

# *Pakistani in U.S. Sought To Ship A-Bomb Trigger*

**By SEYMOUR M. HERSH**

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WASHINGTON, Feb. 24 — The Government of Pakistan operated inside the United States for nine months in an attempt to illegally obtain timing devices whose main function is to trigger nuclear bombs, according to court documents and Federal officials.

A Pakistani agent, Nazir Ahmed Vaid, a 33-year-old from Lahore, was seized last June by Federal agents while he was trying to smuggle 50 of the devices, known as krytrons, out of Houston. Customs Service agents, operating under cover, had been monitoring his activities since October 1983, when he first placed the order for the devices.

When they made the arrest, the Federal officials involved later recalled, they were convinced that they were dealing with a foreign agent.

At that time Customs agents seized a series of letters directly linking Mr. Vaid to S. A. Butt, who was identified

as a director of procurement for the Government-run Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission. Mr. Butt is widely known to American and European arms-control officials as the key operative in Pakistan's successful attempts in Europe in the 1970's to obtain the technology and resources for the enrichment of uranium and the reprocessing of plutonium.

There is no indication, however, that the Customs agents who did the investigation and the Federal prosecutors who tried Mr. Vaid ever identified Mr. Butt or understood that Mr. Vaid's letters provided evidence that he was operating at the direct behest of the Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission.

## **Envoy Denies Any Connection**

Ejaz Azim, Pakistan's Ambassador to the United States, denied that Mr. Vaid had any official connection to the Pakistani Government.

"The Government of Pakistan has absolutely nothing to do with this individual," Mr. Azim said. "He's a private trader, and that is all we know about him. He acts and operates entirely in his individual capacity as a private businessman of Pakistan."

The Ambassador, in an interview, also repeated his Government's position that it "is not engaged in the production of the nuclear weapon," adding, "The dimensions of our nuclear program are entirely peaceful."

The account of Mr. Vaid's activities

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