

June 19, 1979

**Letter from Bryan Cartledge to Paul Lever,
'Pakistan's Nuclear Programme' (with attachment)**

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Summary:

This document is Margaret Thatcher's response to Menachem Begin's letter of May 17, 1979, on the subject of Pakistan's nuclear program.

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cc
Mr Fullerton
POSD 5/7 -

S/M Howard
R/PJS
Sir A. Parsons
Mr Catterall
Mr P. Moberly
From the Private Secretary
Mr Murray
SAD

10 DOWNING STREET

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Dear Paul,

Pakistan's Nuclear Programme

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Thank you for sending me, with your letter of 11 June, the draft of a reply which the Prime Minister might send to Mr. Begin's message to her of 17 May about Pakistan's nuclear programme. As you know, the Prime Minister asked for some changes to be made to the final paragraph of the draft and you were good enough to send me a revised version. I now enclose the signed original of the Prime Minister's reply to Mr. Begin and should be grateful if you would arrange for it to be sent to H.M. Ambassador in Tel Aviv for delivery.

The Prime Minister agrees that the Americans may now be informed of the gist of Mr. Begin's message and of her reply.

I am sending copies of this letter and enclosure to Roger Facer (Ministry of Defence), Bill Burroughs (Department of Energy) and Martin Vile (Cabinet Office).

Yours ever,
Roger Carridge.

Paul Lever, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

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THE PRIME MINISTER

19 June 1979

My dear Prime Minister,

Thank you for your letter of 17 May about Pakistan's nuclear activities.

Britain attaches great importance to preventing the spread of nuclear weapons. We are much concerned at the development in Pakistan of unsafeguarded plants designed to produce materials which are capable of being used for explosive purposes. It would be a grave matter not only for that area but for the whole world if a nuclear arms race began to emerge in the Sub-Continent.

I therefore take your points very seriously. At the same time, none of the evidence currently available to us suggests there is any arrangement to transfer weapons-useable material from Pakistan to other Islamic states or organisations. This would make the situation even more worrying. We are keeping this aspect under careful scrutiny, together with the separate question of the transfer of relevant nuclear technology and know-how.

You ask us to intervene to deny Pakistan supplies for a nuclear weapons programme from British companies. It is already the policy of the British Government to withhold supplies of specially designed items and certain materials having a nuclear application. This policy is being stringently applied in the case of Pakistan. A number of additions have been made in recent months to our export control list, including specified inverters (and their parts and sub-assemblies) which, whilst they have other uses also, could be used in a centrifuge programme. A small consignment of inverters manufactured by the company to which you refer was exported before the new arrangements took effect but the export of a subsequent

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batch has been prevented. Britain has also worked closely with other potential supplier Governments to try to stop key items getting to Pakistan. We shall continue to do our utmost in this respect.

Finally, Mr. Prime Minister, I urge you to consider very carefully the part which Israel herself has to play in avoiding the spread of nuclear weapons into the Middle East. Recent developments in Pakistan, over which our Governments share a deep concern, underline the fragility of the barriers against this, with the awesome consequences it could have. I believe that this reinforces the need for Israel to pursue with all vigour further political accommodation with her neighbours. This in turn should be followed by the adherence by Israel and all other states of the region to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

Yours sincerely
Rajiv Gandhi

His Excellency Mr. Menachem Begin