Your 1157 and 1161

On basis lead given by Deputy PriMin Eban at "Meet the Press" TV interview, NYTimes reporter John Finney, who for some years Scientific Editor, ascertained from Ulysses S. Staebler, leader US Dimona teams 1964 and 1965, that he had visited Dimona facility. This consistent with guidance agreed upon for publicity on visit. Impossible therefore delete statement that "US scientific personnel have been to Dimona" contained Deptel 915.

In answer query by Finney about secrecy surrounding Dimona visits, Department explained for his background information that publicity would cause GOI internal political difficulties. We understand this explanation satisfied Finney, but he intends to publish story using mention of Dimona visits as springboard for story on need for extension international control such nuclear facilities.

Believe effort stop story at this late date likely be unsuccessful and would provide press greater incentive uncover facts.

Since disclosure visits would cause no problems for USG and might even offer certain political advantages in terms easing area tensions, we would welcome GOI decision use Eban action statement implying US knowledge nature.
Dimona to allay Arab fears about Dimona by public admission US has assured itself as to peaceful character reactor.

Israeli Counselor Gazit when apprised of above asked Departmental intercession to have reference to visit deleted from New York Times story. Department officer said it most unlikely any US newspaper would respond to such a request. In addition this might serve to renew Finney's long-held suspicions of Israeli intentions which now seem dissipated and produce a more damaging account.

GP-3.

END

RUSK