

**May 17, 1979**

**Letter from Bryan Cartledge to Stephen Wall,  
'Pakistan's Nuclear Programme' (with attachments)**

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**Summary:**

This document has three parts. The first part, a letter written from Bryan Cartledge of the FCO to Stephen Wall, discusses recent correspondence from Israel's Prime Minister Menachem Begin to British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher. The document's second and third parts are PM Begin's letter, along with an accompanying Israeli intelligence report regarding Pakistan's nuclear program.

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21 May, 1979.

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cc Mr. Tuller  
0059/17.

JWJ for draft reply  
Please by 11:30  
on 22 May

cc  
PS  
PS/M Hurd  
PS/M Bleker  
PS/PJS  
Sir P. Reuter  
Mr. Crotty  
Mr. P. Moberg  
Mr. Munday  
From the Private Secretary  
Mr. Maloney (ADD)  
Mr. White (S/H)  
Nenad.

on 21/5

Dear Stephen,

Pakistan's Nuclear Programme

I told you on the telephone on 18 May that Mr. Begin had sent the Prime Minister a message concerning Pakistan's Nuclear Programme, and asked that this point should be covered in the briefing for the Prime Minister's meeting with Mr. Begin on 23 May.

I now enclose the text of Mr. Begin's message, with its enclosure, which the Prime Minister has seen. The Prime Minister has asked, in particular, whether the statements in paragraph 8 of the memorandum enclosed with Mr. Begin's letter, concerning the Emerson Electric Corporation, are well founded. I should be grateful for advice on this point, and on the response which the Prime Minister might send to Mr. Begin's message (her substantive reply need not, I suggest, be given to Mr. Begin on 23 May, but she will wish to be in a position to promise one soon.)

I am sending copies of this letter, with enclosure, to Roger Facer (Ministry of Defence) and Martin Vile (Cabinet Office).

Yours ever,  
Roger Facer

J.S. Wall, Esq.,  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

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ראש הממשלה  
THE PRIME MINISTER

SECRET

Jerusalem, May 17, 1979

Dear Prime Minister,

I am taking the liberty of forwarding to you a detailed memorandum concerning the activities of the Pakistani Government aimed at producing nuclear weaponry.

Under a regime based on one-man rule the issue itself represents a grave danger for South-East Asia. To the people of Israel it could, one day, become a mortal danger. I state this in the knowledge of Libya's close partnership with Pakistan and, as the attached document reveals, their actual cooperation in the nuclear field.

I do not, Madame Prime Minister, have to cite the nature of the regime of Colonel Gaddafi nor his public advocacy, backed by aggressive action, of a policy aimed at the destruction of the State of Israel.

One balks at the spectre of what could happen in the Middle East, and particularly to the men, women and children in Israel, should the lethal weapons of mass killing and destruction be put at any time into the hands of an absolute ruler like Colonel Gaddafi.

The Rt. Hon.  
Margaret Thatcher, P.C., M.P., M.A., B.Sc.  
Prime Minister of Great Britain  
10 Downing Street  
London

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It is therefore my most sincere and urgent request to you, Madame Prime Minister, that the Government of Great Britain use its good offices to intervene with the companies referred to in the memorandum, to withhold the supply of equipment which could make it possible for Pakistan, perhaps in the near future, to achieve a military nuclear option.

I feel confident of your understanding on a matter of such vital concern.

With every good wish,

Yours sincerely,

*M. Begin*  
Menachem Begin

SECRETPAKISTANI ACTIVITY IN THE NUCLEAR FIELDGeneral Background

1. Pakistan is presently developing a military nuclear potential based on two parallel courses: (a) enriched uranium; (b) plutonium.  
By either means Pakistan can eventually produce nuclear weapons.
  
