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Authority WNO 969000
By [Signature] NARA Date 6/18/08

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THE SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON

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April 19, 1968

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

Subject: Letter to Prime Minister Eshkol on NPT

Recommendation:

I recommend that you send the enclosed letter to Prime Minister Eshkol, urging Israeli support for UNGA endorsement of the NPT at an early stage of the resumed UNGA session. If you approve, the letter should be sent by telegraph to be timely.

Discussion:

The Israeli Government has adopted a favorable but passive attitude toward the NPT. The Israelis apparently wish to see what kind of a reception the treaty draft gets in New York before committing themselves to it. At the same time most of the Arab countries wish to be assured that Israel will adhere to the treaty, which they otherwise favor, before committing themselves. We thus seem to be facing a situation where the two sides of the Middle East equation are waiting for the other to act. Since Israel has the greater technical ability to develop nuclear weapons it will be argued that it should be the first to declare itself on the NPT. Therefore, it clearly is in our interest, and I believe Israel's, to take the initiative.

DEF 18-6

Dean Rusk

Dean Rusk

Enclosure:

Suggested letter.

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GROUP 1

Excluded from automatic
downgrading and
declassification

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By SW NARA Date 6/12/08

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DRAFT MESSAGE TO THE PRIME MINISTER OF ISRAEL

Dear Mr. Prime Minister:

The resumed session of the United Nations General Assembly, to convene on April 24, will have the opportunity to take a major step to increase international security and stability by endorsing a treaty to prevent the further spread of nuclear weapons.

As you are aware, the Eighteen Nation Committee on Disarmament has worked for several years, pursuant to requests of the General Assembly, to develop a non-proliferation treaty. The Co-Chairmen of the Committee, in developing the treaty, have taken into account numerous suggestions by interested countries and have made a genuine effort to accommodate all interests consistent with the objectives of the treaty. It is now the function of the General Assembly to review the efforts of the Committee and to decide on further steps to be taken. It is my strong feeling that the General Assembly should endorse the treaty and ask that it be opened immediately for signature by as many countries as possible so that it may enter into force at the earliest possible date.

The speed with which the treaty enters into force and its effectiveness in accomplishing its purposes will depend in part on the number of nations which support it in the General Assembly and which adhere to it subsequently. A widely supported non-proliferation treaty will enhance the security of all parties by eliminating concerns that neighbors or rivals might produce or

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acquire control of nuclear weapons, thereby creating a highly unstable military and political environment.

To assure prompt and widespread support for the treaty, parallel action will be necessary on the part of certain nations and groups of nations which have an understandable desire to assure themselves that their neighbors will also adhere to the treaty. The Middle East is clearly an area which stands greatly to benefit from the enhanced security which this treaty will provide. In this area, parallel action by Israel and the Arab States will be required for such a benefit to be realized.

The Government of Israel, which, as the most technologically advanced state in the Middle East, has made clear its intention not to be the first to introduce nuclear weapons into the area, is therefore in a position to take the lead in assuring that the treaty will effectively encompass the nations of the Middle East. That is why I urge you, Mr. Prime Minister, to take the initiative at the General Assembly in making clear the readiness of your Government to join in supporting the treaty at the resumed United Nations General Assembly session. This, I trust, will shortly be followed by an announcement that Israel is prepared to sign the treaty.

As you know, I am keenly aware of the many problems you face in assuring Israel's security. I recognize your concern over the buildup of conventional weapons in the states surrounding Israel. I can assure you again, as I did in January, that we will press every opportunity to achieve satisfactory limitation of shipments from the Soviet Union. I can also

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repeat what I told you in January about my own determination to keep Israel's needs under active and sympathetic review.

In that context, I believe this treaty is crucial to the ultimate security of Israel. While we will work to limit the conventional arms race or keep it in appropriate balance, it is absolutely essential to prevent that race from leaping into weaponry against which Israel cannot be defended. The consequences of its use in your country are unthinkable.

Because we do not expect any Arab nuclear capability in the foreseeable future, Israel's objective must be to prevent, insofar as is possible by political arrangements, the transfer of such weapons to its neighbors. The United States knows well what can happen when a weakened leader makes concessions to a great power as Castro did in Cuba in 1962. While the gains to Israel would be vital, the only cost to Israel would be self-denial of the questionable deterrent of an unknown nuclear capability.

I believe that, in signing this treaty, Israel would take an historic step toward assuring its lasting place in the Middle East. As you know, I could not bring myself to propose a step which I did not believe served that objective.

