

Part 3

TOP SECRET-ATOMIC Confidential Filing

The time of the UK Nuclear Deterrent
Plans flight trials

Defence

Part 1 May 1979

Part 3 June 1980

Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date
17.6.80		14.10.80		12-11-81.			
18.6.80		22.10.80		PART 3 CWDS			
23.6.80		23.10.80					
24.6.80		20.11.80					
25.6.80		17.12.80					
27.6.80		21.12.80					
27.80		30.1.81					
9.7.80		5.2.81					
15.7.80		12.2.81					
17.7.80		25.2.81					
18.7.80		10.6.81					
21.7.80		24.7.81					
23.7.80		26/8/81					
26.8.80		10.9.81					
1.9.80		14.9.81					
9.9.80		18.9.81					
12.9.80		15.10.81					
23.9.80		5.11.81					

PART 3 ends:-

cc (81) 36th Mtg Item 3 of 12/11/81.

PART 4 begins:-

MISC 7 (81) 1 of 17/11/81.



FOR IMMEDIATE USE

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MAF

CHURCH INFORMATION OFFICE

Church House, Dean's Yard, London, SW1P 3NZ Telephone 01-222 9011

TEXT OF THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY'S SPEECH IN
MINISTER OF DISARMAMENT DEBATE, GENERAL SYNOD,
CHURCH HOUSE, LONDON, TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 1981

"As Archbishop of Canterbury I'd like to make a short contribution in relation to the specific point at issue though this is in no sense a substantial contribution to the important ethical question of the possession of nuclear arms which I have spoken about before and intend to return to again when there is time for a more reflective speech. But Admiral Marne, the American, after the First World War, said the only justification for force is to give breathing space for moral ideas to take root and that is the only justification for a policy of deterrence. The absence of a sense of urgency about long-term moral principles on which a united Europe might contribute to lasting peace, has led to pressure and protest about the escalation of more sophisticated and horrific nuclear weapons. In that sense, at least, the unilateralists perform a great service, though I happen to believe the policies they advocate reduce the incentive for others to negotiate. However, what I want to do is to pay tribute to some of the recent speeches made by Lord Carrington, the Foreign Secretary, and particularly his Churchill Lecture in Luxembourg, but also I might mention his contributions in his peace initiative in the Middle East, his speech as present President of the Council of Ministers in Europe on Namibia and South Africa and, as it seems to me, his more sympathetic attention to development policies. Now I speak as someone who has recently found himself at odds with the Government in another place on the Nationality Bill and on a cluster of questions surrounding the Brandt Report which seem in danger of promoting insular policies. But I believe at this moment, we should welcome and support the statesman-like way in which the Foreign Secretary wins respect as a genuine seeker for peace and international justice within the present political realities. And it may be better to recognise this and his significance in the Cabinet, rather

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than diverting our attention to a proposal which might be merely cosmetic, or might seem to be another contribution on the part of the Church which is predictably carping and complaining. In his Luxembourg speech, Lord Carrington gives great priority to arms control, "I am not suggesting" he says, "that deterrence by itself is an adequate policy in East-West relations. We must work unremittingly for better ways of ordering the world. I want East-West communication and contact at all levels from tourism to summit meetings." Or again, "Negotiations about arms control are especially important; it is a field where we must be vigorous and imaginative, for nothing, nothing is more important than to reduce the vast resources devoted to arms." Not dramatic in detail but I believe in the diplomatic world signalling a certain code. If the Foreign Secretary is really committed to questions of arms control and step-by-step reduction within a broad framework of peace-keeping and peace-making, and if there is a Minister of State, Mr. Douglas Hurd with a special responsibility for disarmament, then I think that's something to support and may be better than painless efforts on our part which might induce complacency among others responsible for disarmament negotiations. There can be no short-cuts to disarmament if it is genuine and lasting. Under Sir Harold Wilson, there was the appointment of a Minister of State but Lord Chalfont was not a member of the Cabinet and very few disarmament negotiations are conducted at ministerial level. An exception, for example, was the Partial Test Ban Treaty of 1963, when it was actually settled at a higher level still, between President Kennedy, Mr. Krushchev and Sir Harold Macmillan.

So I believe that we should support developing attitudes as expressed in the work of the Foreign Secretary but, at the same time, urge the Church at all levels, to give more serious attention between now and the special session next June of the United Nations Assembly, to these questions and particularly to take seriously the special hearing of the World Council of Churches, of which the Bishop of Durham is to be the chairman. We should not always assume that we are dealing with a Government which lacks all moral sensitivity in these questions, even though we may well disagree with specific defence policies, based on updating the terrible weapons designed to enable us to maintain the balance of a deterrent. While I sympathize with the spirit of those who wish to express themselves and make a specific proposal in this area, I do not find it possible to vote for this motion and I remain to be convinced that any specific amendment has captured my support."



