

April 10, 1961

**Department of State Memorandum of Conversation,
'U.S. Visit to Dimona Reactor Site'**

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Summary:

Ambassador Harman informs Jones and Philip Farley, the special assistant to the secretary of state for atomic energy and outer space matters, that Israel is formally inviting a US scientist to visit the Dimona complex during the week of 15 May, but that the visit should be secret.

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Memorandum of Conversation

884a.1901/4-1061

DATE: April 10, 1961

SUBJECT: U.S. Visit to Dimona Reactor Site

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PARTICIPANTS: Avraham Harman, Ambassador of Israel

G. Lewis Jones, NEA

Philip J. Farley, S/AE

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Ambassador Harman said that he had come in under instructions to convey an invitation for an American to visit the Dimona reactor site during the week of May 15. The Israeli Government wished the visit to be secret since any publicity could have a most undesirable effect.

Mr. Farley said that the handling of the visit had been given a good deal of thought on the U.S. side. Our concept had been that, on the pattern of U.S. technical consultations with other countries engaged in reactor development, a pair of U.S. reactor experts with competence in planning and design of heavy water reactors might go to Israel for discussions with the Israeli scientists and engineers engaged in the project. Such discussions might well be very useful to the Israeli technicians. The discussions would give an opportunity in a most natural way for an incidental visit to the reactor site. The United States did not wish publicity and would want to handle the trip quietly, but to label it "secret" and make extreme efforts to avoid any knowledge of the visit might be counter-productive.

Ambassador Harman emphasized the importance his government attached to the visit not becoming known either before or after the event. He recognized the possibility of a leak and thought the public

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line suggested by Mr. Farley might be the proper one in that case.

Mr. Jones said that the United States had always thought of a quiet visit. There was a good deal of Congressional interest, however, which might lead to the Department being asked whether any American had visited the site. He asked whether arrangements were also being made for others to go to the site, such as British or Swedish experts, pointing out that a special United States-Israel relationship might be undesirable. Ambassador Harman said that the invitation to the United States was in discharge of the specific promise by Ben-Gurion that he would invite someone from the United States.

It was agreed that Mr. Farley should advise the Ambassador directly as to the names of the visitor or visitors whom the United States wished to suggest and as to the acceptability of the time proposed.