

February 12, 1962

Nicolas G. Thacher to James P. Grant, 'Your Appointment with Dennis Greenhill and Dennis Speares of the British Embassy'

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Summary:

British Embassy officials raise British concerns about the Israeli nuclear facility at Dimona.

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UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

*Memorandum*SECRET *HC*

TO : NFA--Mr. James P. Grant

DATE: February 12, 1962

FROM : NFA/NF--Nicholas G. Thacher *WJZ*SUBJECT: Your Appointment with Dennis Greenhill and Dennis Speares
of the British Embassy (3:30 p.m., Wednesday, February 14)DISCUSSION:

The British have completed a study paper, on which they ask our comments, on the inspection and control problems posed by the atomic reactor which the Israelis are developing at Dimona southeast of Jerusalem. Mr. Greenhill, Counselor of the Embassy, regards presentation of the paper as an opportunity to make your acquaintance. He will be accompanied by Mr. Speares, First Secretary. They will seek no substantive comment on the paper but hope to discuss it with us later on.

We have arranged one visit to the reactor, which was made by two United States physicists in May 1961, and in a very preliminary way are negotiating with the Israelis for another, this time preferably by scientists of another friendly government. Our visitors found the reactor being developed along lines which indicate peaceful uses. However, changes in design could be made at various times during its development to adapt it for production of fissionable material. For that reason periodic inspections are desired.

The Israelis announce 1964 as the probable time for the reactor to become "critical". Our scientists suggest that this is a very conservative estimate and the time required might be shorter. Attached is a memorandum to the White House reporting the results of the United States scientists' visit.

RECOMMENDATION:

That you receive the British paper with an expression of appreciation of U.K. initiative and state a willingness to discuss it at length after we have had an opportunity to study it. You might mention that we have discussed Dimona from time to time with the Israelis, who are agreed in principle to further visits by friendly neutral scientists, but inasmuch as the reactor will not become critical for some time we have not introduced a note of urgency into these discussions.

ATTACHMENT:

Memorandum of May 26, 1961
to the White House.

NFA:NF:WLHamilton:ebb

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