EMBARGOED UNTIL TIME OF DELIVERY

CHURCH INFORMATION OFFICE

Church House, Dean's Yard, London, SW1P 3NZ Telephone 01-222 9011

PLEASE CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

PRIVATE MEMBERS' MOTIONS: 700

MINISTER OF DISARMAMENT

Rt Revd John Bickersteth
Bishop of Bath & Wells

Private member's motion proposed by the Bishop of Bath and Wells, the original proposer Mr. C.C. Coles (Cister) having resigned from being on acceptance a post abroad.

The motion is 'That this House asks Her Majesty's Government to appoint a senior Cabinet Minister as Minister of Disarmament'.

Mr. Chairman and members of House

Dirty word, disarmament, to any politician older than his mid-fifties. The principle, along with that of appeasement of dictators, unconsciously nearly lost us the Second World War, because of our unpreparedness during the 5 or 6 years up to 1939. Watchers of 'The Wilderness Years' on television this autumn will have got the message. It was because I believe that the parallel between them and now cannot be fully pressed home that I put my name to Mr. Coles' motion, and then unexpectedly found myself asked to move it after he had enquired. He sent me his speech, with permission to use it or not; and as it is 'the right' matter, as the interesting conversation by telephone across the Atlantic.

Why then do I take up your time to advocate the revival of this post - except (and this is important) that the post was not then of Cabinet rank - twice held under Labour administrations by Lord Chalfont? These are the reasons - and I put them before you this afternoon, with a conviction that has grown far more than I thought it would, since the Standing Committee landed me with this task:

1. The arms race's crazy spiral has in the last few months become apparent to the man in the street. Thousands in government and service circles have of course known about it for years; but have become (understandably enough) in many respects quite insane to the folly of it. Now, suddenly, partly because of the new nuclear weapon plans for Europe, including Great Britain; partly because of the Brandt Report highlighting the lack of money there is for the Third World through the demands of defence expenditure; partly because of the apparent confusion on nuclear policy right at the top of things in the United States - suddenly the evil of what we are doing is becoming apparent to hundreds of thousands of ordinary citizens in many countries. We have realised that we are acquiescing in plans for the destruction of civilisation. Deterrence has indeed been the principle which has played such a large part, many would say the one and only effective part in keeping the peace for 36 years, ever since Japan threw in her hand in 1945 because she knew she could not compete. But now in 1961, the great powers know they can compete, and have this over, giving us that horrible word - in a nuclear vocabulary of horrible words - 'overkill'. We all have ^{the} stockpile for enormous overkill; and the new nuclear countries grow almost daily.

The cat is out of the bag, and the non-expert (that is you and I) has grasped the plain truth that 'wars cannot be fought with nuclear weapons'; the phrase is Lord Houghton's in the summer he was murdered. The appointment of a senior minister of cabinet rank to head up the increasing cry for arms control would ~~be~~^{tell} not only ~~to~~ the British citizen but ~~in~~ the world that a significant change of direction was beginning here in Westminster.

But

2. There is, in this new public awareness of the danger we are in, a great temptation to oversimplify. I suggest that C.N.D. or indeed the much smaller - but they are both growing fast - Christian C.N.D. tend to do just that. They are recent and rather strange bedfellows of mine, but I am learning so much from their singlemindedness and capacity for hard work in the cause. Yet they are victims of a naivete which will surely count against them when it comes to candidates winning votes at General Elections; and this is what we want - a massive swing in Parliament towards disarmament thinking. C.N.D.'s emotional rallying calls for unilateral action, for reneging on NATO, for (as The Times put it recently) 'disinventing nuclear weapons' overnight ~~is~~^{are} not going to gain the serious support of the British people, nearly a third of whom still remember the horrors of the Second World War, and are gratefully aware that till now the deterrent has prevented a third one for more than a generation. As a synod of churches we shall cut no ice whatever over the road if Lores and Cossons can dismiss us as stupid idealists, well-meaning perhaps but floundering about once again in an area where we'd do better to keep our mouths shut. Have they got so besotted with the nuclear thing, they'll say, that they have forgotten about the need

to control conventional arms too? Indeed we haven't. We know that thousands of Russian tanks could slice through Europe tomorrow, and we do not regard Soviet politicians as full of good intentions towards the west. We must all be wise as serpents as well as harmless as doves. But there is no oversimplification of the enormously complex issues involved in asking for a secretary of state for the first time to head up a nation coming to its senses in the long hard slog of negotiation, verification, agreed reductions.

