

November 11, 1966

**Airgram A-49 from the US Embassy in Gabon to the
Department of State, 'Reported Diversion of
Gabonese Uranium to Israel'**

Citation:

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Summary:

The Embassy reported the Gabonese government's assertion that France was the sole procurer of Gabonese uranium; however, it noted that this statement did not preclude a possible diversion to Israel.

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE
AIRGRAM

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DATE: November 21, 1966

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TO : Department of State

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SUBJECT: Reported Diversion of Gabonese Uranium to Israel

REF : -

In a confidential Aide Memoire of October 14, 1966, the Embassy enclosed the latest version of the Battle Act Lists for the information of the Gabonese Government and asserted its understanding:

"that exports of uranium ore from Gabon which are covered by the Battle Act embargo list are marketed for consumption in Free World countries, and it is assumed that this will continue to be the case."

In its unclassified reply by Note 05171 of October 29, 1966, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Gabon stated as follows:

"as is stated in the Aide Memoire, the Gabonese uranium production is put on the market with a view to exclusive consumption in countries of the Free World. In point of fact, France is sole procurer of the totality of this production which, incidentally, does not cover all its consumption needs, so that the possibility of the resale by France of Gabonese uranium concentrates to other countries is practically excluded."

COMMENT: There have been allegations that Israel was the recipient of Gabonese uranium ore for possible use in the creation of a military atomic capability. The statement cited above from the Gabonese Foreign Ministry is, of course, not conclusive evidence that Gabonese uranium ore is not reaching Israel. Nothing in the Gabonese statement would preclude the transfer of uranium concentrate of Gabonese or other origin to Israel on the part of France. The statement is nevertheless of some interest in the light of the rumored diversion. It is also consistent with the information on this subject submitted previously by this Embassy (Embtel 157, November 10, 1965).

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