

Israel / ZFR

Department of State

SECRET

CORRECTION ISSUED:  
8/20/63, 5 AM  
14981  
AUGUST 19, 1963  
12:48 PM

L Action

Control:  
Rec'd:

SS  
Info

FROM: TEL AVIV - CORRECTED COPY  
TO: Secretary of State  
NO: 204, AUGUST 19, 7 PM (SECTION ONE OF TWO)

PRIORITY

**EYES ONLY**

EYES ONLY

EMBTel 192.

VERBATIM TEXT.

PRIME MINISTER THIS NOON HANDED ME A LETTER DATED  
AUGUST 19 FOR TRANSMISSION TO THE PRESIDENT, THE TEXT  
OF WHICH IS AS FOLLOWS:

"DEAR MR. PRESIDENT: SINCE I WROTE TO YOU ON 17 JULY  
1963, I HAVE HAD INTENSIVE CONSULTATIONS WITH MY COLLEAGUES  
AND WITH OUR SCIENTIFIC ADVISERS ON THE MATTERS DISCUSSED  
IN YOUR LETTER TO ME OF 5 JULY.

"I DESIRE, MR. PRESIDENT, TO CONFIRM MR. BEN GURION'S  
CLEAR ASSURANCE TO YOU ON THE CHARACTER AND PURPOSE OF THE  
DIMONA REACTOR, AS EXPRESSED IN HIS CONVERSATION WITH YOU  
ON 31 MAY 1961 AND HIS LETTER OF 27 MAY 1963. I FURTHER  
EMPHASIZE THAT ON THE PEACEFUL PURPOSES OF THE REACTOR WE  
ARE BOUND BY A SPECIFIC AGREEMENT WITH THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT,  
WITH WHOSE AID THE REACTOR IS BEING CONSTRUCTED.

**EYES ONLY**

"FULLY CONSCIOUS AS I AM OF THE SPECIAL INTIMATE  
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND ISRAEL, I UNDERSTAND  
THE REASON FOR OUR TWO GOVERNMENTS TO BE IN CLOSE TOUCH ON THIS  
ISSUE. ACCORDINGLY, ALTHOUGH THE ASSISTANCE FOR THE  
CONSTRUCTION OF THIS REACTOR HAS COME FROM OTHER SOURCES

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WE ARE READY TO AGREE TO VISITS BY UNITED STATES REPRESENTATIVES.

"IN YOUR LETTER OF 5 JULY YOU REFER TO THE SCHEDULING OF THE NEXT VISIT TO DIMONA. IN THIS CONNECTION I REITERATE THE INVITATION EXPRESSED IN MR. BEN GURION'S LETTER OF 27 MAY FOR THE NEXT AMERICAN VISIT TO TAKE PLACE TOWARD THE END OF 1963. AT THAT TIME THE FRENCH GROUP WILL HAVE HANDED THE REACTOR OVER TO US AND IT WILL BE UNDERGOING GENERAL TESTS AND A MEASUREMENT OF ITS PHYSICAL PARAMETERS AT ZERO POWER. THE START-UP STAGE WILL NOT YET HAVE BEEN REACHED. THUS, THE VISIT OF YOUR PEOPLE WILL TAKE PLACE AT THE PRE-START-UP STAGE.

"IN YOUR LETTER OF 5 JULY, MR. PRESIDENT, YOU FURTHER PROPOSE THAT FROM JUNE 1964, INVITATIONS TO UNITED STATES REPRESENTATIVES TO VISIT DIMONA BE EXTENDED AT INTERVALS OF SIX MONTHS. HAVING CONSIDERED THIS REQUEST, I BELIEVE THAT WE SHALL BE ABLE TO REACH AGREEMENT ON THE FUTURE SCHEDULE OF VISITS.

"IN HIS ORAL OBSERVATIONS TO ME ON 5 JULY AMBASSADOR BARBOUR EXPRESSED YOUR PARTICULAR CONCERN ABOUT THE FUEL CYCLING OF THE REACTOR. ON THIS POINT THE POSITION IS, THAT THE URANIUM TO BE USED IS FRENCH AND IS FULLY CONTROLLED BY THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT, TO WHOM IT HAS TO BE RETURNED AFTER IRRADIATION, AS IS THE NORMAL PRACTICE IN SUCH AGREEMENTS BETWEEN SOVEREIGN STATES. THE LOAD BURNING TIME WILL BE AS LONG AS IS TECHNICALLY FEASIBLE. YOUR REPRESENTATIVES WILL BE ENABLED TO OBSERVE THE PROCEDURE OF URANIUM CONTROL DURING THEIR VISITS.

