

## Foreign Relations, 1961-1963, Volume XVIII, Near East, 1962-1963

Released by the Office of the Historian  
Documents 66-94 (87)

### Circular Airgram From the Department of State to Certain Posts<sup>/1/</sup>

CA-4726

Washington, October 31, 1962, 4:17 p.m.

<sup>/1/</sup>Source: Department of State, Central Files, 884A.1901/10-3162. Confidential. Drafted by Crawford on October 24; cleared by Strong, Thomas (DOD/ISA), Burdett, Newsom, and Herron (P); and approved by Talbot. Sent to Amman, Baghdad, Beirut, Damascus, Jidda, and Oslo and repeated to Algiers, Bonn, Cairo, Khartoum, London (by pouch), Ottawa (by pouch), Paris, Rabat, Rome, Taiz, Tel Aviv, Tripoli, and Tunis.

#### SUBJECT

Israel's Dimona Reactor

#### REF

Depcirtel 2047 of July [June] 17, 1961<sup>/2/</sup>

<sup>/2/</sup>Circular telegram 2047, June 17, 1961, advised Near Eastern posts regarding the recent U.S. inspection of the Dimona nuclear reactor. (Ibid., 884A. 1901/6-1761)

Reftel (sent all addressees except Algiers) authorized addressees inform governments to which accredited of results unpublicized visit in spring 1961 by two qualified scientists to Israel reactor site at **Dimona**. According to observations then reported, **Dimona** project appeared of type and magnitude described publicly by Israel leaders (e.g., research reactor with 24 megawatt capacity). While they also concluded reactor upon completion in two or three years would produce small quantities plutonium as do others of comparable size and character, **our experts found no evidence Israelis preparing produce weapons**. We noted, accordingly, that observations US scientists tended support public and private assurances re peaceful intent Dimona project. **We further noted that highest levels this government opposed to proliferation nuclear weapons production capabilities and had so informed Israel.**

Recently there has been further visit by American scientists to Dimona reactor.<sup>/3/</sup> This enables us renew statements of June 1961 that latest observations again confirm Israeli statements that reactor intended for peaceful purposes only. There no evidence of preparation for nuclear weapons production. Work on reactor progressing normally.

<sup>/3/</sup>On June 22, Talbot suggested to Harmon the possibility of a second visit by U.S. scientists to Israel's nuclear reactor at Dimona, arguing that such a visit could help prolong the relaxed feeling toward Israel's nuclear program since the first U.S. visit in May 1961. (Memorandum of conversation, June 22; *ibid.*, 611.84A45/6-2262) On September 14, the Department asked Harman if a visit could be arranged for two U.S. Atomic Energy Commission scientists who would be visiting Israel September 25-28 to inspect another smaller reactor. The next day, Harman conveyed Israeli regret that a decision could not be made until Ben Gurion returned from a foreign trip at the end of September. (Memorandum from Brubeck to Bundy, September 21; *ibid.*, 884A.1901/9-2162) On September 26 during the visit of the two U.S. scientists, Israeli officials took them without prior warning to the Dimona facility where they were given a 40-minute tour of the site. (Memorandum from Davies to Talbot, December 27; *ibid.*, 984A.8138/12-2762; for text, see the Supplement, the compilation on Israel)

## Annexe 65

Unless strong objection perceived, action addressees should orally convey information preceding paragraph promptly and in confidence to host governments at level deemed appropriate, although we would wish be assured information will become known at highest levels. Missions should report action taken and reactions noted.

For Damascus: Since no approach was made in Damascus last year, your statement should be altered appropriately.

Info addressees, with exception Tel Aviv, may use foregoing in discussions with local government as seems desirable and useful do so. We discussed with Canadian and UK Embassies October 23./4/ Cairo instructed separately re approach UAR./5/

/4/The memorandum of conversation, October 23, is in Department of State, Central Files, 884A.1901/10-2362.

/5/In telegram 451 to Cairo, October 22, the Department of State instructed the Embassy: "Connection your approach to Nasser regarding Cuban situation you should inform him in confidence recent visit by American scientists to Dimona reactor enables USG renew assurances of June 1961 that latest observations again confirm Israeli statements that reactor intended for peaceful purposes only. No evidence of preparation for nuclear weapons production. Work on reactor progressing normally." (Ibid., 884A.1901/10-2262)

Department intends initiate no publicity with regard visits by scientists. If leaks occur, US spokesman will say two US scientists recently in Israel in connection with US Atoms-for-Peace Agreement had opportunity visit Dimona installation which they observed to be of nature and scope publicly disclosed by Israel Government. Suggest addressees take similar line in response responsible press inquiries.

Rusk