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M. Farley

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Israel Rector
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May 1, 1961

Visit to the Israeli Reactor

Mr. Mordechai Gazit, Israeli Minister
Mr. Armin H. Meyer, Deputy Assistant Secretary, NEA

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TO THE SECRETARY											
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Mr. Gazit referred to his conversation with Mr. Philip Farley on April 28 concerning the proposed visit of two qualified American observers to the Dimona reactor. Mr. Farley had urged that the visit take place during the week of May 15 as had been previously envisaged.

Noting that Prime Minister Ben-Gurion has emphasized that Israel's atomic energy program is one of the key subjects he wishes to discuss with President Kennedy, Mr. Gazit said that in the Israeli view it would be preferable for the visit by the two Americans to take place after Mr. Ben-Gurion's talk with the President. However, if the Department determined that the visit should take place in mid-May, Israel would reluctantly proceed on this basis.

Mr. Meyer said he would bring this subject to the attention of his superiors and would provide Mr. Gazit with a definitive answer as soon as possible. Mr. Meyer noted, however, that this government is extremely sensitive to any proliferation of nuclear weapons capabilities. Because of this sensitivity, there probably would be a disposition to proceed with the visit to Dimona at the earliest feasible date, i.e. the week of May 15.

When asked what difference it would make as to what the American technicians would observe and whether an inference might be drawn that there may be more to the Israeli atomic energy program than has heretofore been disclosed to us, Mr. Gazit reiterated that Israel's main interest was for the Prime Minister to discuss this subject with the President. He said that even if one were to assume that Israel

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is developing a nuclear capability, this would not come to pass before the middle of 1963 and, therefore, two weeks difference in the timing of the visit by the American observers would not be a serious matter.

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