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DEPARTMENT OF STATE, A/CDC/MR

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Dear Mr. Ramey:

*7842-5611*

At the conclusion of the closed hearing on December 9, 1960, Representative Durham requested Mr. Farley to inform the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy of subsequent information received concerning the Israeli atomic energy program. Mr. Farley subsequently advised the Committee staff that, at the first meeting between Secretary Harter and the Israeli Ambassador later on December 9, the Ambassador disclaimed any detailed knowledge of the reactor installation near Dimona. Our inquiries of the Israeli Government and also of the French Government have been pressed since that time. In accordance with the Committee's request and Mr. Farley's telephone conversation with Mr. Conway on January 13, the enclosed summary of the information obtained is submitted for the information of the Committee. Also attached for your convenience is a compilation of public statements. Responsible officers of the Department of State will be available to discuss this information with the Committee if desired.

The official statements which the Israeli and French Governments have now given us are unequivocal as to the non-military character of the Israeli program and French assistance to it. We do not anticipate that these Governments will provide us with significant additional information in the near future. You will note, however, that we have been given formal assurance that visitors from the United States or another friendly country will be received when the present intense public interest in the question has subsided. We believe that this will be very helpful in providing first-hand reassurance, and we intend to follow up this offer at an early date.

Any possibility of proliferation of nuclear weapons—particularly in the Middle East—obviously is a matter of grave

Mr. James T. Ramey,  
Executive Director,  
Joint Committee on Atomic Energy,  
United States Congress.

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No. 13SECRETSummary of Additional Secret Information on  
Israeli Atomic Energy Program

1. We have been assured categorically at the highest level of the Israeli Government that Israel has no plans for the production of atomic weapons.

2. We have been assured that there is no third reactor in either the construction or planning stage. Israel hopes to have a power reactor in due course, perhaps in ten years but possibly no sooner than fifteen years.

3. We have been assured that Israel will be glad to receive visits by scientists from friendly countries at the Dimona reactor when public interest has quieted down. In particular, a scientist from the United States will be welcome as early as possible on this condition.

4. We have been given responsible assurances by the French that the French-Israeli cooperation program is limited to the 24 megawatt research reactor, that the French will supply all the uranium for this reactor, that the plutonium produced in the reactor will all be returned to France, that adequate arrangements have been agreed upon to assure the exclusively peaceful use of the reactor, and that resident French inspectors or periodic inspection visits will be accepted. The French assured us that they do not want to be associated with any Israeli nuclear weapons program, that they have urged public assurances of peaceful intention by the Israelis, and that they support our efforts to this same end.

5. Specific information on the Dimona reactor is the following:

a. The reactor will go critical in about three to four years and is now in the second year of construction.

b. There is no plutonium now in Israel and plutonium from the reactor will, as a condition attached to purchase of uranium abroad, return to the supplying country.

c. Israel is producing only experimental quantities of heavy water and of uranium from phosphate.

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d. No power generation is to be attempted in connection with the Dimona reactor, which is intended to provide general experience and know-how as well as a more effective research tool.

e. The stack visible in ground photographs is a water tower for this water-cooled reactor.

f. The incoming 100 KVA power lines are explained by the fact that the reactor installation serves as a distribution point not only for the reactor complex but for phosphate mining operations and a potash plant in the area.

g. In addition to the reactor the complex will include a hot laboratory, cold laboratory, waste disposal plant, a facility for rods, offices including library services, and a medical unit.

h. The reactor and ancillary facilities are expected to cost \$34 million of which \$17.8 million would be foreign exchange. The reactor itself is expected to cost \$15.4 million of which \$10 million would be foreign exchange.

6. The secrecy initially attached to the reactor arose from the fears of participating foreign companies over the prospect of Arab boycott.

7. While Israel accepts the general principle of international safeguards to assure the peaceful use of atomic energy, it believes also in equality; thus it does not propose to open the Dimona reactor to international inspection until such inspection applies to comparable reactors everywhere.

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concern to the Department. We shall continue to follow this matter closely. We do not believe, however, that extended public speculation regarding the Israeli atomic energy program will advance the interests of the United States, and we have taken and will continue to take any feasible measures to damp down speculation on this matter and in particular to avoid giving occasion for renewed suspicions and possible undesirable reactions in the Arab world. We believe that persistent but quiet diplomatic approaches are most likely to be productive.

The continued cooperation of the Joint Committee in avoiding public comment is most helpful in this regard.

Sincerely yours,

*WJM*  
William B. Macomber, Jr.  
Assistant Secretary

✓ Enclosures:

1. Summary of Information.
2. Compilation of Public Statements.

cc: NE - Mr. Meyer *AM*  
H - Mr. Schnee

AEC - Mr. Kratzer

CIA - Dr. Scoville

RSB - Mr. Flowerree

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S/AE: PJFarley:jd  
January 17, 1961

NE - Mr. Meyer *AM*

H - Mr. Schnee *AS*

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