acknowlodged 24 megawatt Dimona reactor for research
 - 2) Said begun one year ago, will require 3-4 years to complete
 - 3) Assisted by France and in minor way several other countries 4) However, under direction of Israeli scientists

 - 5) Assured that project was for peaceful uses only
 - 6) When completed, would be open to students from friendly countries
 - 7) Cost \$5,000,000 per year exclusive of local costs
 - 8) Ben-Gurism would issue public statement following day
 - 9) Secretary asked additional questions

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•	60 Jan	
Decauber 21	Bun-Gurion made statement before Absaut.	
	1) Referred to Mahal Rubin project 2) Acknowledged 24 megasatt reactor near 3) Said it dedicated to scientific resear 4) Completion in 3-4 years 5) Under Israeli direction, will be open 6) "Intended exclusively for percental put 7) Anticipated future power reactor	to friendly students
December 21	Harmen sew Assistant Scoretary Jones and F	gyley.
	1) Presented Ben-Gurion's statement 2) Explained belated response due to Sec 3) Sumplained about widespread publicity 4) Hoped assurances would preclude "magg 5) Was told full festual information bea	
December 22	Department's Press Statement,	
	 Noted Harman's call and Ban-Guricn's Welcomed statements, any second reast special concern Restated U.S. Government's continuing against proliferation 	or as no cause for
December 22	Department sent background guidence to field	ld posts.
December 24	Andersedor Raid sav Bun-Curion, suggested	ser oguaris
December 24	Asbassedor Jarama returned to Israel for o	consultations.
December 31.	Asbassador Reid was instructed re specific	resaining questions.
	a) Plutonium, b) Visits, c) IAEA safeguard u) no Weepens	s, d) 3rd reactor,
1961		• •
January 4	Asbassador Reid beld extensive discussion	with Ben-Gurion.
	a. Plutonium would go to uranium supplier b. Visits by nationals from friendly power c. No IAEA sufeguerds until others agree; d. No third reastor now contemplated c. Categoric assurance that no nuclear veg	"no Russiens" .
January 6	Senate Foreign Relations Committee asked S information re Largeli reactor.	ecretary for more

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 Monity NNN 9976-22 January 9 Prench Dovernment on "irms! categorically that its child into to Intract 1a propose. January 10 UK received reply to prestionnaire it had shullted to favaal on Dimone reactor. Meply paralleled catify summaries to 13. January 10 UK received reply to prestionnaire it had shullted to favaal on Dimone reactor. Meply paralleled catify summaries to 13. January 11 Anhassador Barnan recursed than formed, meethed to the scentary the assaymates made by Prine Kinitter Den-Sution to Cohassador Reid. January 17 Department instructs: Subany Vel. Aviv to keep pressing for cariy pient to Fischa instructs of unclear experiling in Israel Messedor Reider in Caro, President Messen rad that Genometric to function. experiling the semicond to unclear experiling in Israel would compet MA take radical action. January 30 Briefing memorandum on Israel stonic energy program submitted to Pression Kennedy. Pebruary 7 During initial courtesy call on Secretary, MA Abbasador Karel experised contern on Israel reactor. Molect was for peaked usuardows from buil israel and react the factor was for peaked sources and Messador Harmen informally on Lasing style mode. Pebruary 7 During initial courtesy call on Secretary, MA Abbasador Karel expressed contern on Israel reactor. Made we intend to maintend reactor was for peaked sources for built instel and react the learn had been reacted and react the second is the second in this field could be a caretary finitable Intend is counted to mainten deviation of Armed is counted is counted. February 13 December, forther visi about visit to reactor had been reactify and inter deviate cound in this field could be of great importance to future field count in this field would be of great importance to future field counted is the deviation of a friendly power, and intervised of Armed is counted. February 13 December, force of Prime Minister Ben-Ouriouw Had and the dissisted prime is anoth	 January 9 Prench Government ec. Times enterprised by that its fieldshaper to Inrael is premised on Inrael is pregnan being solely for prescell purposes. January 10 UK received recip to questionnaire it has similated to (Arael on Dimona reactors. Merphy puralleled entries convents to (3). January 11 Ambassador Herman recurred from Inrael, repeated to the secretary the assurances made by Prine Minister Den-Gurnos to Ambassador Relat. January 11 Department instants in Enhanced from Inrael, repeated to the secretary the assurances made by Prine Minister Den-Gurnos to Ambassador Relat. January 21 In conversation with Ambassador Heinaut in Gairo, President Resseer and that devolutement of muchase respectively in Isreel would compel WA take radical action. January 30 Briefing memorandum on famel atomic energy program submitted to President Kennedy. Pebruary 3 Ansistant Generary Jones Insige? Ambassador Herman informality of peared anticement for both Isreel and France that reactor was for peared and with the sector was for peared and with the sector had been reacting in the sector. Added we intend to main it firms a firm and in the sector had been reacting and for wheat reactor was for peared and the sector. Jacobs and for wheat reactor was for peared and income from both Israel and France that reactor was for peared and income and Armos that what reactor had been reacting the bits first world be of great importance to four end to main interest from both Israel and France that reactor had been reacting to Dimentary formed and interest in the first world will be reacted had been received and income and from both Israel and France that reactor had been received and the set and receive and information well state of the set and the set at a set and the set at a set at the dist wild be of great importance to four endities. February 7 During initial countery call information well setter is initial countery and interest and a frame dist first wild be an	softeenesibigh	
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March 22 Assistant Secretary Jones again "nudged" Harman by telephone saying that he was to appear before the Near East Subcommittee of the House Foreign Affairs Committee on March 29 and felt it probable he would be asked about the Israel reactor.

March 28 Assistant Secretary Jones asked Ambassedor Harman to cell and pointed out that USG had been waiting since January 4 for the promised invitation to send experts to Israel to see the Dimona reactor. USG interest remained keen. The White House had inquired on March 27 when the visit would take place and had requested a report from the Department by "arch 31. Harman said he had been pushing his Government hard. Promised he would cable, but doubted any action until after Passover Week April 3-10.

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