

May 22, 1979

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

Citation:

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Summary:

Alston proposes a response to the Israeli Prime Minister's letter on Pakistan's nuclear activity.

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Mr J.C. Moberly
Mr Moberly
Private Secretary
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pla (Pak Nuclear) R
2576 Mr Secretary of State
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Physical E

PAKISTAN'S NUCLEAR PROGRAMME

Problem

1. How should we reply to Mr Begin's message to the Prime Minister about Pakistan's nuclear activities?

Background and Argument

Draft to Mr
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2. Mr Cartledge wrote to Mr Lever on 21 May attaching a copy of a letter from Mr Begin to the Prime Minister dated 17 May, expressing concern at Pakistan's nuclear intentions. The letter enclosed a memorandum which focused principally on Arab-Pakistani links and the involvement of British based companies (specifically Emersons of Swindon) in supplying equipment for Pakistan's nuclear programme.

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3. Mr Lever sent a reply to No 10 dated 22 May giving advice on these issues and enclosing a speaking note for use by the Prime Minister when he met Mr Begin on 23 May. I understand that Pakistan was not in fact raised during their discussions.

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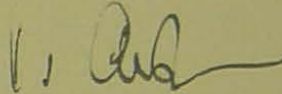
4. No 10 should see the JIC Assessment of 26 April on Possible Arab Assistance for Pakistani Nuclear Development. We have consulted others concerned who confirm that although there has been some subsequent indication, of unproven reliability, about possible Libyan financial assistance for Pakistan's nuclear programme the conclusion of the Assessment still holds.

5. We do not know whether the Israelis have made a parallel approach to the Americans or other Governments. I think we should let the Americans know of the gist of our exchange with the Israelis. This would continue our close cooperation in this field. It would also be useful to know whether the Americans themselves have had any exchanges with Mr Begin on this point. This could be done through the Embassy in Washington but would need authority from No 10.

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Recommendation

6. I recommend that the Private Secretary should write to Mr Cartledge on the lines of the attached draft, enclosing a draft message for the Prime Minister to send to Mr Begin. I further recommend that, with No 10's agreement, the Embassy in Washington should be instructed to inform the Americans of our exchange with the Israelis. A draft telegram is attached.
7. SAD and NENAD have been consulted and agree.

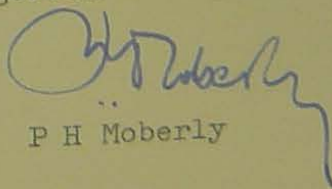


R J Alston
Joint Nuclear Unit

5 June 1979

cc: PS/LPS
PS/Mr Hurd
PS/PUS
Mr Cortazzi
Mr Murray
Mr White (SAD)
Mr Reeve (ACDD)
Mr Braithwaite
Planning Staff
Mr Tomkys
NENAD
Mr Whyte (News Dept)
Mr Thomas (PUSD)

I have delayed submission briefly while a number of points were being checked and the drafts were revised. I agree that our position on Pakistan is properly dealt with in the suggested reply to Mr Begin. As regards the plea to Mr Begin that Israel should help to avoid the spread of nuclear weapons into the Middle East, our assessment is that the Israelis probably have the capacity already to make nuclear weapons. But outwardly I think it is better to maintain that we still see everything to play for in avoiding nuclear proliferation in the Middle East as elsewhere. It may be helpful for us to be able to say that we have advocated non-proliferation wherever there is cause for concern. Subject to Mr J C Moberly's views, I therefore support the inclusion of the last paragraph in the suggested message to Mr Begin.



P H Moberly

7 June 1979

SECRET

I agree that it would be helpful and timely to remind Mr Begin that Israel has her own part to play in creating the conditions for avoiding the spread of nuclear weapons in the Middle East.

I also, therefore, support the inclusion of the last paragraph in the message to Mr Begin.

J. M. Buckley
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