"I CANNOT CONCLUDE THIS LETTER, MR. PRESIDENT, WITHOUT ANY REFERENCE TO RECENT INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS. ISRAEL HAS NOTED WITH DEEP SATISFACTION THE CONCLUSION OF THE AGREEMENT REACHED IN MOSCOW ON THE PARTIAL CESSATION OF NUCLEAR TESTS. THIS AGREEMENT, TO WHICH WE HAVE ADHERED, WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN POSSIBLE WITHOUT YOUR PERSONAL INITIATIVE AND TENACITY AT MANY STAGES.

GP-3

BARBOUR

JTC

NOTE: PASSED WHITE HOUSE, 8/19/63 - PER S/S  
CORRECTION PASSED WHITE HOUSE, 8/20/63

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INCOMING TELEGRAM

## Department of State

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CORRECTION ISSUED:

8/20/63 8:30 AM JTC

Action

Control: 15484

Rec'd: AUGUST 20, 1963

2:21 AM

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Info

FROM: TEL AVIV -- CORRECTED COPY

TO: Secretary of State

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"THE CHIEF SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TEST-BAN AGREEMENT, AS I SEE IT, LIES IN THE POSSIBILITY THAT IT MAY BE THE FIRST STEP LEADING TO A GENERAL IMPROVEMENT IN THE RELATIONS BETWEEN THE GREAT-POWERS. WE ARE FOLLOWING WITH SYMPATHY YOUR EFFORTS TO MAKE THIS AGREEMENT THE STARTING-POINT OF A MORE GENERAL RELAXATION OF TENSIONS. IT IS OUR EARNEST HOPE THAT THE RELATIONS BETWEEN STATES IN OUR REGION WILL ALSO IMPROVE IN CONFORMITY WITH THE PRESENT INTERNATIONAL CLIMATE. YOURS SINCERELY, LEVI ESHKOL."

PRIME MINISTER COMMENTED ORALLY THAT THIS LETTER CONTAINS FOLLOWING THREE MAJOR POINTS ON WHICH ISRAEL HAS ATTEMPTED TO MEET U.S. CONCERNS AND WHICH, SINCE THEY GO BEYOND PREVIOUS POSITION AND IN VIEW OF ABSENCE OF AMERICAN PARTICIPATION IN CONSTRUCTION DIMONA REACTOR, MAY BE DESCRIBED AS CONCESSIONS: (1) FIRST VISIT WILL TAKE PLACE BEFORE CRITICALITY; (2) VISITS FROM JUNE 1964 ONWARDS IN FUTURE MAY BE CONDUCTED AS WE DESIRE, AGREEMENT THEREON WILL GIVE NO TROUBLE; (3) U.S. WILL BE PERMITTED TO OBSERVE THE PROCEDURE OF FUEL CONTROL (THIS EVIDENTLY IS WITH SPECIFIC REFERENCE TO COMMENTS I PASSED ON TO PRIME MINISTER ORALLY AS INSTRUCTED DEPTTEL 19, JULY 4).

PRIME MINISTER MADE TWO FURTHER POINTS: (A) THAT HE DID NOT REPEAT NOT WISH THAT THIS LETTER BE RELEASED FOR PUBLICATION, AND (B) THAT CONTRARY TO THE UNDERSTANDING WITH PRIME MINISTER BEN GURION IN REGARD TO EARLIER VISITS, THE FACT OF THESE PRESENT ARRANGEMENTS AND INFORMATION OBTAINED

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FROM THE VISITS ENVISAGED HEREIN SHOULD NOT REPEAT NOT BE PASSED ON TO NASSER. IN CONNECTION POINT (B), ESHKOL SAID THAT HIS MIND IS NOT ENTIRELY MADE UP AND MAY BE SUBJECT TO CHANGE AFTER FURTHER CONSIDERATION, BUT THAT, AS OF NOW, HE BELIEVES IT DESIRABLE THAT NASSER NOT REPEAT NOT BE COMPLETELY ASSURED THAT ISRAEL IS NOT WORKING TOWARD NUCLEAR WEAPONS PRODUCTION. HE NOTED NASSER'S SUPERIORITY IN CONVENTIONAL WEAPONS, HIS UNDENIED PRODUCTION OF MISSILES, AND OF LESS IMPORTANCE BUT STILL A FACTOR, NASSER'S LARGE PREPONDERANCE OF MANPOWER. IN THE CIRCUMSTANCES, THE PRIME MINISTER THOUGHT AN ELEMENT OF DOUBT AS TO ISRAEL'S CAPABILITIES COULD HAVE A USEFUL DETERRENT EFFECT AGAINST ANY EGYPTIAN ADVENTURES. I COMMENTED THAT IT COULD ALSO BE ARGUED THAT THIS ELEMENT OF DOUBT ON NASSER'S PART COULD BE DANGEROUS IN THAT, IF HE, HOWEVER ERRONEOUSLY, CONVINCED HIMSELF THAT ISRAEL IS EMBARKING ON NUCLEAR WEAPONS PRODUCTION AND SIMILARLY BECAME CONVINCED THAT ISRAEL WOULD ATTACK EGYPT WHEN IT POSSESSED SUCH WEAPONS, NASSER COULD CONCLUDE IN DESPERATION THAT HE HAD NO CHOICE BUT A PREVENTIVE ATTACK. ESHKOL ADMITTED VALIDITY THIS LINE OF THOUGHT, REITERATING HIS REMARK THAT HIS MIND IS NOT FIRMLY MADE UP AS TO BEST POLICY IN THIS RESPECT, BUT AGAIN SAID THAT FOR THE TIME BEING HE REQUESTS NASSER NOT BE REASSURED.

