

May 1967

**Report, South African Department of Foreign
Affairs, 'Cooperation with Argentina in the Atomic
Energy Field'**

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Summary:

Details the current status of South African nuclear cooperation with Argentina, France and Israel as well as South Africa's redesignation to the IAEA Board of Governors.

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137/11/29

CO-OPERATION WITH ARGENTINA IN THE
ATOMIC ENERGY FIELD

It will be re-called that following on a despatch addressed to our Ambassador in Buenos Aires, he informed the Department that the Chairman of the Argentine Atomic Energy Commission, Admiral Quihillalt, suggested that two South Africans visit Argentina for three weeks and that two Argentinians should also visit the Republic.

The Board subsequently authorised the Director-General and the Department of Foreign Affairs to go ahead with arrangements on the basis proposed by Admiral Quihillalt.

The arrangements subsequently agreed on were conveyed to Buenos Aires and in a telegraphic reply our Ambassador there advised that, [“]Argentinians had suggested the second half of May for the visit of the two South African experts (it was envisaged that Dr. Roux himself and Dr. Robinson, Director of the National Institute for ^{M_e} Metallurgy, who is South Africa's leading expert in the fields of Special interest to Argentina, would undertake the visit).

However, in the interim period the Americans revived the question of the renewal of the bilateral with us and as this matter, as also the question of the proposed contract with the French CEA for the supply of SAFARI's fuel requirements, called for priority, Buenos Aires was telegraphed to the effect that as matters of an urgent nature not foreseen earlier had arisen, the visit to the Argentina of the South African Team would

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have to be delayed until after next September/October.

The Ambassador was requested to convey in suitable terms our regret to Admiral Quihillalt and express the hope that this would not jeopardise visit at later date.

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Co-operation with France in the Field of
Atomic Energy - Re-supply of Fuel Elements
to Pelindaba by France.

It will be re-called that the Department of Foreign Affairs sent letters addressed to Dr. Goldschmidt and Mr. Goure of the French Atomic Energy Commission by the Atomic Energy Board to the Embassy in Paris for transmission to these officials, concerning the proposed contract between the AEB and CEA for the supply of fuel elements required by SAFARI I.

In the letter to Dr. Goldschmidt, Dr. Roux indicated that there were one or two aspects which he wanted to discuss on a personal visit and with that in mind he intended to pay a visit to Paris in about the second week of May.

The Ambassador subsequently telegraphed that the CEA would be happy to hold discussions with Dr. Roux around the 22nd May and they were in agreement with minor changes proposed by the Board and were preparing a new contract on that basis.

The visit took place as planned from the 20th to the 24th May.

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Sale of Uranium to Israel.

It will be re-called that we informed the Israeli representative in Vienna earlier the year that the Atomic Energy Board was in a position to supply 100 tons of U_3O_8 at $\text{£}5.35$ per lb. f.o.b. Durban, and that the offer would be open until 31st March, 1967.

The Israeli representative indicated that he was unhappy about the price as he was under the impression that it would be $\text{£}4.60$.

After having been advised that the price of $\text{£}5.36$ was final (and after obtaining an extension until 17th April to arrive at a decision), the Israeli's accepted the option.

Presumably in view of the tense situation in the Middle East, the Israelis have now requested a postponement of deliveries for another year.

South Africa's Redesignation to the IAEA
Board of Governors, June Meeting of Board

At its Session commencing 13th June the Board of Governors of the IAEA will again be required to designate members to the Board for the period 1967/68.

Every year since the establishment of the Agency, South Africa has been designated to the Board as "the member most advanced in the technology of atomic energy agency, including the production of source materials", in the area Africa and the Middle East.

In the light hereof and since opposition to our candidature, which will be politically motivated, may materialise, we have requested ~~and~~ missions to seek the support of the Governments to which they are accredited for South Africa's re-designation to the Board.

Our Missions have also been requested to follow the same line as that which applied the previous two years in the event of the question being raised by the local authorities in regard to South Africa's reaction in the event of a challenge to our redesignation should lead to a decision by the Board of Governors to set up an ad hoc committee to determine the degree of advancement of South Africa and the UAR and possibly Israel (if the Israelis decide to present their candidature in response to the UAR challenge), namely:

Not to raise this aspect themselves in any way in conversation with the local authorities,

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but if they should be asked how South Africa was likely to react to such a proposal, to state that from background briefing made available to them on the general issue of re-designation, their conclusion was that the Republic was not likely to react favourably since there can be no doubt about South Africa's superiority in the technology of atomic energy etc, and that such a proposal was bound to be interpreted by her as an evasion of duty on the part of the Board. However, strictly for the Missions' own information, South Africa was likely to agree if no other course was open to her but it would be against her interests if that became known in advance of the Board discussions or to give the Western countries any ground for believing that she could be coerced into accepting such a proposal.

As in past years, a memorandum on South Africa's progress in the atomic energy field was drawn up by the A E B and copies thereof sent to our Missions for transmission to the local authorities.

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May, 1967.

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