

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

EXDIS

October 23, 1964

SECRET/SENSITIVE

1
President
Form -
Bundy

MEMORANDUM FOR
THE SECRETARY OF STATE

The President has received a very private and informal approach from Prime Minister Eshkol on delaying our next inspection of the Dimona reactor, for which we are currently pressing. Eshkol recognizes Israel has committed itself to periodic inspection of Dimona, though apparently on an annual rather than semi-annual basis.

However, he has personally appealed for deferring this inspection until after his elections in November 1965. He is concerned about charges that he has opened Israel's reactor to inspection by other powers, and contends that if he is compelled to honor his agreement it will jeopardize his political position. Eshkol further points out that there is no possibility that Dimona could be converted to military purposes in so short a period of time.

The President would appreciate your recommendations. However, he would not want to decide so sensitive a matter until after our elections, which gives time for us to investigate the full implications of a delay en route. In the meantime I suggest that we postpone any further diplomatic approaches in Israel. May I also suggest that we ask John McCone for an evaluation of the possible risks in an inspection gap which might be as much as two years.

AE
11-2 ISR

NO DIS REVIEW
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McG. B.

McGeorge Bundy

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Duplicity, Deception, and Self-Deception: Israel, the United States, and the Dimona Inspections, 1964-65

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