

**June 29, 1979**

**Letter from J.F. MacCulloch (British Embassy, Bonn)  
to R.J. Alston (Joint Nuclear Unit), 'Israeli Comments  
on Pakistani and Libyan Nuclear Capability'**

**Citation:**

"Letter from J.F. MacCulloch (British Embassy, Bonn) to R.J. Alston (Joint Nuclear Unit), 'Israeli Comments on Pakistani and Libyan Nuclear Capability'", June 29, 1979, Wilson Center Digital Archive, The National Archive of the UK, FCO 96/955. Contributed by Malcolm Craig. <https://wilson-center-digital-archive.dvincitest.com/document/280727>

**Summary:**

This letter, written from Jim MacCulloch at the British Embassy in Bonn to Robert Alston at the FCO's Joint Nuclear Unit, details a recent memorandum sent to West German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt by Menachem Begin about the Pakistani nuclear program.

**Original Language:**

English

**Contents:**

Original Scan

CONFIDENTIAL



BRITISH EMBASSY

BONN

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*In the*  
*to discuss with WED/*  
*NENAD whether we*  
*his memorandum*

R J Alston Esq  
JNU  
FCO

*say something to the*  
*firmly. I hope we can.*

*with the agreement of Private Office 9 W/O 10*

*9 Coltel in the Coltel 29 June 1979*

*today that we did.*  
*confirm to the agencies in strict confidence (a) that*  
*we had rec'd a letter and (b) that we had replied - giving*  
*the agencies the gist asset and upon 2 of Coltel - 711 of 20 June*  
*to which you could be born. I stressed the information shd. not be passed*  
*to other eyes.*

*Dear Robert,*

*3/1*

ISRAELI COMMENTS ON PAKISTANI AND LIBYAN NUCLEAR CAPABILITY *to 21 June 1979*

1. Rouget of the Federal Foreign Office told me on 26 June that Chancellor Schmidt had received a letter, just prior to the visit of Foreign Minister Genscher to Libya, from the Israeli Prime Minister Mr Begin, accompanied by a four-page memorandum. The letter and memorandum had referred to various reports the Israelis had heard of Pakistani nuclear intentions and mentioned five firms by name, among them some German firms. However, Rouget went on to explain that the real intent of the letter was to draw a possible link between the Pakistani leaders and Libyan Prime Minister Colonel Qadhafi, by implying that Qadhafi was extremely interested in acquiring access to Pakistan's know-how and work in this field, in order to develop or acquire nuclear weapons for eventual use against Israel. This is the whole idea of the "Islamic bomb" that has sometimes been mentioned in the press. Rouget commented acidly that the Israelis were hardly in a position to complain about the spread of nuclear weapon know-how in view of the persistent rumours and the general assessment that the Israelis already had, or were on the verge of, a nuclear capability.

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2. The Chancellor's office and the Federal Foreign Office were now preparing a draft reply for the Chancellor, on the general lines that the FRG, as part of the Nuclear Suppliers' Group and as a country that had signed the Non-proliferation Treaty, was living up to its international obligations to minimize the spread of nuclear technology that might enable others to make nuclear weapons. He admitted that they were finding the drafting of a reply at all easy. Rouget did not ask whether or not the UK Prime Minister had received a similar letter, but it seems to me that Mr Begin may well have sent such a letter as UK firms have been reported to have been involved in the Pakistani acquisition of nuclear know-how. I would be grateful if you could throw any light on the possibility that Mr Begin wrote to Mrs Thatcher or other Western leaders besides Chancellor Schmidt.

*Yours sincerely,*  
*Jim MacGulloch*

J F MacGulloch

cc: R Bedford Esq, WED  
C D Powell Esq, NENAD

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