However, I must also tell you that I consider this treaty to transcend even these crucial national issues. Its potential contribution to the safety and survival of all mankind--as well as to the survival of each nation large or small--is so great as to compel its separate consideration. I am confident that Israel, which has already given so much to mankind, will

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not ignore the worldwide significance of this act. I hope, therefore,
that I can count on your government's initiative in supporting this treaty
in the coming session of the United Nations General Assembly.

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By S NARA Date 6/18/05

Department of State

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ORIGIN SS 20

INFO NEA 13, IO 13, ACDA 16, GPM 04, NSC 10, L 03, SCI 05, CIAE 00, INR 07,
NSAE 00, RSC 01, DODE 00, /092 R

DRAFTED BY: TEXT OF PROPOSED PRESIDENTIAL MESSAGE RECEIVED
FROM WHITE HOUSE FOR REVISION AS LETTER FROM SECRETARY
APPROVED BY: THE SECRETARY
NEA-MR. DAVIES
S75-MR. HOUDOX
OTHER CLEARANCES ON PREVIOUS VERSION

P R 281707Z APR 68
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV PRIORITY
INFO USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
USMISSION GENEVA

S E C R E T STATE 154625

DISTO

1: PLEASE DELIVER FOLLOWING MESSAGE TO FOREIGN MINISTER EBAN
FROM THE SECRETARY.

QUOTE DEAR MR. MINISTER:

WE HAVE IN THE PAST DISCUSSED THE DANGERS TO MANKIND
OF A FURTHER SPREAD OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS. THE CURRENT RESUMED
SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY WILL HAVE
THE OPPORTUNITY IN THIS RESPECT TO TAKE A MAJOR STEP BY

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ENDORING A TREATY TO PREVENT THE FURTHER SPREAD OF NUCLEAR
WEAPONS. IT IS THE STRONG FEELING OF MY GOVERNMENT THAT THE
GENERAL ASSEMBLY SHOULD ENDORSE THE TREATY AND ASK THAT IT
BE OPENED IMMEDIATELY FOR SIGNATURE BY AS MANY COUNTRIES AS
POSSIBLE SO THAT IT MAY ENTER INTO FORCE AT THE EARLIEST

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By S NARA Date 6/18/05

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POSSIBLE DATE.

TO ASSURE PROMPT AND WIDESPREAD SUPPORT FOR THE TREATY, PARALLEL ACTION WILL BE NECESSARY ON THE PART OF CERTAIN NATIONS AND GROUPS OF NATIONS WHICH HAVE AN UNDERSTANDABLE DESIRE TO ASSURE THEMSELVES THAT THEIR NEIGHBORS WILL ALSO ADHERE TO THE TREATY. THE MIDDLE EAST IS CLEARLY AN AREA WHICH STANDS GREATLY TO BENEFIT FROM THE ENHANCED SECURITY WHICH THIS TREATY WILL PROVIDE. IN THIS AREA, PARALLEL ACTION BY ISRAEL AND THE ARAB STATES WILL BE REQUIRED FOR SUCH A BENEFIT TO BE REALIZED.

THE GOVERNMENT OF ISRAEL, WHICH, AS THE MOST TECHNOLOGICALLY ADVANCED STATE IN THE MIDDLE EAST, HAS MADE CLEAR ITS INTENTION NOT TO BE THE FIRST TO INTRODUCE NUCLEAR WEAPONS INTO THE

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AREA, IS THEREFORE IN A POSITION TO ASSURE THAT THE TREATY WILL EFFECTIVELY ENCOMPASS THE NATIONS OF THE MIDDLE EAST. THAT IS WHY I URGE, MR. MISITER, THAT YOUR GOVERNMENT AS EARLY AS POSSIBLE IN THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY MAKE CLEAR ITS READINESS TO JOIN IN SUPPORTING THE TREATY AT THE RESUMED UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY SESSION. THIS, I TRUST, WILL SHORTLY BE FOLLOWED BY AN ANNOUNCEMENT THAT ISRAEL IS PREPARED TO SIGN THE TREATY.

