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Info:

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VERBATIM TEXT

You should deliver following letter from President to Primin Ben-Curion:

"Dear Mr. Prime Minister:

"I welcome your letter of May 12 and am giving it careful study.

"Meanwhile, I have received from Ambassador Barbour a report of his conversation with you on May 14 regarding the arrangements for visiting the Dimona reactor. I should like to add some personal comments on that subject.

"I am sure you will agree that there is no more urgent business for the whole world than the control of nuclear weapons. We both recognized this when we talked together two years ago, and I emphasized it again when I met with Mrs. Meir just after Christmas. The dangers in the proliferation of national nuclear weapons systems are so obvious that I am sure I need not repeat them here.

" It is because of our preoccupation with this problem that my Government has sought to arrange with you for periodic visits to Dimona. When we spoke together in May 1961 you said that we might make whatever use we wished of the information resulting from the first visit of American

Drafted by **U:GWBall/NEA:NE:Wrcrawford**
5/17/63

Electronic transmission and classification approved by:

The Secretary

Clearances: **NEA:Mr. Talbot NE:Mr. Strong SCI:Dr. Rollefson M:Gov. Harriman** ~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~
(in substance)

to House: **S/S: Mr. Kriebel**
Bromley Smith ~~SECRET~~ **SECRET**

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scientists to Dimona and that you would agree to further visits by neutrals as well. I had assumed from Mrs. Meir's comment that there would be no problem between us on this.

"We are concerned with the disturbing effects on world stability which would accompany the development of a nuclear weapons capability by Israel. I cannot imagine that the Arabs would refrain from turning to the Soviet Union for assistance if Israel were to develop a nuclear weapons capability - with all the consequences this would hold. But the problem is much larger than its impact on the Middle East. Development of a nuclear weapons capability by Israel would almost certainly lead other larger countries, that have so far refrained from such development, to feel that they must follow suit.

"As I made clear in my press conference of May 8, we have a deep commitment to the security of Israel. In addition this country supports Israel in a wide variety of other ways which are well known to both of us. This commitment and this support would be seriously jeopardized in the public opinion in this country and in the West as a whole if it should be thought that this Government was unable to obtain reliable information on a subject as vital to peace as the question of the character of Israel's effort in the nuclear field.

"I can well appreciate your concern for developments in the UAR. But I see no present or imminent nuclear threat to Israel from there. I am assured that our intelligence on this question is good and that the Egyptians do not presently have any installation comparable to Dimona, nor any facilities potentially capable of nuclear weapons production. But, of course, if you have information that would support a contrary conclusion, I should like to receive it from you through Ambassador Barbour. We have the capacity to check it.

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"I trust this message will convey the sense of urgency and the perspective in which I view your Government's early assent to the proposal first put to you by Ambassador Barbour on April 2.

"Sincerely,

"John F. Kennedy"

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