

TELEGRAM

Foreign Service of the
United States of America

INCOMING AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

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AMBASSADOR HARMAN TOLD ASSISTANT SECRETARY TALBOT MARCH 15 THAT PRIME MINISTER ESHKOL AND FOREIGN MINISTER MEIR TOOK VERY SERIOUS VIEW OF NEW YORK TIMES DISCLOSURES ON DIMONA REACTOR (DEPTEL 1691). VISITS HAD BEEN HANDLED ON BASIS COMPLETE SECRECY SO GOI BOWLED OVER THAT REPORTER FINNEY ABLE MENTION VISITS MADE YEAR AGO AND MONTH AND HALF AGO. RESULTS OF DISCLOSURES UNPREDICTABLE SINCE DOMESTIC POLITICAL SITUATION IN ISRAEL DELICATE. GOI ALREADY UNDER CRITICISM BY BEN-GURION FOR GIVING IN TO ALLEGED US PRESSURE ON JERUSALEM PARADE.

TALBOT SAID WE ALSO REGRETTED LEAKS. UNFORTUNATE THAT FINNEY WAS ABLE TO FOLLOW UP REMARKS OF DEPUTY PRININ ABBA EBAN ON "MEET THE PRESS." HE HAD GOTTEN TO EBAN BEFORE ISRAEL EMBASSY AWARE OF IT AND TO KEY USG OFFICIALS BEFORE DEPARTMENT KNEW IT. WE WERE LIMITING COMMENT TO BROAD REMARKS DESIGNED TO FUZZ DETAILS. WE DID NOT ANTICIPATE MORE STORIES.

TALBOT REMARKED PAST MONTHS MARKED BY MOST EXTRAORDINARY LEAKS WHICH HAD ADVERSE EFFECT UPON CONDUCT QUIET DIPLOMACY IN NEAR EAST.

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AP 11-9 Thoms