

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

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PMM
Memorandum*Israel Reactor*
S/AE FILE COPYTO : *AE*
WE - William L. Hamilton

DATE: January 16, 1961

FROM : Murat V. Williams

Some Israel evasions.

SUBJECT: A Catalogue of Replies Regarding the Reactor

1. In about October, 1959 Jack Hagerty saw the construction site for the reactor at Dimona. Not knowing what it was, he asked Eliozer Preminger. Preminger replied, "Why, that's a military installation. Ask your military attaché to inquire of the Israel Defense Forces". (Preminger related this to me in December, 1960. Jack Hagerty apparently forgot it.) This was the most honest answer we got.

2. In September, 1960 Addy Cohen was flying from Kohar, near the reactor site, when Ambassador Reid or another member of his party in a helicopter asked what the big construction was. Cohen replied, "Why, that's a textile plant". Cohen told me also in December, 1960 that he had made this reply, "Because that was our story at the time".

3. The same reply was given by a Ministry of Finance official, probably Cohen again, during a similar flight in May, 1960. Members of the party included Liggett and Chalfant.

4. On three occasions in August and September, 1960 the Assistant Air Attaché, the Air Attaché and/or another U.S. service officer asked an FIO officer what the construction site was. The reply, by this time had changed: the Israeli officer said that it was a metallurgical research installation. On one occasion there was also some mention of a meteorological installation. Such a facility actually exists in the neighborhood.

5. The Naval Attaché, Captain Kittredge, had heard that there was an atomic reactor at a town southwest of Beersheba. He looked at his map and found that the nearest town in that direction was Beit Ebel. He then wrote a letter in August, 1960 to the FIO asking permission to visit the reactor near Beit Ebel. He was told in response that there was no reactor at that town. Kittredge is very sad that he guessed the name of the town instead of asking to see the reactor "southeast of Beersheba".

6. After Szberg's visit to Israel, the Ambassador asked Ernst Bergmann about a reactor in the Negev. Bergmann's reply, which referred to a research program and a new university in the south, was reported in the Ambassador's telegram of about November 29.

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