January 28, 1961

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MEMORANDUM

TO: INR - Mr. Cumming

FROM: S/AE - Philip J. Farley

SUBJECT: Post-mortem on SNIE 100-8-60

 I am troubled that the post-mortem on SNIE 100-8-60
which is to be considered by the USIB on January 31 appears
to take as a premise the substantial accuracy of that SNIE.
I believe, even recognizing that official French and Israeli
assurances require first-hand confirmation, that the presump-
tion now must be that the Estimate greatly exaggerated the
scope and timing of the Israeli nuclear program. Thus the
post-mortem must explain not only why the Israeli program
came as a surprise, but also why the initial estimate
over-stated Israeli achievements and the likelihood of an
early nuclear weapons capability. A new paragraph 3. might
be inserted to the general effect that it appears, in
retrospect and in the light of fuller information since the
Estimate, that the pace and scale of the program are much
smaller and there is no likelihood of an early nuclear weapons
capability. The over-estimate could be validly attributed
to the secrecy and deception referred to in the Estimate and
the apparent ambiguity and change in Israeli program
objectives which furnished some grounds for placing an
extreme interpretation on initial data.

 The activity recommended in paragraph 10. should be under
the cognizance of the Chief of Mission, and this point might
well be explicit. Also, present paragraph 7. of the post-mortem
is misleading and might well be paraphrased somewhat as follows:

 "7. A continuing effort should be made to obtain first-hand
confirmation of official assurances and additional information
on the stated characteristics of the Israeli reactors, how and
where the plutonium produced will be processed and used, plans
for weapon development if any at the present time, and the extent
of foreign assistance and collaboration."

Concurrences:

Copy 1 - INR - 7 Extra
2 - NEA
3 - NE
4 - S/AE File
5 - PO
6 - S/AE Chron

  NEA - Mr. Jones NE - Mr. Meyer

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