

*Messrs. Thomas Krizan*MEMORANDUM FOR MR. McGEORGE BUNDY
THE WHITE HOUSESubject: Reply to Israel Prime Minister
Ben-Gurion on Dimona Visits

On April 2, Ambassador Barbour presented to Ben-Gurion our request for semi-annual, full-access United States visits to Dimona to begin in May. On May 19, the President wrote to the Prime Minister to stress the importance we attach to this issue. On May 27, Ben-Gurion replied, agreeing to annual visits, "such as have already taken place", beginning late this year or early in 1964. He referred to this as the "start-up" time of the reactor.

The Department of State has consulted the several branches of the scientific intelligence community (AEC, ACDA, CIA) on whether the Prime Minister's reply would meet our minimum intelligence requirements to satisfy ourselves and other interested nations as to Israel's intentions. Regrettably, it does not. A reactor of this size would, at the optimum, be discharged every two years if devoted to research; but approximately at six months intervals if the object was to produce a maximum of irradiated fuel for separation into weapons grade plutonium. This is recognized in the IAEA minimum inspection ^{system} [standard], which we have supported and from which it would be unwise for us to condone an exception, ^{and} which, for a reactor of this size, calls for two inspections yearly, with far more complete ^{access} [controls] than Israel is prepared to allow us. A visit before the reactor goes critical is also considered essential

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on scientific grounds in that a more detailed observation of its structure is possible then than after its operation renders certain portions

inaccessible. ^R These agencies ^{we have consulted} have agreed that only by the following

procedure
[position] could we be reasonably sure that the Dimona facility is used

for peaceful research:

1. A June or July 1963 visit. ✓
2. A June 1964 visit. ✓
3. Thereafter, visits every six months. ✓
4. Scientists to have access to all areas of the site and any part of the complex such as fuel fabrication facilities or plutonium separation plant which might be located at a different site.
5. Scientists to have sufficient time at the site for a truly thorough examination.

This schedule goes part way to meeting Ben-Gurion's once-a-year stipulation. This schedule was accepted with some reluctance by our scientists, who would prefer a semi-annual scheduling from the outset and who are also most insistent on the need for thoroughness covered in points 4 and 5.

A proposed further message from the President to Prime Minister Ben-Gurion, which incorporates the agreed on minimum terms, is enclosed.

William H. Brubeck
Executive Secretary

Enclosure: Proposed Presidential Message to Israel Prime Minister Ben-Gurion
6/10/63

NEA:NE:WRCrawford:ebb Cleared: SCT:Mr. Kretzmam NEA:Mr. Talbot

ACTION: Amembassy TEL AVIV

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VERBATIM TEXT

FOR AMBASSADOR

Following letter from President should be conveyed Primin

Ben-Gurion:

"Dear Mr. Prime Minister:

"I thank you for your letter of May 27 concerning American visits to Israel's nuclear facility at Dimona. I know your words reflect your most intense personal consideration of a problem that is not easy for you or for your Government, as it is not for mine.

"We are concerned in this matter not with doubts on our part as to Israel's intentions. In your welcome reaffirmation that the Dimona facility will be devoted exclusively to peaceful purposes, and in the statements you earlier made to me ⁱⁿ and public, I place fullest assurance.

"What we must look to, however, is the appearance as well as the fact of Israel's intentions. In this respect, the determination of what will at minimum convince others ~~as to Israel's intentions~~ must reflect a scientific ^{judgment} ~~determination~~ in accord with the potentialities of a reactor the size of Dimona.

"On receiving your letter I asked that such a determination again be carefully reviewed by our scientists who have had the most extensive experience in these matters. If in the most important general interests of which we have written we are to be able to demonstrate Israel's

purposes beyond reasonable doubt, we must ask that the scheduling proposed in your letter be somewhat adjusted to provide at minimum for a visit early this summer, a visit in June 1964 and thereafter at intervals of six months. It would be essential, and I take it that your letter is in accord with this, that our scientists ~~would~~ have access to all areas of the Dimona site and to any related part of the complex such as fuel fabrication facilities or plutonium separation plant and that there ~~would~~ be sufficient time for a thorough examination ~~of all facilities~~.

"Knowing that you fully appreciate the truly vital significance of this matter to the future well-being of Israel, ^{to} the United States, and internationally, I am sure our carefully considered request will again have your most sympathetic study.

"Sincerely,

"John F. Kennedy"

In conveying foregoing, you should stress that exhaustive examination by the most competent USG authorities has established scheduling embodied in President's letter as minimum to achieve a purpose we see as vital to Israel. Scientific reasons for this are that (a) only a visit before criticality can fully establish features of a reactor--this is reason for requested early summer visit which we hope could be this month or next at latest; (b) it is widely known and accepted by ~~XXXXXX~~

knowledgeable international scientific community 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 two years--this is what makes it essential that after mid-1964 visits be scheduled semi-annually.

SCP-3.

END

NEA:NE:WRCrawford'ebb
6/11/63

Approved:

Cleared: SCI:Mr. Kretzmann *mk*

NEA:Mr. Talbot

NE:Mr. Strong

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