

Top US officials allowed Pakistan in the 1980s to manufacture and possess nuclear weapons and were aware that the A Q Khan nuclear network was violating American laws, a US based watchdog has told the US Congress, citing a former CIA whistleblower.

Danielle Brian, executive director of Project on Government Oversight, told a Senate panel that CIA officer Richard Barlow, who then worked for the Pentagon, was fired for suggesting that the Congress should be made aware of the situation relating to Pakistan's nuclear programme.

Brian related the Barlow episode to the Senate Homeland Security and Government Affairs Committee as one of the instances where whistleblowers have come to grief.

"The brave, honest public servants deserve better than this second-class system." Bringing up Barlow's findings, Brian said that working as a CIA counter-proliferation intelligence officer in the 1980s, he learned that "top US officials were allowing Pakistan to manufacture and possess nuclear weapons, and that the A Q Khan nuclear network was violating US laws".

Barlow also discovered that top officials were "hiding these activities from Congress, since telling the truth would have legally obligated the US government to cut off its overt military aid to Pakistan at a time when covert military aid was being funneled through Pakistan to Afghan jihadists in the war against the Soviets".

Brian said that after engineering the arrests of Khan's nuclear agents in the US, he left to work for the Office of the Secretary of Defense.

"Top officials at the DoD (Department of Defence) continued to lie about Pakistan's nuclear programme. Barlow objected and suggested to his supervisors that Congress should be made aware of the situation. Because Barlow merely suggested that Congress should know the truth, Barlow was fired," she said.

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