

May 22, 1979

Letter from R.J. Alston (Joint Nuclear Unit) to P.H. Moberly, 'Pakistan's Nuclear Programme'

Citation:

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Summary:

This document is a memo from Robert Alston at the FCO's Joint Nuclear Unit to Patrick Moberley. In the memo, Alston focuses on how best to respond to a recent letter of concern from Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin to Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, on the subject of Pakistan's nuclear program.

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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Mr P H Moberly
PS

see (502)

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RECEIVED IN REGISTRY No. 76	
23 MAY	
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PAKISTAN'S NUCLEAR PROGRAMME

Problem

1. To advise the Prime Minister on a response to Mr Begin's message about Pakistan's nuclear programme and to brief her on this point for her meeting with Mr Begin on 23 May.

Background and Argument

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2. Mr Cartledge's letter of 21 May encloses the text of a message for Mr Begin expressing concern about Pakistan's nuclear intentions and the alleged cooperation between Pakistan and certain Arab States in the nuclear field. In an accompanying memorandum attention is drawn to the supply of inverters by Emersons (UK) to Pakistan.
3. The Israelis are well informed about the Pakistani programme and about Libyan contacts with Pakistan. Our evidence appears not dissimilar to theirs. Unlike them we have concluded that it does not for the moment substantiate suggestions about an Arab bomb. The allegations in paragraph 8 of the Israeli memorandum about the supply of inverters from Britain to Pakistan gives a distorted impression though some of the information is basically correct.
4. The Israeli decision to raise this matter with us presents an opportunity to underline to the Israelis (who, like the Pakistanis, are not signatories of the NPT) that they also have a part to play in ensuring that nuclear weapons are not introduced in to the Middle East.
5. Successive Israeli Governments since 1966 have said that Israel will not be the first to introduce nuclear weapons in the Middle East. We have no doubt that the Israelis have the technical ability to design and develop nuclear explosives and they should have enough plutonium for a small stockpile of nuclear weapons. We believe the

/Israelis

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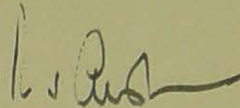
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Israelis could quickly assemble about a dozen low yield weapons without testing for delivery, probably by aircraft.

Recommendation

6. I recommend that a letter be sent to No 10 on the lines of the attached draft enclosing an interim reply to Mr Begin, and a brief for use by the Prime Minister for her meeting with Mr Begin on 23 May.
7. NENAD and SAD have been consulted.



R J Alston
Joint Nuclear Unit

22 May 1979

cc: PS/Mr Hurd
PS/Mr Blaker
PS/PUS
Sir A Parsons
Mr Cortazzi
Mr J C Moberly
Mr Murray
Mr Reeve
Mr White
Mr Tomkys

I agree, though I doubt if we need anything but the speaking note with the letter to No 10.

J. Moberly
" 24/5

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