



Department of State TELEGRAM

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 IS0-00 NEAE-00 SS0-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00 PM-04  
NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 L-03 PRS-01 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00  
DODE-00 ACDA-07 IQ-13 EB-08 NRC-05 OES-06 FEAE-00  
ERDA-05 /092 W

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Q 031504Z FEB 77  
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4733

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E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: ENPG, OVIP (VANCE, CYRUS), IS  
SUBJECT: SECRETARY'S VISIT: ISRAEL'S NUCLEAR ACTIVITIES

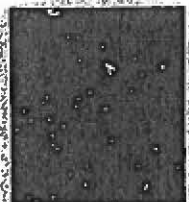
1. SUMMARY. ISRAEL HAS AN ACTIVE, HIGHLY ADVANCED NUCLEAR PROGRAM, COVERING VARIOUS RESEARCH AREAS, AND PLANS TO ENTER THE NUCLEAR POWER CONSTRUCTION PHASE THIS YEAR -- PROVIDED CONGRESS APPROVES THE US/ISRAEL COOPERATION AGREEMENT. ISRAEL HAS NOT SIGNED THE NPT. IT DENIES THAT IT IS PRODUCING WEAPONS AT ITS DIMONA NUCLEAR FACILITY, BUT REFUSES TO PERMIT FOREIGNERS TO VISIT THE PLANT. IN TALKS WITH THE SECRETARY, THE ISRAELIS MAY EXPRESS THE HOPE THAT THE PENDING NUCLEAR POWER AGREEMENT CAN BE QUICKLY APPROVED.  
END SUMMARY.

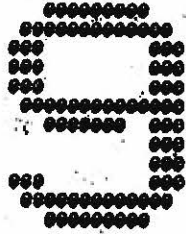
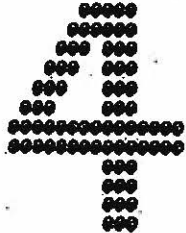
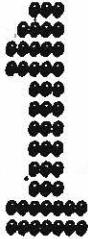
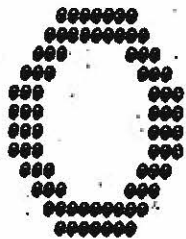
2. THE ISRAELI NUCLEAR PROGRAM IS ADMINISTERED UNDER A SYSTEM SIMILAR TO THAT OPERATED BY THE FORMER US ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION. UNDER A CLASSIFIED BUDGET, EXTENSIVE NUCLEAR RESEARCH IS CONDUCTED IN ALL SECTORS, INCLUDING SUCH ADVANCED AREAS AS LASER FUSION AND ISOTOPE SEPARATION. MOST OF THE WORK IS DONE AT THREE ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS -- WEIZMANN, HEBREW UNIVERSITY, AND TECHNION, AND AT TWO GOVERNMENT REACTOR FACILITIES--SOREQ NUCLEAR  
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RESEARCH CENTER AND NEGEV NUCLEAR RESEARCH CENTER

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(DIMONA).

3. THE SOBEB REACTOR IS A FIVE-MEGAWATT LWR WHICH WAS PROVIDED UNDER THE US ATOMS FOR PEACE PROGRAM. IT BECAME CRITICAL IN 1960. IT IS SAFEGUARDED UNDER THE US-ISRAEL NUCLEAR RESEARCH AGREEMENT AND THE ISRAEL-IAEA TRILATERAL NUCLEAR RESEARCH AGREEMENT.

4. AT DIMONA THERE IS A 26-MEGAWATT HEAVY WATER REACTOR WHICH WAS PROVIDED BY FRANCE. IT BECAME CRITICAL IN 1963 AND IS UNSAFEGUARDED. THE US WAS ALLOWED INFORMAL AD HOC INSPECTIONS UP UNTIL 1969, BUT NO US OFFICIAL HAS BEEN ALLOWED INTO THE PLANT SINCE THAT DATE. THE DENIAL LAST NOVEMBER OF A REQUEST BY SENATORS RIBICOFF AND BAKER TO VISIT DIMONA WAS GIVEN EXTENSIVE PRESS COVERAGE AND GENERATED RENEWED SPECULATION AS TO DIMONA'S ROLE IN ISRAEL'S NUCLEAR PROGRAM.