IT WAS AGREED THAT PRESS WOULD NOT REPEAT NOT BE INFORMED ON PURPOSE MY MEETING PRIME MINISTER TODAY. PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE WILL ANNOUNCE MEETING AS COURTESY CALL BEFORE MY DEPARTURE ON BRIEF VACATION TOMORROW.

COMMENT: IT IS EVIDENT FROM THE COMMENTS OF AUTHORITATIVE SOURCES, AS WELL AS FROM THE TENOR OF RECENT PRESS SPECULATION AND REMARKS VOLUNTEERED OVER THE PAST WEEKS BY PROMINENT ISRAELIS OF VARIOUS POLITICAL PERSUASIONS, THAT THE PRIME MINISTER HAS NOT HAD AN EASY TIME IN OBTAINING AGREEMENT OF HIS COLLEAGUES TO THE LINE TAKEN IN THIS LETTER, A LINE WHICH REPRESENTS A MAJOR EFFORT ON HIS PART AND THOSE OF HIS COLLEAGUES WHO ARE LIKE-MINDED, TO MEET U.S. ANXIETIES ON THIS IMPORTANT PROBLEM. EQUALLY OBVIOUS, I THINK, IS THE CONCLUSION, LARGELY CONFIRMED TO ME IN A SUBSEQUENT CONVERSATION WITH MRS. MEIR, WHO PROBABLY IS NOT PERSONALLY WHOLELY SYMPATHETIC, THAT A MAJOR FACTOR HAS BEEN THE IMPORTANCE ATTACHED TO THE

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ISSUE BY THE PRESIDENT PERSONALLY, AND A DESIRE TO BE HELPFUL IN A MATTER ON WHICH HE FEELS STRONGLY.

IT IS NOTEWORTHY THAT THIS LETTER MAKES NO REFERENCE TO MR. BEN GURION'S LETTER TO THE PRESIDENT OF MAY 12. PRIME MINISTER HAS RESISTED TEMPTATION, WHICH WAS STRIDENTLY ENCOURAGED BY IMPORTANT SECTIONS OF OPINION HERE, TO BARGAIN ISRAELI ACQUIESCENCE IN DIMONA SAFEGUARDS FOR PROGRESS ON PROBLEM OF FURTHERING A U.S. GUARANTEE OF ISRAEL'S GENERAL SECURITY. THIS WELCOME DEPARTURE FROM TACTICS EMPLOYED ON SOME PREVIOUS OCCASIONS MAY OR MAY NOT HAVE BEEN RESULT EFFORTS I HAVE TAKEN VARIOUS OCCASIONS TO POINT OUT PROBABLE COUNTERPRODUCTIVITY OF SUCH A BARGAINING STRATEGY. IN ANY EVENT, IN ORDER TO ENCOURAGE GROWTH THIS IMPROVEMENT IN U.S. - ISRAEL TACTICAL RELATIONSHIPS, I WOULD HOPE AND STRONGLY URGE THAT, IF IN FACT WE DO HAVE IN MIND TAKING SOME STEPS TO IMPLEMENT THROUGH PRACTICAL COORDINATION SECURITY GUARANTEES WE HAVE GIVEN ISRAEL, THE PRESIDENT'S RESPONSE TO THE MAY 12 LETTER WOULD BE EQUALLY FORTHCOMING.

GP-3.

BARBOUR

UMT/JTC

NOTE: PASSED WHITE HOUSE 8/20/63, 2:25 AM.

NOTE: CORRECTIONS PASSED WHITE HOUSE 8/20/63 7:08 AM.

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