3. There is the evidence growing every day of a world wide convergence of minds among ordinary people, many Christians of all traditions among them that this nettle must be grasped. For instance doctors in this country have been getting together with Russian ones, including Mr. Brezhnev's own. These Russian citizens are allies in the cause not enemies.

Dismiss ^{if} you will as sheer propaganda the extensive coverage being given in Russian newspapers to the Soviet doctors who are campaigning against nuclear war; but if you do that you do not account for the unity of purpose which the British doctors, a very ordinary bunch across our political spectrum, found with their professional colleagues when they were over here last month - an event not nearly enough reported, incidentally, in our newspapers. Then there is the encouraging fact that the London march less than a month ago, the biggest yet for peace, was matched by several in other European cities, all attended by far more than the long-haired jesties which the detractors of the march had hoped to be able to write about. This issue is enormous as infinitely greater than something to be channelled along party lines. Washing up the coffee cups in a village hall after church last Sunday - actually they were mostly sherry glasses because it was that sort of parish (I have several

of them as you can guess) a young naval officer's wife who told me she was a staunch Shirley Williams-ite together with a matriarchal Conservative canvasser agreed without my saying a word that at long last Remembrance Sunday had new point to it for everyone, because we were all now concentrating on peace-making; and of course any thought that their aging Dad had suddenly gone left-wing has my four children and their boy and girl-friends rolling about. Senior churchmen too have been addressing themselves to the ^{issue; we} ~~the~~ ^{said} ~~pr~~imates of the Anglican Communion meeting last June. "We pledge ourselves to work for multi-national disarmament and to support those who seek by education and other appropriate means to influence those people and agencies who shape nuclear policy." And all the church leaders of Britain, led by the Archbishop of Canterbury, have given strong support to the World Disarmament Campaign. So a Cabinet Minister for it would be a focal point for this convergence of British opinion. The present Minister of State at the Foreign Office, Mr. Douglas Hurd, who gave 20 of us three hours of his time ten days ago and cares greatly about these things has, on his own admission, too many other hats to wear. The country and the world, no less, needs this kind of unilateral lead - the new initiative of putting right into the heart of the British government's planning machine a man or woman who properly staffed will pursue all his or her cares and studies this way. No non-stipendiary minister here, we need a full time secretary of state.

And finally

4. I believe in the creation of this post because, as the All Saints Day gospel reminded us a few days ago, peace-making is integral to the very being of the church. We must be seen to repent now of our evil. And unadulterated evil it is.

A single one-megaton attack (I give you no other statistics - they can be found in their grisly detail in many publications now) a single one megaton bomb (that is 50 times the power of the Hiroshima one) will do damage equivalent to the amount of High Explosive which would fill a goods train 200 miles long; so do not listen to those who say to you that what we are talking about is only marginally ~~more~~ ^{different from} than what some of us remember from the last war. In a well-known newspaper a fortnight ago a widely-read columnist was actually describing what might happen as no worse than the bombing of Dresden in 1944. This is irresponsible stuff. It is a crying of peace, peace when there is no peace. Pacifists have made up their minds about what alone can constitute the absence of war. Most of us are not pacifists. Put at stake now is the Christian's basic credibility as a follower of the Prince of Peace; and I believe that the Church of Jesus Christ can stand aside no longer.

My reasons then, as ^{we} work forward to the important W.C.C. hearing on nuclear arms in a fortnight's time, and to the vital U.N. Special Assembly on Disarmament next June, my reasons for inviting you to give overwhelming support to this motion - perhaps to be amended, and I am particularly interested to hear the case for one of them - are these four:

1. Across the world ordinary people have realized - very belatedly, the veteran campaigners would say - the acute danger of that button being pressed. The new and encouraging will to avoid the ultimate evil of a Third World War needs to be made visible in the highest forum in the land - the Cabinet of Her Majesty's Government.

2. There must be no giving in to oversimplification. We are talking about a long term disarmament programme starting

as soon as possible, with specific proposals; for example there is much work that can be done in the verification field. As Mr. Hurd has rightly reminded us 'We must think straight about all this, as well as feel strongly'. The brain power must, I'm saying, be at Cabinet level, with a single-minded devotion.

3. There is a quite unmistakable peace surge everywhere among people of all walks of life and all political persuasions and in all the churches. Patriotism, love of all that our country means to us whether in Russia or Europe or the United States, lies at the heart of what we are saying. If it's important, as it must be, to have a Secretary of State for Energy, how much more so to have one concerned with all this destructive energy ^{the money saved from} which we ought to be turning to the world's real needs.

