

**April 23, 1979**

**Letter from C.L.G. Mallaby (Arms Control and  
Disarmament Department) to R.J. Alston (Joint  
Nuclear Unit), 'South Asia: Nuclear Issues'**

**Citation:**

"Letter from C.L.G. Mallaby (Arms Control and Disarmament Department) to R.J. Alston (Joint Nuclear Unit), 'South Asia: Nuclear Issues'", April 23, 1979, Wilson Center Digital Archive, The National Archive of the UK, FCO 96/953. Contributed by Malcolm Craig.  
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**Summary:**

This document is a memo from Christopher Mallaby at the FCO's Arms Control and Disarmament Department, to Robert Alston at the Joint Nuclear Unit. In it, Mallaby discusses a prior memo from Alston, as well as a meeting they both had with an official from the US State Department, Thomas Pickering, three days prior.

**Credits:**

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

**Original Language:**

English

**Contents:**

Original Scan

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REGISTRY

Mr Alston, JNU

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Mr. ~~Alston~~ - para 6 is a point to discuss with Mr. Hancock from Feb. who is here. (Please handle with Fed on this.)

At an suggestion FED asked Mr. Hancock to see Mr. Hancock but the Americans apparently had no time to do so (or look at papers) 27/4

See with ref 307p

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SOUTH ASIA: NUCLEAR ISSUES

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1. Many of the points in your minute of 19 April were overtaken by our meeting with Mr Pickering on 20 April. But I have the following comments.
2. On your para 3 I agree that it is not clear at present that we are dealing with an "Arab bomb". I also agree that there are strong - indeed overwhelming - arguments against broadening our security treaty proposal so as to get it caught up with the political problems of the Middle East. If we can frustrate the Pakistani nuclear weapons programme by means of some Asian regional proposal, any plans on the part of Arab countries to obtain nuclear weapons technology from Pakistan will automatically be frustrated. If an "Arab bomb" project starts up in some other moslem country, that different problem will no doubt require a diplomatic solution different from the one we at present envisage for Pakistan.
3. On your para 5, I agree that the Yugoslav proposal for a UN conference on the peaceful uses of nuclear energy is too uncertain and too distant in time to provide the main focus for our strategy regarding Pakistan and India. It could fortuitously be that a strategy on the lines we are considering would result in a detailed plan at about the time of the Yugoslav conference. It would then be for consideration whether the Asian plan should be tied up at the conference or separately.
4. On your para 6, I was struck by Mr Pickering's view - which I think Sir A Parsons shared - that the Pakistani nuclear weapons programme is not enough to make the Indians take a more favourable view of accepting safeguards. Mr Pickering was talking more in terms of inducements related to CTB and curbs on vertical proliferation. There is evidence that Mr Pickering is right. But I am not satisfied - pending a sight of Sir John Thomson's letters to Sir A Parsons - that this point has been firmly established in discussions with the Indians.
5. I think you will wish to discuss your para 9(c) with Defence Department.
6. On your para 9(d), I was interested that Mr Pickering did not press us to make bilateral approaches to Pakistan. I agree with you that we might consult our posts in Jeddah and Peking; Mr Samuel, who has just visited Peking and will have discussed this subject, will have views. I think you wrote to Moscow on 20 April.
7. I think the Americans are quite right - your para 9(e) -

24/4

/to talk

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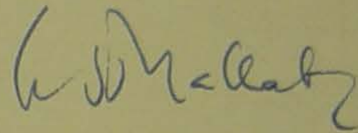
PS

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THERE IS NO CHANGE IN THIS OFFER. VANCE

to talk more in terms of unsafeguarded facilities than of weapons programmes. So far this tactful tactic has worked quite well; but big publicity for the Pakistani programme is still likely, so the tactic may not be durable.



C L G Mallaby  
Arms Control and Disarmament  
Department

23 April 1979

copied to: Mr White, SAD  
Mr P H Moberly o/r  
Mr Gillmore, Defence Dept } with Mr Alston's minute  
Mr Samuel, FED

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PS

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