

June 22, 1962

Robert C. Strong to Phillips Talbot, 'Another Visit to Israel's Dimona Reactor'

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Summary:

Unable to arrange visits from a "neutral" country, the State Department proposes another US visit to Dimona.

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English

Contents:

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UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

Memorandum

SECRET

TO : NEA -- Mr. Phillips Talbot

DATE: June 22, 1962

FROM : NE -- Robert C. Strong *RC*

SUBJECT: Another Visit to Israel's Dimona Reactor

DISCUSSION:

Department efforts to arrange a visit to Dimona by scientists of other than U.S. nationality have not yet succeeded, and we doubt that the faint interest the Swedes have shown can be developed sufficiently to result in a visit by their scientists in the near future. It is now more than a year since the initial U.S. visit. In our briefing of the Arab Ambassadors following that visit we said another inspection would occur in about a year. Thus, in the absence of a better alternative and given the delicacy of the Dimona project in area relationships, we must undertake the responsibility once more.

At 3:00 p.m. Friday, June 22, Israel Ambassador Harman and you are to sign an agreement entitled "Extension of the Agreement for Cooperation Concerning Civil Uses of Atomic Energy Expiring on July 11, 1962". A brief description of the arrangements for the signing is attached at Tab A. We suggest that after the ceremony you discuss with Harman another visit to Dimona by a United States scientific team.

We believe that the U.S. visit of May 1961 and our diplomatic efforts with other governments based on its findings have been helpful in reducing Arab fears of the Dimona reactor and in keeping the subject out of the world press. Preservation of this favorable atmosphere is possible only if the course we originally charted is followed. You will recall that the kernel of the U.S. scientists' report was to the effect that, while the reactor appeared then to be designed for the peaceful purposes to which the Israelis declare it is to be devoted, it would only be by similar periodic visits that its ultimate use could be established.

Ambassador Harman in a conversation with you (Tab B) expressed his Government's agreement in principle to a subsequent visit by neutral scientists. While we wish to keep this possibility alive for future use, we feel that another U.S. visit should now be proposed. We do not expect difficulty in obtaining the Israel Government's agreement.

The Atomic Energy Commission reports the immediate availability of Dr. Ulysses Staebler, who was a member of the 1961 team. His associate, however, will be a new man, who has not yet been selected but who could be selected on very short notice. The combination is desirable in that Dr. Staebler can compare his conclusions on this visit with those of his earlier trip and the new scientist will provide a fresh viewpoint and assessment.

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RECOMMENDATION:

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RECOMMENDATION:

That you take the opportunity presented by the signing ceremony to broach to Ambassador Harman the subject of an early visit by United States scientists to the Dimona reactor, pointing out to him that the assurances the United States was able to give the world after the 1961 visit undoubtedly contributed to the relaxed attitude with which the world, initially very apprehensive of the development, now regards it. We would hope the Israel Government would agree to our renewing the assurances we passed to other governments last year. You might add that we still hope that the quiet cooperation of an acceptable neutral ultimately can be gained.

ATTACHMENTS:

- Tab A - Memorandum Concerning the Agreement to be Signed.
- Tab B - Memorandum of Conversation dated November 14, 1961.

WJH
NEA:NE:WLHamilton:ebb
6/22/62

WJH
Cleared: S/AE:Mr. Thomas (in draft)

SECRET

This document consists of 1 pages.
Number 1 of 6 copies, Series A

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

Memorandum

SECRET

TO : NEA-- Mr. Phillips Talbot

DATE: June 22, 1962

FROM : NE -- Robert C. Strong *RC*

SUBJECT: Signing with Israel of an Extended Agreement for the Peaceful
Uses of Atomic Energy (Your Office at 3:00 p.m. today.)

We have arranged for the signing by you and Ambassador Avraham Harman of a renewal of our agreement on the peaceful uses of atomic energy. As is customary, the ceremony will be held in your office without fanfare or the presence of newsmen and other non-official personnel. According to the Science Adviser's office, the ceremony takes no more than a minute or two.

The amendment embodies the following main provisions: (1) The agreement is extended from July 11, 1962 to July 11, 1964; (2) The Government of Israel without modifying this agreement may enter into an agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency for IAEA safeguards to be applied to materials and equipment transferred to Israel under this agreement.

The Government of Israel will be represented by Ambassador Harman and Dr. Ephraim Lahav, the Embassy's Scientific Counselor. You will be attended by Mr. Charles Wilson Thomas of the Science Adviser's office, possibly by a representative of the Atomic Energy Commission, and Mr. Hamilton of NE. We suggest that you ask Ambassador Harman to remain with Dr. Lahav and Mr. Hamilton after the ceremony to discuss an early visit by U.S. scientists to the Dimona reactor.

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