4. The long Christian tradition for a reconciling role in society can come to the fore again in this striking and central way. Pious talk will be able to emerge in definite policy-making. A person at the top will embody the idea; and as Victor Hugo, I think it was, put it 'Nothing can defeat an idea whose time has come'. I think this one has.

Mr. Chairman, I beg to move.

SECRET



File AH
cc CO
Defence

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Principal Private Secretary

5 November 1981

Test took place on 12/11/81.
successful. ✓
13/11/81

Dear David,

BRITISH NUCLEAR TEST PROGRAMME

Thank you for your letter of 4 November 1981 letting me know that the date of the next British nuclear test is now expected to be 11 November.

The Prime Minister decided not to mention this to Cabinet today because of the length of the interval between now and next Wednesday. If, however, the date slips a day or more, she will mention it at next Thursday's Cabinet meeting.

I am sending a copy of this letter to David Wright (Cabinet Office).

Yours ever,

Muri Whimman

David Omand Esq.,
Ministry of Defence.

SECRET

MW

SECRET

85/4



MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
MAIN BUILDING WHITEHALL LONDON SW1
Telephone 01-~~336 7022~~ 218 2111/3

MO 18/1/1

4th November 1981

Prime Minister.

11th November is next Wednesday. Do you want to mention the test to Cabinet tomorrow?

Dear Clive,

TAH

4xi

BRITISH NUCLEAR TEST PROGRAMME

Thank you for your letter of 29th October. The very latest information we have from the test site is that the scheduled date is now firmly 11th November, although there is always the possibility of a last minute hitch at the test site (we are very much in US hands).

I am sending a copy of this letter to David Wright (Cabinet Office).

Yours ever,

David Omand

(D B OMAND)

C A Whitmore Esq

SECRET



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10 DOWNING STREET

BF 9-11-81

From the Principal Private Secretary

29 October 1981

BRITISH NUCLEAR TEST PROGRAMME

I have shown the Prime Minister your letter of 26 October 1981 and she has noted that the next British nuclear test has been brought forward to 11 or 12 November.

I should be grateful if, as you propose, you could confirm the final scheduled date nearer the time so that the Prime Minister can let the Cabinet know.

I am sending a copy of this letter to David Wright (Cabinet Office).

C. A. WHITMORE

D.B. Omand, Esq.,
Ministry of Defence.

So

SECRET



MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
 MAIN BUILDING WHITEHALL LONDON SW1
 Telephone 01-335 7621 218 2111/3

MO 18/1/1

26th October 1981

Dear Sir,

Prime Minister

*AWJ
27.x.*

BRITISH NUCLEAR TEST PROGRAMME

Further to my Secretary of State's minute of 12th October, and your letter to me of 19th October, I have been asked to let you know that favourable conditions at the US test site and their own testing schedules mean that we may be asked to bring our shot date forward to 11th or 12th November. As with all nuclear test arrangements, the planning date for the actual test detonation will undergo fluctuations and there may be further variations but I thought I should let you know that we may be seeking to go ahead a week earlier than previously planned. In view of the Prime Minister's intention to inform Cabinet of the test before it occurs, we will ensure that you have advance warning before the Cabinet immediately prior to the final scheduled date.

I am copying this letter to David Wright (Cabinet Office).

Yours ever,

David

(D B OMAND)

C A Whitmore Esq

SECRET



10 DOWNING STREET

ccs HO
FCO
Tsy
CO

File AA
82

From the Principal Private Secretary

19 October 1981

Dear David,

BRITISH NUCLEAR TEST PROGRAMME

The Prime Minister has seen your Secretary of State's minute of 12 October 1981 about the British nuclear test programme and she agrees that Mr Nott should give final clearance for the test which is now planned to take place on 19 November.

She will inform Cabinet of the test on Thursday 19 November.

I am sending copies of this letter to John Halliday (Home Office), Brian Fall (Foreign and Commonwealth Office), John Kerr (Treasury) and David Wright (Cabinet Office).

Yours truly,

Heri Whinn.

David Omand Esq.,
Ministry of Defence.

SECRET

SECRET



File AH
ces MOD 8
CO

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Principal Private Secretary

19 October 1981

Dear Romani,

US STRATEGIC DECISIONS

You had a copy of David Omand's letter of 8 October 1981 to Willie Rickett about President Reagan's message of 1 October.

I should be grateful if you would arrange for the attached reply from the Prime Minister to be conveyed to the President.

I am sending copies of this letter and of the Prime Minister's letter to David Omand (Ministry of Defence) and David Wright (Cabinet Office).

