

WINSTON S. CHURCHILL, M.P.



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

01 - 219 3405

7 July 1981

Dear Prime Minister,

Very many thanks for your letter of 1 July in regard to Iraq's nuclear development programme. At the root of my concern is the openly avowed determination - repeated by the President of Iraq and reported by the Iraqi news agency only last week - to become a nuclear weapons power. Such a development I feel sure you would agree, would, to put it at its lowest, introduce a new element of instability into an already precarious situation. Nor could such a development be equated with Israel's own status as a country that almost certainly possesses nuclear weapons. I feel sure that you would be the first to agree that there is all the world of difference in the consequences of such weapons being held for defensive purposes by a democracy and their possession by a volatile, belligerent dictatorship which, almost certainly would use them to threaten their neighbours, not least Iran, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.

Given the avowed aim of the Iraqi President to acquire nuclear weapons - which Peter Carrington at a meeting of the Defence and Foreign Affairs Committees acknowledged to be their aim - I find it difficult to accept the argument that Britain does not have the right, indeed a duty to intercede with the Government of France to ensure that what starts as a peaceful nuclear power programme does not lead directly as in the case of India, to the acquisition of nuclear weapon status by a non-nuclear power. I do hope that you would feel able to look again at this situation. The representation of our concern on this matter to President Mitterand would cost us nothing, but could have a decisive effect on future events in the Middle East.

Yours ever,

Winston

Rt. Hon. Margaret Thatcher, M.P.
Prime Minister,
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