

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

# Memorandum

SECRET  
EXCLUSIVE DISTRIBUTION

This document consists of  
2 pages; no. 1 of 5  
copies, Series A.

TO : NEA - Mr. Talbot

FROM : NE - Rodger P. Davies *RPD*

SUBJECT: Israel's Cabinet Crisis and the Dimona Inspection

DATE: December 15, 1964

## Discussion:

We are concerned that the resignation of Prime Minister Eshkol appears to have no sound political reasons. The pretext, the revival of the Lavon affair by Ben-Gurion, is a dead horse that has received repeated posthumous beatings. Eshkol remains the only likely candidate for the Prime Ministership, so that he could return to office much stronger for having resigned and more immune to domestic political attack. If President Shazar should ask Eshkol to head a caretaker government, however, he could still continue as Prime Minister until the parliamentary elections originally expected November 1965. Such an arrangement would enable Eshkol to plead more effectively that he was in no position to entertain distasteful foreign proposals.

We feel sure Israeli leaders are aware of our concern about Israel's activities in the nuclear and missile fields. If, as seems likely, Israel has decided to develop a nuclear weapon, it will make every effort to conceal the fact from us until we can be faced with a fait accompli. Eshkol, however, found it necessary to bow to White House pressure to set a date for the next Dimona inspection despite pleas for a delay because of domestic difficulties. Selection of January 30 as a suitable time made further delays difficult, barring a serious internal political upheaval. The Prime Minister's resignation meets this description and allows ample time to request postponement of the inspection.

Despite their apparent differences today, we must bear in mind the long and close association of Eshkol and Ben-Gurion. Both played major roles in the establishment of Israel as a state. Both regard defense measures as the keystone to Israel's survival. Deputy Defense Minister Peres and former Agriculture Minister Dayan, both Ben-Gurion men, share this view. Therefore, cooperation by these men to create circumstances that would permit Israel to develop unhindered the ultimate deterrent against Arab attack is neither illogical nor unlikely. The present cabinet crisis need affect neither the ultimate position of Eshkol or the Mapai party.

Recommendation....

SECRET  
EXCLUSIVE DISTRIBUTION



Buy U.S. Savings Bonds Regularly on the Payroll Savings Plan

SECRET  
EXCLUSIVE DISTRIBUTION

- 2 -

Recommendation:

1. That we press for the Dimona inspection as scheduled on January 30 on the terms set forth in our telegram now awaiting clearance at the White House.

2. That, if necessary, we request the President's permission to exert the graduated pressures set forth in our memorandum on extension of IAEA safeguards to nuclear facilities in the Near East (attached).

Attachment:

Graduated Scale of Pressures.

*1. We would press for Jan. 30 inspection when signs appeared that Israelis reneging. Keep me informed of such indications.*  
D

cc: NEA/JDJernegan

NEA:NE:HE Russell:rvc:12/15/64

SECRET  
EXCLUSIVE DISTRIBUTION

ENCLOSURE III

SECRETPRESSURES THAT COULD BE APPLIED TO PERSUADE ISRAEL  
TO ADOPT LAEA SAFEGUARDS FOR ALL NUCLEAR FACILITIES

If, after receiving the President's request, Prime Minister Eshkol demurred or refused to accede, the following graduated scale of pressures could be applied:

1. Formal, reasoned reiteration through diplomatic channels.
2. Warning that non-compliance would force reappraisal of forms of U.S. support to Israel.
3. Public restatement by President of U.S. non-proliferation policy with emphasis on the Near East arms race.
4. Reduction or elimination of development loan support.
5. Elimination of PL-480 sales.
6. Curtailment of all military sales and training.
7. Termination of special military support assistance.
8. Reinterpretation of U.S. tax policy to make financial contributions channeled to Israel taxable.

SECRET

GROUP 3

Downgraded at 12 year intervals;  
not automatically declassified.



This document is from the holdings of:

The National Security Archive

Suite 701, Gelman Library, The George Washington University

2130 H Street, NW, Washington, D.C., 20037

Phone: 202/994-7000, Fax: 202/994-7005, [nsarchiv@gwu.edu](mailto:nsarchiv@gwu.edu)

[Read related article:](#)

**Duplicity, Deception, and Self-Deception: Israel, the United States, and the Dimona Inspections, 1964-65**

2020-11-03