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Ambassador Barbour-Ben Gurion meeting (Embtel 894)

After the Ambassador had pressed hard for semi-annual visits to Dimona reactor, Ben Gurion interrupted with "we know they (UAR) are building something bigger" . . . "We know Nasser is making unconventional weapons. He has some foreign experts, he is sending some people abroad. . . "We are afraid when he has missiles with nuclear warheads, he will do it (destroy Israel). What will you do to him?". . . "If it comes to war, we must rely on ourselves".

Ben Gurion later said he was not sure that telling Nasser (about Dimona) had the effect of diminishing UAR efforts in the nuclear field. Maybe it is better that Nasser be "a little afraid". The meeting ended by Ben Gurion promising to consult the Cabinet but in the meantime, the US should carefully consider the points he made on Israel's security situation in his May 12 letter to the President (re security assurance, demilitarization of the West Bank, arms assistance, US-USSR agreement to limit Near East arms race, and mutual Israel-Arab arms inspection and control).

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