

TOP SECRET

*James  
Dimona  
93*

BRIEF ON DEVELOPMENTS RE THE DIMONA REACTOR

1. June 1961 - Cairo Embassy in name of Rusk assured UAR that inspection Israel reactor at Dimona confirmed it only intended for peaceful uses.
2. October 22, 1962 - Further assurance re Dimona reactor based on second inspection given to Nasser.
3. December 27, 1962 - Meeting Meir/JFK. Mrs. Meir assured President there would be "no difficulty between us" on the Israeli nuclear reactor.

3a. January 23, 1963 - 3.3(b)(1)

3.3(b)(1)

*States a/d  
7/30/63*

BRIEF  
67-7-2003

DECLASSIFIED IN PART

E.O. 13526

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4. March 27, 1963 - Deptel 658 to Tel Aviv. Barbour instructed raise with BG assent to semi-annual visit to Dimona, perhaps in May and Nov. with full access to all parts and instruments in the facility by qualified US scientists.
5. April 3, 1963 - Tel Aviv 721. Barbour raised with Ben Curion question further visits by US scientists to Dimona as instructed above. BG did not demur but asked matter be considered at next meeting.
6. April 4, 1963 - Talbot/Harman demarche re Dimona.
- 6a. May 8, 1963 - SNIE 30-2-63 (See attached RWK Memo for pertinent excerpt)
7. May 15, 1963 - Tel Aviv 894. Barbour/BG exchange on Dimona. PM asked if we would visit Egypt nuclear installations twice a year. (Barbour replied there nothing to visit.) PM does not agree our assessment Egyptian nuclear programs. Disparity between UAR and Israeli capabilities widening. US help could be too late.  
x US does not comprehend threat to Israel. Re US request for semi-annual inspection with no strings attached. BG said he would consult Cabinet. BG considers certain advantages if Arabs worried rather than reassured on Israeli nuclear program. (Barbour had indicated it better have regular US visit even if results withheld from others (i. e. Arabs) than no visits. BG had previously agreed to visits without any conditions as to use made of results. Barbour comments Israeli may be trying to insert various non-nuclear elements into bargaining situation (e. g. BG ltr 5/12 to JFK requesting US/USSR security guarantee.
8. May 16, 1963 - Talbot-Harman talks indicate surprised reaction US possible Israeli conditions re Dimona visits.
9. May 18, 1963 - Deptel 835 to T. A. Text JFK ltr to BG on Dimona.
10. May 20, 1963 - T. A. 909. Advising delivery JFK ltr to BG 5/19/63

11. 5/22/63 - T. A. 922. Meir at PM request advises Barbour most careful consideration being given JFK msg 5/19/63 re visits to Dimona
12. May 27, 1963 \* T. A. 948. Text BG ltr to JFK on Dimona indicates annual visits acceptable.
13. May 27, 1963 - T. A. 949. Barbour view/-- While our proposals have not been agreed in full, Israelis have (1) accepted principle of continuing visits; (2) given assurances in writing at highest level as to peaceful purposes of reactor; (3) disclosure to some degree nature of their agreement with French; (4) dropped any reciprocal conditions such as parallel inspection of Egyptian nuclear activities which not even mentioned.
14. June 15, 1963 - Deptel 938 to T. A. Text JFK ltr to BG insisting on semi-annual inspection (i. e. early this summer, another in June 1964) thereafter at six-month intervals). Barbour instructed give reasons for scheduling (a) only a visit before criticality can fully estimate features of a reactor--this is reason for requested early summer visit, preferably June or July; (b) it widely known that if intended for ultimate production of weapons grade plutonium, a reactor of this size would be operated to burn a single fuel load approximately every six months--whereas for peaceful purposes optimum burn-up time would be about 2 years--hence need for semi-annual visits after mid-1964 visit.

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15. June 16, 1963 - Ben Gurion resigns
16. June 16, 1963 - Tel Aviv 1043. Barbour doubts we can get further Cabinet consultation on Dimona in current political crisis. Recommends JFK ltr to BG (6/15/63) be "retailored" to new PM (Eshkol).
18. - Deptel 939 to Tel Aviv.
  
18. 7/5/63 - Deptel 19 to Tel Aviv. Text JFK letter to Eshkol (revision of his letter to BG 6/15/63 which not delivered due BG resignation 6/16/63 Instruction to Barbour remains the same--see Item 14)
19. 7/17/63 - Eshkol (Tel Aviv 74) letter to JFK/ An interim reply to 7/5/63 JFK ltr; substantive reply promised at early date. Eshkol made two points to Barbour: (1) "solutions" contained 5/12/63 BG ltr to JFK shared by Eshkol Govt as well and they anticipate response "with special interest"; (2) Israeli "surprise" at sentence JFK ltr 7/5/63 referring to possible jeopardizing US support if Israel not forthcoming re nuclear buildup. Israel wld do what it had to do for its national security and to safeguard its sovereign rights. Eshkol asked US view of possible Israeli proposal to consult w/US in advance shld sometime in distant future developments in ME made it necessary for her to go nuclear road. Barbour gave no view. Eshkol indicated word of sovereign govt shld be sufficiently acceptable and inquired whether we would expect inspect Indian nuclear development. Barbour agreed word of sov govt shld be sufficient but that in type of world today that point not yet reached.

Attach. Exceypts on Dimona frm  
Presidential/PM correspondence

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