5. DIMONA THEORETICALLY HAS THE CAPACITY TO HAVE GENERATED THE MATERIAL FOR A DOZEN OR SO 20-KILOTON NUCLEAR WEAPONS SINCE GOING CRITICAL. MOREOVER, ISRAEL HAS THE SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL CAPABILITY TO HAVE DEVELOPED THESE WEAPONS BASED ON INDIGENOUS RESEARCH AND KNOWLEDGE TRANSFERRED BY PROMINENT NUCLEAR SCIENTISTS WHO HAVE EITHER IMMIGRATED TO ISRAEL OR HAVE MADE EXTENSIVE VISITS. THE GOVERNMENT'S PRONOUNCEMENTS ON THIS ISSUE ADHERE TO THE BASIC LINE THAT "ISRAEL IS A NON-NUCLEAR COUNTRY" AND "WILL NOT BE THE FIRST TO INTRODUCE NUCLEAR WEAPONS INTO THE AREA."

6. A US-ISRAEL NUCLEAR POWER AGREEMENT WAS INITIALED LAST AUGUST, BUT HAS NOT YET BEEN APPROVED BY CONGRESS. US COOPERATION IN THIS FIELD WITH ISRAEL AND EGYPT WAS FIRST PROPOSED BY PRESIDENT NIXON DURING HIS VISIT  
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TO THE MIDDLE EAST IN 1974 AND THE TWO NEGOTIATIONS WERE CONDUCTED IN TANDEM. THE ISRAELI PROGRAM HAS MOVED SLOWLY, DESPITE THE STIMULUS OF HIGH OIL PRICES, BECAUSE OF THE MAGNITUDE OF THE PROGRAM (FOR A COUNTRY THE SIZE OF ISRAEL) AND DIFFICULTIES IN FINDING A SUITABLE SITE, BUT ALSO BECAUSE OF A LINGERING ISRAELI RELUCTANCE TO SEE A US COOPERATIVE PROGRAM WITH EGYPT

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III THE NUCLEAR FIELD.

7. THE ISRAELIS NOW WISH TO MOVE AHEAD AND ARE IN THE FINAL STAGES OF CONTRACTUAL NEGOTIATIONS WITH US FIRMS FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF TWO 950 MEGAWATT POWER PLANTS. WESTINGHOUSE SEEMS TO HAVE THE INSIDE TRACK, IN PART BECAUSE OF THE SUITABILITY OF ITS REACTOR FOR LATER COUPLING WITH A WATER DESALTING FACILITY. WHILE THE ISRAELIS ARE BELIEVED TO BE INTERESTED IN DEVELOPMENT OF AN INDEPENDENT NUCLEAR FUEL CYCLE, THEY MAY BE DETERRED BY THE ENORMOUS FINANCING REQUIREMENT FOR SUCH A FACILITY.

8. ISRAEL HAS NOT SIGNED THE NPT. IN NOVEMBER 1976 FOREIGN MINISTER ABLONDIPOINTED OUT TO CODEL RITCHIE/BAKER THAT HE IS IN FAVOR OF SIGNATURE, BUT ISRAEL LIVES IN A WORLD WHERE ITS NEIGHBORS SIGN BUT CLAIM THOSE SIGNATURES DO NOT APPLY TO THEIR NEGOTIATIONS WITH ISRAEL, AND ISRAEL, THEREFORE, HAS NO FAITH IN THE NPT. ISRAEL RESPONDED POSITIVELY TO A PROPOSAL SEVERAL YEARS AGO BY IRAN AND EGYPT FOR A NUCLEAR FREE ZONE IN THE MIDDLE EAST, PROVIDED THAT ALL ASPECTS OF SUCH A PROPOSAL WOULD BE NEGOTIATED BY ALL POTENTIAL MEMBER STATES WITH NO DISCRIMINATION. THERE HAS BEEN NO FURTHER ACTION ON THIS PROPOSAL.  
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