

August 14, 1979

**Cable from the American Embassy Islamabad to the
Secretary of State, 'Letter from President Zia ul-Haq
to President Carter'**

Citation:

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Summary:

This document is a telegram between the Pakistani president Muhammad Zia and Jimmy Carter. In it, Zia protests at the recent characterization of Pakistan's nuclear program in Western media.

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Correspondence: 1-12/79**

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TAGS: MNUC, PARM, PEPR, PK, US, PPDC

SUBJ(S) LETTER FROM PRESIDENT ZIA UL-HAQ TO PRESIDENT CARTER

1. (S) ENTIRE TEXT.

2. FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF LETTER DATED AUGUST 9, 1979 FROM PRESIDENT ZIA UL-HAQ TO PRESIDENT CARTER AS HANDED TO ME BY FOREIGN SECRETARY ON AUGUST 14. AS NOTED IN SEPTEL, GOP EXPECTS LETTER TO BE DELIVERED BY PAK EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON ON AUGUST 15:

QUOTE:

HIS EXCELLENCY
MR. JIMMY CARTER
PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
WASHINGTON

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT.
THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PAKISTAN AND THE UNITED STATES

OF AMERICA HAS BEEN NURTURED OVER A LONG PERIOD. THERE HAS HARDLY BEEN GREATER NEED FOR ITS PRESERVATION AND REINFORCEMENT THAN AT PRESENT. THE DESTABILISATION OF ONE COUNTRY AFTER ANOTHER IN OUR NEIGHBOURHOOD HAS SERVED THE SOVIET UNION'S PURPOSES AND UNDERLINED THE FACT THAT PAKISTAN, A TRADITIONAL FRIEND OF THE UNITED STATES, WITH WHICH IT CONTINUES TO BE ALLIED UNDER THE 1959 BILATERAL AGREEMENT, STANDS ISOLATED. FOLLOWING THE MARXIST COUP IN AFGHANISTAN IN APRIL LAST YEAR, THE SOVIET THREAT TO PAKISTAN AND THE OIL BEARING REGION OF THE PERSIAN GULF AND ARABIAN PENINSULA HAS MOVED DOWN SOUTH FROM THE OXUS TO THE KHYBER PASS. IRAN, THE PRSTWHILE REGIONAL INFLUENTIAL WHICH WAS EXPECTED TO HAVE BOLSTERED PAKISTAN'S SECURITY AS WELL HAS, ITSELF, BEEN DESTABILISED AND IS IN THE THROES OF A REVOLUTION THE

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CONSEQUENCES OF WHICH ARE INCALCULABLE. OUR OTHER NEIGHBOUR INDIA IS ALSO FACING POLITICAL TURMOIL AND PROSPECTS OF PROLONGED POLITICAL INSTABILITY WHICH CANNOT BUT CAUSE US CONCERN.

YOU WOULD UNDERSTAND, MR. PRESIDENT, OUR DEEP DISAPPOINTMENT THAT IN SUCH A SITUATION WHICH, IN OUR ESTIMATIN, SHOULD ALSO BE A MATTER OF PROFOUND CONCERN TO THE UNITED STATES, OUR LINES OF COMMUNICATION A STAND DISRUPTED FOR REASONS BEYOND OUR CONTROL. OUR MODEST NUCLEAR RESEARCH PROGRAMME WHICH IS GEARED ENTIRELY TO PEACEFUL PURPOSES, HAS BEEN MISUNDERSTOOD AND MISINTERPRETED BY YOUR ADMINISTRATION AS WELL AS BY THE CONGRESS AND THE U.S. MEDIA, AS A SINISTER ATTEMPT TO MANUFACTURE A NUCLEAR WEAPON, WHICH, TO AGGRAVATE OUR PROBLEM FURTHER, HAS BEEN DESCRIBED AS A "MUSLIM ATOM BOMB". I AM REFERRING TO THE CBS BROADCAST BY MR. WALTER CRONKITE ON JUNE 11 AND 12, WHICH PRESENTED A HIGHLY DISTORTED AND TENDENTIOUS PICTURE OF OUR ACTIVITIES IN THE NUCLEAR FIELD, GIVING AN UNMISTAKABLE IMPRESSION THAT THE WESTERN COUNTRIES AND THE UNITED STATES WERE CONDUCTING AN ORCHESTRATED CAMPAIGN TO MISREPRESENT THE INTENT AND PURPOSE OF OUR PEACEFUL NUCLEAR PROGRAMME. THE SUGGESTION IN THE CBS BROADCAST THAT INDIA OR ISRAEL OR PERHAPS EVEN THE SOVIET UNION MIGHT BE TEMPTED TO DESTROY PAKISTAN'S NUCLEAR FACILITIES AMOUNTED TO AN INCITEMENT TO THESE COUNTRIES TO COMMIT AGGRESSION AGAINST PAKISTAN. A U.S. OFFICIAL WAS QUOTED BY THE HINDUSTAN TIMES, PUBLISHED IN NEW DELHI, AS SAYING, "IF YOU CAN TAKE OUT EAST PAKITAN IN FOURTEEN DAYS, THERE IS NO REASON WHY YOU CANNOT TAKE OUT THE NUCLEAR PLANT IN FOURTEEN MINUTES."

ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS IN THE RECENT PAST, I HAVE HAD OCCASION TO CONVEY TO VISITING U.S. DIGNITARIES AS WELL AS TO YOUR AMBASSADOR OUR CONCERN AT THE MANNER IN WHICH THE UNITED STATES HAS REACTED TO OUR PEACEFUL NUCLEAR PROGRAMME AND THE SERIOUS CONSEQUENCES IT COULD HAVE NOT ONLY FOR PAKISTAN'S SECURITY BUT ALSO FOR THE FUTURE OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIESS.

DURING MY MOST RECENT EXCHANGE OF VIEWS WITH AMBASSADOR HUMMEL ON THIS SUBJECT ON JULY 29, HE BROUGHT A MESSAGE SUGGESTING THAT YOUR GOVERNMENT WOULD WELCOME A WRITTEN ASSURANCE REGARDING OUR COMMITMENT TO A NUCLEAR PROGRAMME ENTIRELY DEVOTED TO PEACEFUL PURPOSES. I HAVE NO HESITATION WHATSOEVER, MR. PRESIDENT, IN CONVEYING TO YOU MY FIRM ASSURANCE THAT PAKISTAN'S NUCLEAR PROGRAMME IS ENTIRELY PEACEFUL IN NATURE AND THAT PAKISTAN HAS NO INTENTION OF ACQUIRING OR MANUFACTURING NUCLEAR WEAPONS.

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SUCH AN ASSURANCE IS FULLY IN ACCORD WITH PAKISTAN'S UNREMITTING EFFORTS IN THE UNITED NATIONS AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL FORUMS FOR NUCLEAR GUARANTEES TO NON-NUCLEAR WEAPON STATES AND FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A SOUTH ASIAN NUCLEAR WEAPON FREE ZONE. LET ME FURTHER ASSURE YOU OF PAKISTAN'S READINESS AT ALL TIMES TO CONTINUE TO COOPERATE WITH THE UNITED STATES IN THE UNITED NATIONS AS WELL AS BILATERALLY, IN EXPLORING HOW BEST WE MIGHT MAKE THIS REGION SAFE FROM THE THREAT OF PROLIFERATION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS.

IN CONCLUSION, MAY I SAY THAT THE SIGNING OF THE AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND THE SOVIET UNION ON LIMITING STRATEGIC WEAPONS IS AN ACHIEVEMENT OF HISTORIC PROPORTIONS. WE SEE IN THIS DEVELOPMENT A REFLECTION OF OUR OWN DEEP YEARNINGS FOR THE DELIVERANCE OF MANKIND FROM THE CATASTROPHE OF NUCLEAR WAR AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A WORLD ORDER BASED ON GENERAL DISARMAMENT, PEACE AND JUSTICE. THE CONCLUSION OF THE AGREEMENT WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN POSSIBLE WITHOUT YOUR PATIENT AND DEDICATED PURSUIT OF THIS NOBLE OBJECTIVE.

WITH PROFOUND REGARDS,
YOURS SINCERELY,
GENERAL (M. ZIA-UL-HAQ)
HUMMEL
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