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S.L. Kuniz

RWK: I think we ought to have another periodic check on this by scientists. Will you prod Department?

107 McGB

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR (INTELLIGENCE)

Israel - Nuclear

MEMORANDUM FOR: Special Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs

SUBJECT: Israeli Nuclear Energy Program

1. The Israeli Atomic Energy Commission was established in 1952 under the Office of the Prime Minister with headquarters at Tel Aviv and a laboratory at Rehovot. In 1955, conclusion of the U.S.-Israeli bilateral agreement for the peaceful uses of atomic energy led to the establishment of a research center at Nahi Rubin (also called Nahal Soreq), a short distance from both Tel Aviv and Rehovot. Under the terms of this agreement, Israel received a 1 megawatt swimming pool reactor, which is safeguarded by U.S. procedures and cannot contribute to a nuclear weapon program except as a basic research facility.

2. A nuclear reactor complex is under construction near Dimona in the Negev.

3.

1/11/62 -

SUBJECT: Israeli Nuclear Energy Program

[redacted]

The reactor is now considered to be a 24 to 26 megawatt research reactor, fueled with natural uranium and heavy water moderated and cooled, similar to the French EL-3 reactor and the Indian CIR (Canada-India Reactor).

4. At a power level of 26 megawatts this reactor could [redacted] of plutonium per year.

5. Ground breaking at the Dimona site took place in late 1959. On 21 December 1960, Prime Minister Ben-Gurion stated that construction would not be completed for 3 or 4 years and the site would be opened to world scientists after completion. Three weeks earlier, Bergman, Chairman of the Israeli AEC, had indicated that the reactor would go critical in the latter part of 1962. The EL-3 in France required 26 months from start of construction to criticality and 9 additional months for full power operation. The Indian CIR required 4½ years from start of construction to criticality. All told, it appears that the Dimona reactor could go critical in late 1962 or early 1963, and reach full power operation by mid 1963 to early 1964. Of course, construction difficulties could postpone these times.

6. [redacted]

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~~NOFORN~~

SUBJECT: Israeli Nuclear Energy Program

[redacted]

ROBERT ANDRY, JR.

Enclosures:
1. Photo
2. Map

> attached in big envelope
Bundy has.

~~Signed~~