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Memorandum of Conversation XG AE 4 FR-ISR

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SUBJECT: Israel's Atomic Energy Activities

PARTICIPANTS: Mr. Patrick R. H. Wright, First Secretary, British Embassy
NEA/NE - William R. Crawford, Jr., Officer in Charge,
Lebanon-Israel Affairs

SEP 17 1963

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Mr. Wright said that in a recent conversation between the senior officers of the British and French Embassies in Tel Aviv the French officer had volunteered the following regarding the Israel-French relationship in atomic energy.

The safeguards and inspection provisions of the original Israeli-French agreement concluded some six years ago were "stiffened" at French request eighteen months ago. The French Embassy in Tel Aviv has been cut out of any responsibility in this question and the relationship is handled through other channels. However, the Embassy is aware that the Israelis have been "miffed" at the French for being so suspicious. Estimates that there have been as many as 200 French families in Dimona are ridiculously high. There are only 60 Frenchmen there and this number includes many who are simple construction workers. The French Embassy is convinced that the Israelis are not in any position to manufacture atomic weapons at this time. "They are exploiting doubt regarding intentions as a factor in the political game."

Mr. Wright asked that the foregoing be closely held and that the source of the information, if used in any way, not be identified.

Mr. Crawford recalled that on August 14 Acting Assistant Secretary Grant had informed Mr. Killick, in confidence, of our effort to learn more from the French about their arrangements with Israel. Some comment has been received from the French Foreign Ministry. This is not very revealing, and we are going back to them again.

In regard

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In regard to a further point mentioned by Mr. Grant, our interest in regularizing United States visits to Dimona, our discussion with the Israelis has reached a reasonably satisfactory conclusion. We hope shortly to be in a position to tell the UK what has been agreed.

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