2. Pakistani activity in the nuclear field recently provoked sharp international reactions:
  - a) The U.S. State Department spokesman announced that the United States would invoke the Symington Amendment to the Foreign Assistance Act with regard to Pakistan and would withhold economic aid. This stemmed from the U.S. conclusion that Pakistan is constructing a plant for the production of enriched uranium to supply fissile material intended for the manufacture of nuclear weapons.
  - b) Already in August 1978 France decided to hold in abeyance the construction of a reprocessing plant (for irradiated nuclear fuel) since this would enable Pakistan to separate plutonium for the production of nuclear weapons.
  - c) The question of Pakistan's activities in the field of uranium enrichment was raised in both the British and the Indian Parliaments.
  - d) The matter has been widely reported in the international press. It was the subject of a recent special television program in West Germany.

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3. The Pakistani rulers themselves, both the former and the present head of government, publicly declared on a number of occasions that they never considered themselves constrained from achieving a military nuclear potential.

Cooperation between Pakistan and Arab Countries

4. We assess that a reasonable possibility exists for the transfer of nuclear technology and know-how to Arab countries, including the radical states, amongst them Libya and via Libya to the terrorist organizations.
5. Manifold relations have been in existence between Pakistan and the Arab states for many years. These relations are expressed in numerous fields:
  - a) On the military level: Pakistan has dispatched military units to Arab countries as well as officers and pilots as instructors.
  - b) On the economic level: Pakistan receives economic aid from Arab countries, particularly from Saudi Arabia and Libya.
  - c) On the technical level: Pakistan sends technical experts to Arab countries, including experts in the nuclear field. Pakistan also trains Arab technical personnel in its academic institutions.
  - d) On the politico-military level: Pakistan supports the terror organizations.
6. It is with utmost gravity that we view the cooperation between Pakistan and Libya in the nuclear field. This assessment is made in light of the Libyan effort, ever since Gaddafi came to power, to obtain nuclear weapons and because of Libya's involvement in international terror.

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7. With regard to nuclear cooperation between Pakistan and Libya it is known that:
- a) Gaddafi visited Pakistan in February 1974 and made an inspection tour of the Kanupp reactor accompanied by Bhutto and the chairman of the Pakistani Atomic Energy Commission, Mounir Ahmed Khan. In the course of the visit Gaddafi declared that he would assist the Pakistanis as much as possible ("Nuclear Engineering International," May 1974).
  - b) Gaddafi offered to finance the construction of the French reprocessing plant in Pakistan in return for which he asked for part of its plutonium production. According to a number of sources Libya did, indeed, provide aid to the Pakistanis for the construction of the plant. ("Christian Science Monitor," August 29, 1978; "Foreign Report," October 20, 1978; "Sipri Yearbook," 1978).
  - c) The question of financing Pakistani nuclear projects was again raised during the visit to Pakistan of Libyan Prime Minister Jallud in August 1978.
  - d) Pakistani nuclear assistance to Libya is presently expressed in the following areas:
    - 1) The training of Libyan nuclear scientists in Pakistan.
    - 2) The sending of Pakistani nuclear experts to Libya.

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SECRETAssistance by British Companies to Pakistan's Nuclear Potential

8. The Emerson Electric corporation last year supplied the Pakistanis with a large quantity of high-frequency invertors. This equipment is essential for the uranium enrichment plant. The invertors were sold as equipment for a textile enterprise and it was by this means that the Pakistanis succeeded in circumventing the Export of Goods Control Order. It was only at the end of 1978 that British trade legislation was so amended as to prohibit the export of such sensitive nuclear equipment to Pakistan. It would appear, however, that by that time the invertors had already reached their destination. It is conceivable that negotiations are still continuing between Pakistan and Emerson Electric for the acquisition of additional invertors.
  
9. In addition, Britain extensively sells to Pakistan equipment ostensibly designated for the Pakistani military industry, other industries as well as for research institutions but which, in fact, serves that country's military nuclear program.

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SECRETConclusion

10. It is our view that the disruption of Pakistan's military nuclear program is feasible only through the total stoppage of equipment supply relevant to this program.
  
  11. The Pakistani nuclear program is at an advanced stage. Nevertheless, it is reasonable to assume that the total stoppage of all assistance to Pakistan in this field will prevent, or at least delay for many years, the establishment of a nuclear weapons system in that country. It is possible that the withholding of assistance (coupled with drastic pressure) will deprive Pakistan of the means to achieve a limited military nuclear option.
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