AS YOU KNOW, WE ARE KEENLY AWARE OF THE MANY PROBLEMS YOU FACE IN ASSURING ISRAEL'S SECURITY. WE RECOGNIZE YOUR CONCERN OVER THE BUILDUP OF CONVENTIONAL WEAPONS IN THE STATES SURROUNDING ISRAEL. I CAN ASSURE YOU AGAIN, AS PRESIDENT JOHNSON TOLD PRIME MINISTER ESHKOL IN JANUARY, THAT WE WILL PRESS EVERY OPPORTUNITY TO ACHIEVE SATISFACTORY LIMITATION OF SHIPMENTS FROM THE SOVIET UNION. I CAN ALSO REPEAT WHAT THE PRESIDENT SAID IN JANUARY ABOUT OUR DETERMINATION TO KEEP ISRAEL'S NEEDS UNDER ACTIVE AND SYMPATHETIC REVIEW.

IN THAT CONTEXT, I BELIEVE THIS TREATY IS CRUCIAL TO THE

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By *S* NARA Date 6/18/06

Department of State

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ULTIMATE SECURITY OF ISRAEL. WHILE WE WILL WORK TO LIMIT
THE CONVENTIONAL ARMS RACE OR KEEP IT IN APPROPRIATE BALANCE,
IT IS ABSOLUTELY ESSENTIAL TO PREVENT THAT RACE FROM LEAPING
INTO WEAPONRY AGAINST WHICH ISRAEL CANNOT BE DEFENDED. THE
CONSEQUENCES OF ITS USE IN YOUR COUNTRY WOULD BE CATASTROPHIC.

BECAUSE WE DO NOT EXPECT ANY ARAB NUCLEAR CAPABILITY IN
THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE, ISRAEL'S OBJECTIVE MUST BE TO PREVENT,
INSOFAR AS IS POSSIBLE BY POLITICAL ARRANGEMENTS, THE TRANSFER
OF SUCH WEAPONS TO ITS NEIGHBORS. WHILE THE GAINS TO ISRAEL
THROUGH ADHERENCE TO THE NPT WOULD BE VITAL, THE ONLY COST
TO ISRAEL WOULD BE SELF-DENIAL OF THE QUESTIONABLE DETERRENT
OF AN UNKNOWN NUCLEAR CAPABILITY.

HOWEVER, I MUST ALSO TELL YOU THAT I CONSIDER THIS TREATY
TO TRANSCEND EVEN THESE CRUCIAL NATIONAL ISSUES. ITS POTENTIAL
CONTRIBUTION TO THE SAFETY AND SURVIVAL OF ALL MANKIND--
AS WELL AS TO THE SURVIVAL OF EACH NATION LARGE OR SMALL--
IS SO GREAT AS TO COMPEL ITS SEPARATE CONSIDERATION. I AM
CONFIDENT THAT ISRAEL WILL NOT IGNORE THE WORLDWIDE SIGNIFICANCE

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OF THIS ACT. I HOPE, THEREFORE, THAT THE UNITED STATES
CAN COUNT ON YOUR GOVERNMENT'S INITIATIVE IN SUPPORTING THIS
TREATY IN THE COMING SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL
ASSEMBLY.

SINCERELY YOURS, DEAN RUSK. UNQUOTE. GP-3. RUSK

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UNITED STATES ARMS CONTROL AND DISARMAMENT AGENCY

6/25

WASHINGTON

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April 18, 1968

OFFICE OF
THE DIRECTOR

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF STATE

S/S B HQ

SUBJECT: Presidential Letter to Prime Minister Eshkol
on NPT - ACTION MEMORANDUM

Israeli Foreign Minister Eban indicated publicly on February 2, 1968 that Israel will "not be the exception" in adhering to an NPT when the best possible draft has been written. Since then we presented a revised NPT in Geneva on March 11 and solicited Israel's views on it, pointing out that it is responsive to views set forth by the General Assembly in various UN resolutions. A senior Israeli Foreign Ministry official informed Ambassador Barbour on March 27 that a GOI statement on the NPT prior to the UNGA was possible and gave the impression that it would be phrased in positive terms. However, there has been no such statement and more recent indications suggest that Israel will try to maintain its positive but passive attitude toward the treaty until it sees how the NPT fares at the UNGA.

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Our delegation in New York has recommended that a special approach be made to Israel urging its support for UNGA endorsement of the NPT at an early stage of the resumed session. It is believed that this would make it easier for a large number of Arab countries to overcome their major concern about the NPT.

I think the most effective approach to Israel under the circumstances would be at the highest level. I therefore recommend that you sign the attached memorandum to the President (TAB A) enclosing a proposed letter to Prime Minister Eshkol (TAB B).

Messrs. Sisco and Davies concur.

William C. Foster
William C. Foster

Enclosures:

- TAB A - Memo to President
- TAB B - Proposed ltr. to PM Eshkol

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