

February 13, 1961
Department of State Memorandum of Conversation,
'Inspection of Israel's New Atomic Reactor'

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Summary:

Secretary of State Rusk meets with Ambassador Harman to raise the desirability of a US visit to Dimona, noting that Israeli "candor" was important to the state of the US-Israeli relationship.

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Memorandum of Conversation

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PARTICIPANTS: The Secretary of State
Avraham Harman, Ambassador of Israel
Mordechai Gazit, Minister, Embassy of Israel
NEA - G. Lewis Jones
NE - William L. Hamilton

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The Secretary asked Ambassador Harman if he had received further word from his Government regarding the new atomic reactor southeast of Beersheba.

Ambassador Harman replied that Ben-Gurion is well aware of the United States Government's interest and is entirely in favor of a visit from representatives of a friendly power or, for that matter, a number of friendly powers. Ambassador Harman said he could now assure the Secretary that as soon as Ben-Gurion's preoccupation with the Cabinet crisis subsides, and providing he is returned to power, he will give the earliest attention to the question of arranging a visit.

The Secretary replied that he found this information very encouraging. He underscored United States' sensitivity on the subject, which he said is intensified at the moment because nuclear test discussions are about to begin. It would be an advantage for the Department to be able to convey the Ambassador's assurances to United States representatives. He intimated that Israel's complete candor in this field would be of great importance to the future relationships of the two governments.

Ambassador Harman minimized the importance of the reactor as a contemporary development in the nuclear field, stating that it is only in the process of becoming "something", and that a period of two or three years would elapse before it is completed.

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

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