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Action

Control: 25401

Rec'd: AUGUST 30, 1963

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FROM: TEL AVIV

Info

TO: Secretary of State

NO: 291, AUGUST 30, 3 PM

TEL AVIV 291

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SUBJECT: INSPECTIONS OF DIMONA REACTOR

AFTER RECENT DISCUSSION AT EMB ON OTHER MATTERS, DIRGEN PRIMIN'S OFFICE KOLLEK MADE FOLLOWING COMMENTS ON DIMONA INSPECTIONS:

OBVIOUSLY FAMILIAR WITH ENTIRE BACKGROUND, HE OPENED SUBJECT WITH REMARK THAT RECENT COMMUNICATIONS SEEMED VERY SATISFACTORY. ADDED THAT HE HAD NOT HAD TIME TO GO INTO LATEST LETTER THOROUGHLY, THOUGH AWARE OF DELIVERY AND ROUGHLY OF CONTENT. SAID HE HAD PARTICIPATED WITH PRIMIN AND BEN-GURION IN REVIEWING TEXT OF ESHKOL'S LAST LETTER. ESHKOL HAD WANTED BEN-GURION'S ADVICE, FOR OBVIOUS REASONS, ALTHOUGH LETTER NOW SOMEWHAT UNENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT PARTICIPATING IN SUCH DELIBERATIONS SINCE NOT IN GOVT KOLLEK SAID ESHKOL FELT THIS WAS TOO IMPORTANT A DECISION TO BE DELEGATED; THAT HE MUST THOROUGHLY FAMILIARIZE HIMSELF WITH MATTER; AND THAT IT WAS CONSEQUENTLY WORTH SPENDING HOURS WITH SCIENTISTS AND MAKING TRIPS TO SITE.

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ON MY INQUIRY, KOLLEK ADMITTED THERE HAD BEEN SPECTRUM OF OPINIONS WITHIN GOVT. THIS SPECTRUM RANGED FROM ONE EXTREME, WHICH FELT SINCE ISRAEL SOVEREIGN NATION AND RECEIVED NO HELP FROM US IN CONSTRUCTION OR INSTALLATIONS, THERE SHOULD BE NO NEED TO ACCEDE TO INSPECTION. EXAMPLE OF THIS VIEW WAS PERES. ON OTHER EXTREME WAS GROUP WHO CONSIDERED US REAL AND VALUABLE FRIEND, AND FELT IT IMPORTANT TO HONOR REQUEST ABOUT WHICH US GOVT FELT SO STRONGLY. HE CITED AMBASSADOR HARMAN AS REPRESENTATIVE OF THIS EXTREME, AND SAID HARMAN HAD SPENT SOME HOURS IN DISCUSSION OF MATTER WHEN HERE RECENTLY.

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-2- 291, AUGUST 30, 3 PM, FROM TEL AVIV

77 KOLLEK AGREED THAT A MOST DIFFICULT DECISION WOULD BE, HYPOTHETICALLY, IF GOI HAD TO CHOOSE BETWEEN ITS TWO MAJOR PILLARS OF SECURITY, NAMELY ADEQUATE NATIONAL DETERRENT ON ONE HAND AND POWERFUL SUPPORT ABROAD, SUCH AS US COULD OFFER, ON OTHER. BUT HE SAID THIS HURDLE SEEMED TO HAVE BEEN SURMOUNTED. PARENTHETICALLY, HE MENTIONED THAT DISCUSSION HE HAD WITH MCCONE IN US MADE HIM REALIZE BETTER WHY JANUARY INSPECTION MIGHT SEEM ILLUSORY DUE TO RADIATION HAZARDS WHICH WOULD BE PRESENT AT THAT STAGE.

HE THEN TOUCHED ON GOI'S INTEREST IN CLOSER RELATIONSHIP WITH US IN RESPECT TO DEFENSE PLANNING, AND WHAT SUPPORT MIGHT BE ANTICIPATED FROM US IN EVENT OF EMERGENCY. HE SAID, WHILE HIMSELF NOT VERY FAMILIAR WITH FIELD IN DETAIL, THERE WAS STRONG FEELING IN GOI THAT CLOSER ASSOCIATION WOULD BE MOST VALUABLE. HE HAD FELT IN DISCUSSIONS IN WASHINGTON, INCLUDING ONE WITH HARRIMAN, THAT US POSITION HAD NOT CRYSTALIZED ON THE MATTER AT THAT TIME. BUT HE ALSO THOUGHT THAT, WHILE ISRAEL FRIEND OF US, PERHAPS MORE LIKELY TO BE TYPE OF FRIEND WHO WOULD ATTRACT STRONG SYMPATHY IN EMERGENCY, BUT NOT NECESSARILY ONE FOR WHOM US WOULD GO TO WAR. IN ADDITION, TIME ELEMENT WOULD BE ALL-IMPORTANT. HE THOUGHT CLOSER US-ISRAELI RELATIONSHIPS WOULD TEND TO UNDERCUT STILL WIDELY HELD VIEW THAT, EVEN THOUGH NO PLANS NOW FOR MANUFACTURING NUCLEAR WEAPONS, WOULD BE SHORT-SIGHTED FOR ISRAEL NOT TO MOVE TOWARD POSITION WHERE IT COULD EXERCISE OPTION QUICKLY IF LATER CIRCUMSTANCES REQUIRED. HE DID NOT APPEAR, HERE, TO BE BROADCASTING BARGAINING TACTICS, NOR HINTING AT EXISTENCE OF GOVT PLANS AT VARIANCE WITH EXPRESSED POLICY. BUT IT SEEMED CLEAR THAT HE DID NOT CONSIDER ABANDONMENT OF OPTION TO BE IRREVOCABLE DECISION. HE CLOSED BY COMMENTING THAT, NOW THIS HAD BEEN TAKEN CARE OF, WOULD BE SEVERAL MORE HOURS A WEEK TO DEVOTE TO OTHER MATTERS.

GP-1.

BARNES

BAP

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