EASTERN
15/5/55

SECRET
ER 1241/24/G

FROM P. E. Rendall
PARIS - NEWS
No. 1297/11/14
Dated June 11th
Received June 13th

SUBJECT:
Talk with Senior of Quai d’Orsay on Israeli Nuclear Activity

Encloses copy of:

References and Relevant Papers:
- 119/3/4
- 15/3/4
- 15
- 28/6/4

MINUTES:

C.P. copy & German

Important in this connection that the French have been more active in trying to stop the secret
information from reaching the Americans. The Canadian
seems to be passing it to the French if
information could otherwise be passed to the French.

I have spoken to the Americans on the point and
have not been told at this stage how far they
have come in a preliminary sense on the Israeli
point. The French should always be given any
information in this case.

The Americans have not contributed to the Canadian
(U.S. ambassador) on February 21st,

"We know there is a foreign power interested in French
questions - they have acquired many excellent sources,"

(Commentary) who is being handled by 1241/24/G.

(Handwritten notes:
2/5/6
2/1/6
7/5/6
6/1/6
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FO 371/175844/ER 1241/24G

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In your letter BR 1247 of April 21 about Israel's nuclear activities you suggested a number of points which we might put to the French were they to resume the dialogue on the subject with us. Subsequently Laurence wrote to Peadle (his letter VG 1043/6 of April 29) reporting a conversation he had had with Ejron of the French Embassy.

2. When I called on Soutou the other day for a tour de conversation the conversation turned to Israel and I found him very ready to discuss the subject of Israel's nuclear activities. He started off by saying that the French agreed with us that it could prove disastrous if the Israelis were to develop a nuclear military potential since it would almost certainly stimulate the Egyptians into trying to acquire a similar capability for themselves. He said that French policy in this matter was extremely firm (meaning, no doubt, that the Élysée was now even more determined than before not to arouse Arab suspicions that France was assisting Israel to acquire a military nuclear capability).

3. Confirming what de la Grandville had previously told us (my letter of February 34), Soutou said that the French Government recognised that it was probably Israeli policy to attempt at least to put themselves in a position to make a nuclear bomb if they wanted to. He repeated that the French, for their part, were satisfied that the system of control now operating on the supply of French material and its return for re-processing and plutonium-recovery was meticulous.

Everything was being checked and weighed to the last milligram.

4. Soutou then explained that the original Franco-Israeli agreement for nuclear co-operation had been rather loosely drafted and had not made it a condition that only French uranium should be used in the reactor supplied by the French - though this was clearly the spirit of the agreement. The French interpreted the agreement in this sense and had already prevented the sale of uranium to the Israelis from one of the ex-French African countries. Soutou added that, if the Israelis now succeeded in obtaining significant supplies of uranium from sources other than France (he mentioned South

Afica,

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Africa, but not Argentina, and I naturally made no reference to it in view of the secrecy of the Canadian information mentioned in Goodison's letter of April 29 to Kallas. The French would tell them that they regarded this as a breach of the agreement and that they would consequently withdraw from it and deny the Israelis any further assistance.

5. As time was short I did not have the opportunity to put the points suggested in the enclosure to your letter under reference except to ask if the French knew whether or not there was a plutonium separation plant at Dimona. Soutou replied that the French did not believe that the Israelis had such a plant.

6. It is interesting to find the French still ready to talk to us about this delicate subject at a time when even Soutou is becoming much less frank in discussing African affairs. There are special reasons for this. You may therefore think that it would be worth telling the Canadians about my conversation with Soutou and suggesting that, since the French seem to be sincerely in agreement with their Western partners in wishing to prevent the Israelis acquiring a military nuclear capability, the Canadians might like to consider talking to the French (or authorising us to do so) about the Argentine deal. I appreciate that the Canadians may not agree to this suggestion since they have so far treated their information as guard, but it seems to me that if we really want the French to do what they can to prevent the Israelis breaking the spirit of the Franco-Israeli agreement we shall have to take them into our confidence when we hear of Israeli attempts at evasion.

7. I am sending copies of this letter to Kallas in Tel Aviv, Wright in Washington and Maitland in Cairo on a secret and guard basis. I enclose additional copies for Arkell in the Home Office Intelligence Staff and Redpath in the Commonwealth Relations Office who received copies of Goodison's letter under reference.

(P.E. Ramsbotham)