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ACTION: Amembassy

TEL AVIV 434

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FOR AMBASSADOR

VERBATIM TEST

Please deliver following oral message to Prime Minister from President Johnson as soon as possible:

QUOTE: I appreciate the frankness of your message outlining the problems posed for you by the timing of our next visit to the Dimona reactor. I can, of course, understand the ever-present difficulty of reconciling conflicting domestic and foreign interests.

Nevertheless, I do feel bound to urge upon you the importance of the semi-annual visits on which we have previously agreed. We are engaged in a continuing effort to prevent proliferation of sophisticated weapons in the world and especially in the Near East. I believe you fully agree that this effort is in the interests of Israel. A vital element in its success is our ability to assure all parties that none of them has attained or is seeking a nuclear capability, and to give this assurance we

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Telegraphic transmission and
classification approved by:

M - Governor Harriman

Clearances:

White House - Mr. Bundy

S/S - Mr. Davies

NEA - Mr. Talbot

NE - Mr. Davies

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must be able to satisfy ourselves on this score.

The problem is made more acute by the recent explosion of a nuclear device by Communist China. This has alarmed many countries and made some of them--such as India--think again whether they should not attempt nuclear programs of their own. This is likely to focus Arab suspicion even more upon Israel.

You may be sure that our interest in the security of your country remains unchanged. The grave responsibility which this puts upon us is an important factor in ~~my~~ my conviction that we must leave no stone ~~unturned~~ unturned in our efforts to maintain peace. I hope, therefore, that you will see your way clear to arrange for a visit by our people to Dimona in late November or early December. In return we may be able to ease your problem along lines which I have asked Ambassador Barbour to discuss with you. END QUOTE.

We have studied considerations cited your recent telegram and appreciate your effort reconcile divergent US and Israeli interests. Following Department's guidelines for discussion with Eshkol:

1. Dimona inspection within 1-2 months imperative.
2. We willing ~~XXXXX~~ consider waiving Israel commitment to six-monthly inspection until after November 1965 elections contingent

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upon satisfactory findings next inspection and without prejudice to resumption schedule of six-monthly visits thereafter.

3. We willing postpone passing results inspection to Nasser until after November 1965, unless situation in Near East such that US and Israeli interests better served by informing him. We would, of course, consult GOI before such step. However, the President wishes you to emphasize orally to Eshkol that the agreement on semi-annual visits to Dimona is particularly important to our efforts with Nasser, because he knows, as does the rest of the world, that Israel is probably ~~the~~ the only country in the Near East which has the scientific capability to produce nuclear weapons and in addition also has a facility in being which could be converted to such production. If we were unable to reassure Nasser periodically, for example, he might well be driven to greater dependence on the Soviet Union and even to irrational military action against Israel. He would, of course, be more resistant to our urgings that he limit his own arms development, particularly in the missile field.

4. If Eshkol avers that his problem is with "hard liners" in Cabinet, you should point out our difficulty in understanding this argument, since BG personally agreed to periodic inspections in May 1963, presumably with concurrence of Cabinet.

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