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American Embassy,

Tel Aviv

July 5, 1963

Dear Mr. Prime Minister:

I enclose the text of a letter which I have been instructed to deliver to you from President Kennedy.

Sincerely yours,

Walworth Barbour

Enclosure:

Letter from President Kennedy

His Excellency

Mr. Levi Eshkol,

Prime Minister of Israel.

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"Dear Mr. Prime Minister:

"It gives me great personal pleasure to extend congratulations as you assume your responsibilities as Prime Minister of Israel. You have our friendship and best wishes in your new tasks. It is on one of these that I am writing you at this time.

"You are aware, I am sure, of the exchanges which I had with Prime Minister Ben-Gurion concerning American visits to Israel's nuclear facility at Dimona. Most recently, the Prime Minister wrote to me on May 27. His words reflected a most intense personal consideration of a problem that I know is not easy for your Government, as it is not for mine. We welcomed the former Prime Minister's strong reaffirmation that Dimona will be devoted exclusively to peaceful purposes and the reaffirmation also of Israel's willingness to permit periodic visits to Dimona.

"I regret having to add to your burdens so soon after your assumption of office, but I feel the crucial importance of this problem necessitates my taking up with you at this early date certain further considerations, arising out of Mr. Ben-Gurion's May 27 letter, as to the nature and scheduling of such visits.

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"I am sure you will agree that these visits should be as nearly as possible in accord with international standards, thereby resolving all doubts as to the peaceful intent of the Dimona project. As I wrote Mr. Ben-Gurion, this Government's commitment to and support of Israel could be seriously jeopardized if it should be thought that we were unable to obtain reliable information on a subject as vital to peace as the question of Israel's effort in the nuclear field.

"Therefore, I asked our scientists to review the alternative schedules of visits we and you had proposed. If Israel's purposes are to be clear beyond reasonable doubt, I believe that the schedule which would best serve our common purposes would be a visit early this summer, another visit in June 1964, and thereafter at intervals of six months. I am sure that such a schedule should not cause you any more difficulty than that which Mr. Ben-Gurion proposed in his May 27 letter. It would be essential, and I understand that Mr. Ben-Gurion's letter was in accord with this, that our scientists have access to all areas of the Dimona site and to any related part of the complex, such as fuel fabrication facilities or plutonium separation plant, and that sufficient time be allotted for a thorough examination.

"Knowing that you fully appreciate the truly vital significance of this matter to the future well-being of
Israel

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Israel, to the United States, and internationally, I am sure our carefully considered request will have your most sympathetic attention.

"Sincerely,

JOHN F. KENNEDY

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