

April 29, 1964

**Letter from Alan C. Goodison, Eastern Department
of the Foreign Office to Arthur R. H. Kellas, British
Embassy**

Citation:

"Letter from Alan C. Goodison, Eastern Department of the Foreign Office to Arthur R. H. Kellas, British Embassy", April 29, 1964, Wilson Center Digital Archive, British National Archives (Kew Gardens), FO 371/175843. Originally published in Avner Cohen and William Burr, eds., National Security Archive Electronic Briefing Book #432 (June 25, 2013). <https://wilson-center.drivingcreative.com/document/117127>

Summary:

In a letter to Arthur Kellas, counselor at the British Embassy in Tel Aviv, Alan Goodison of the Foreign Office's Eastern Department disclosed the Argentine-Israel uranium deal, which involved the transfer of 80-100 tons over 33 months. Since evidence suggested that Israel had facilities for plutonium separation, they estimated that there would be enough plutonium for a weapon within 20 months; however, Goodison had no proof that the Israelis planned to produce a nuclear weapon, only that they had the capability to do so. Minutes are attached.

Credits:

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Original Language:

English

Contents:

Original Scan

<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div> <p style="font-size: 2em;">E</p> <p>1004</p> </div> <div> <p>ER 1241/15 / G 65</p> </div> </div>	
<p>EASTERN ISRAEL</p>	
<p>FROM F.O. Minute A C Goodison</p> <p style="font-size: 1.5em; font-weight: bold;">SECRET</p> <p>No.</p> <p>Dated Apr 29th</p> <p>Received Apr 30th</p>	<p>SUBJECT:</p> <p>Canadian authorities reported agreement between Argentine Republic and Israel for sale of between 80 and 100 tons of uranium concentrate over period 33 months.</p>
<p>References</p>	<p>MINUTES</p> <p style="text-align: right;">(Goodison) 30/4</p>
<p>(Printing Instructions)</p>	<p>HEAD Mr. Douglas D.I.S.</p> <p>AK DD Mr. Hanes Mr. Shepherd</p> <p>General Dept Mr. G. Laibstone Mr. W. W. 11/5</p> <p>Per SD Mr. Lecky IV 8/5 Mr. Stevenson 30/4</p>
<p>(Outward Action)</p> <p>8) AR H. Kellogg, Tel Aviv from Goodison 29/4.</p> <p>cc, C.J. Auckland Buenos Aires</p> <p>D.J. Maitland Cairo</p> <p>F.E. Ramsbottom Paris</p> <p>P.R. Wright, Washington</p> <p>D. Akell, D.I.S.</p> <p>Mr. Pedgley, CRC</p> <p>8) D. Akell, D.I.S. 2/8</p>	<p>At least the Israelis wish to retain the option. At any fork on their nuclear road, where they are confronted with purely civil as against civil plus military folks, they will surely opt for the latter. <i>Adkinson</i> 4/5</p> <p>Also this surely throws light on recent Israeli pronouncements on the NREIA & safeguards. This only reinforces my earlier comments on that subject & I endorse the last sentence of Mr. Goodison's letter.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>James (Adkinson)</i> 5/5</p> <p>12x 33 (Mr. Shepherd) not yet seen? 10/5? 8/5. <i>Sum</i> 24/5</p>
<p>(Action Completed)</p> <p><i>JE</i> 26.6.64</p>	<p>(Main Indexed)</p> <p><i>But</i> 1/2/66</p>

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Secret. and Guard	
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Restricted.	28/4
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Insert Telephone No. & Ext. when appropriate.
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Draft. Letter to:

A.R.H. Kellas, Esq.
British Embassy,
Tel Aviv.

From:

A.C. Goodison

Copy to:

C.J. Audland, Esq.
British Embassy,
Buenos Aires.D.J. Maitland, Esq.
British Embassy,
Cairo.P.E. Ramsbotham, Esq.
British Embassy,
Paris.P.R.H. Wright, Esq.
British Embassy,
Washington.D. Arkell, Esq.,
Defence
Intelligence and
Staff,
Metropole Bldgs.AW 28/4/65
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NOTHING TO BE WRITTEN IN THIS MARGIN.

(87285) Hw.

NEAD
AEDGeneral Dept
M. Lecky P.D.

} a.a.

The Canadian Intelligence Authorities have informed the Defence Intelligence Staff that the Argentine Republic and Israel have signed an agreement for the sale of the entire Argentine production of uranium concentrate to Israel. This involves the transfer of 80-100 tons of concentrate over a period of 33 months. This means that Israel now has ^{virtually unlimited} ~~undertaken~~ supplies of uranium free of safeguards.

2. If, as recent evidence leads us to suppose, the Israelis have ~~adequate~~ facilities for plutonium separation it now appears on a very rough estimate that she would have enough plutonium to fuel a nuclear bomb ^{beginning} after between 18 and 20 months from the ~~date~~ ^{of this year} when the Dimona reactor became critical, that is to say in June or August 1965.

3. Although this information is unconfirmed we know that last November the Argentine were looking for a buyer for their uranium. If you or Buenos Aires can obtain any confirmation of it we should be very grateful. Since this is Canadian information we are not in a position to hand it over to the Americans. We understand that the Canadians are reluctant to do so because the Americans have refused them information on their recent inspection of Dimona; ^{I have suggested to the Canadian High} ~~we shall be talking further to the~~ Commission here that this is perhaps short sighted. Canadians about this.

/4. This

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4. This information does not of course prove that the Israelis are making a nuclear bomb but their anxiety to obtain such a large quantity of safeguard-free uranium suggests that they have ^{sinister} ~~since had~~ motives. Although the evidence is all circumstantial it is beginning to be overwhelming.

5. I am copying this letter to Audland in Buenos Aires, Maitland in Cairo, Ramsbotham in Paris, Wright in Washington ~~and~~ Arkell in the Defence Intelligence Staff, and Redpath at the CRO.

NOTHING TO BE WRITTEN IN THIS MARGIN.

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FOREIGN OFFICE S.W.1.

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(A.C. Goodison)

A.R.H. Kellas, Esq.,
British Embassy,
TEL AVIV.

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