

October 30, 1951
**Letter from UK Embassy in Paris to London on
Franco-Indian agreement**

Citation:

"Letter from UK Embassy in Paris to London on Franco-Indian agreement", October 30, 1951, Wilson Center Digital Archive, National Archives, Kew, AB16/565, Technical cooperation with India, 1947-54. Obtained for NPIHP by Jayita Sarkar.
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Summary:

British Ambassador Oliver Harvey reports a conversation with the Director of the French Atomic Energy Commission Jules Guéron on the details of Franco-Indian nuclear cooperation.

Credits:

This document was made possible with support from Carnegie Corporation of New York (CCNY)

Original Language:

English

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Transcript - English

BRITISH EMBASSY,
PARIS
SECRET
30TH October, 1951.
No. 492

Sir,

With reference to my dispatch No. 394 of the 24th August on the subject of Franco-Indian co-operation in atomic energy matters, I have the honour to report that a member of my staff had a recent conversation on this subject with M.J. Guéron, the Director of the French Atomic Energy Commission, who has been actively concerned in the preparation of the Agreement in question.

2. According to M. Guéron the Agreement covers two separate stages. The first is that of research, as indicated in the Note enclosed with my dispatch referred to. This will include nuclear physical studies and theoretical work on beryllium or its oxide as a moderator (calculations so far made suggest the use of Oxide) and treatment of beryl shipped from India. The second stage, which may never be reached, is the construction of a moderate-sized pile and its operation for five years under a joint committee formed of representatives of the French and Indian Atomic Energy Commissions.

3. During the first stage, the cost of research would be shared on an equal basis and cost each country about £250,000; the Indians will provide the beryl (equivalent of sixty tons of beryllium oxide) for treatment in France and return to India and the French will provide the necessary uranium.

4. During the second stage, if it should ever be reached, the Indians would bear the cost of planning and erecting the reactor and of the beryllium used. The French will contribute knowledge and experience of building a pile and will loan the uranium during the five year period, with the right during this period to half the products of all kinds of the reactor.

5. It would seem that the French have obtained an Agreement very favourable to themselves as they have found a way of sharing the cost of doing research on a subject of considerable interest to them. They also have entrée into India for the French firm of Pechiney who will be treating the beryl for the French Atomic Energy Commission and they will for little cost get the full results of the first five years' operation of the pile if it is ever built. Finally, they will also have a supply of isotopes and other products from the pile (there will be very little plutonium as the pile is to be a small one).

6. For their part, the Indians will have the benefit of French experience and will have another country interested in their beryl which may help them in bargaining with the Americans, who already have some claim to their ore.

7. The Agreement specifically allows other countries to participate and British participation may therefore be possible to a limited extent, particularly in view of the discussions which have been held on the subject of beryllium between representatives of Pechiney and of Harwell. Nothing has been done yet to invite other countries to participate despite newspaper accounts to the contrary.

8. Discussions between India and France had lasted for about fifteen months but since the signing of the Agreement there have been no further meetings and no correspondence and the French are wondering when the Indians will send some beryl

for treatment. No doubt this matter will advance soon as one of the chief Indians concerned is coming to Paris at the end of the month.

9. I am sending a copy of this dispatch (together with a copy of my dispatch No. 394) to the High Commissioner at Delhi.

I have the honour to be, with the highest respect,

Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

(s) OLIVER HARVEY