Yours sincerely,

Brian Fall

Brian Fall Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

SECRET

A

SECRET



File 80

ccs FCO
MOD
CO

10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

19 October 1981

PRIME MINISTER'S
PERSONAL MESSAGE
SERIAL No. T145C/81.

Dear Ron.

I am most grateful to you for your personal message to me of 1 October giving advance notification of the details of the modernisation programme for your strategic forces.

These plans will greatly strengthen deterrence at the strategic level, and the United Kingdom Government welcomes the improvement which this will bring in the deterrent posture of the NATO Alliance as a whole against the background of the increasing Soviet threat. I also welcome this renewed demonstration of your Administration's resolve to strengthen your defence capabilities as well as the incentive which the programme will offer to the Russians to engage seriously in arms control negotiations: the benefits will be felt throughout the Alliance.

Yours ever
Roger

The President of the United States of America

SECRET

CONFIDENTIAL

Draft amended as indicated by CWS

13/10

before



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

13 October 1981

Dear Willie

US Strategic Decisions

David Omand kindly sent us a copy of his letter of 8 October conveying a draft reply from the Prime Minister to the telegram from President Reagan giving advance notice of the recent US announcement on strategic nuclear arms.

We are broadly content with the proposed draft but think it would be desirable to pick up President Reagan's reference to arms control in the penultimate paragraph of his message. The final sentence of the draft reply might therefore be amended to read:

'I also welcome this renewed demonstration of your Administration's resolve to strengthen your defence capabilities as well as the incentive which the programme will offer to the Russians to engage seriously in arms control negotiations: the benefits will be felt throughout the Alliance.'

I am sending copies of this letter to David Omand (Ministry of Defence) and David Wright (Cabinet Office).

Yours ever,

Francis Richards
(F N Richards)
Private Secretary

Willie Rickett Esq
10 Downing St

CONFIDENTIAL

SECRET

DRAFT LETTER FROM PRIME MINISTER TO PRESIDENT REAGAN

I am most grateful to you for your personal message to me of 1 October giving advance notification of the details of the modernisation programme for your strategic forces.

These plans will greatly strengthen deterrence at the strategic level, and the United Kingdom Government welcomes the improvement which this will bring in the deterrent posture of the NATO Alliance as a whole against the background of the increasing Soviet threat. I also welcome this renewed demonstration of your Administration's resolve to strengthen your defence capabilities: the benefits will be felt throughout the Alliance.

SECRET



The National Archives

LETTERCODE/SERIES <i>PREM 19</i>	Date and sign
PIECE/ITEM <i>417</i> (one piece/item number)	
Extract/Item details: <i>Minute from MOD to Prime Minister dated 12 October 1981 (folio 79A)</i>	
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79



MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
MAIN BUILDING WHITEHALL LONDON SW1
Telephone 01-230 7622 218 2111/3

Prime Minister

MO 14/2 or pgy A in case you need to
look at it again.

8th October 1981

A reply for your signature is
immediately below.

HL
12x.

Dear Willie,

US STRATEGIC DECISIONS

In your letter to us of 2nd October you asked for advice on the telegram to the Prime Minister from President Reagan warning her of the announcement of US decisions on strategic nuclear arms. As you know the announcement was duly made by the President.

My Secretary of State recommends that the Prime Minister should reply along the lines of the attached draft. He will himself be writing to the US Defense Secretary to thank him for the trouble he took in telephoning Mr Nott in Hong Kong to forewarn him of the US decisions.

I am sending a copy of this letter and its enclosure to Brian Fall (FCO) and David Wright (Cabinet Office).

Yours ever,
David

(D B OMAND)

W Rickett Esq

Covering SECRET

SECRET

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JSL
Defence



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

2 October 1981

I am enclosing a copy of a telegram to the Prime Minister from President Reagan, warning her of the forthcoming announcement of U.S. decisions on strategic nuclear arms. I should be grateful if you could advise whether a substantive reply is necessary, and if so, if you could provide a suitable draft by Friday 9 October.

I am sending a copy of this letter and its enclosure to Brian Fall (Foreign and Commonwealth Office) and David Wright (Cabinet Office).

J. W. R. S. RICKETT

Brian Norbury, Esq.,
Ministry of Defence.

A

SECRET

PRIME MINISTER'S
PERSONAL MESSAGE
SERIAL No. T 134/81

77A

ZCZCWA6014
OO WTEP4
DE WTE 65575 075001R
O 020136Z OCT #1
FM THE PRESIDENT, THE WHITE HOUSE
TO THE PRIME MINISTER, CABINET OFFICE
ZEM
S E C R E T VIA CABINET OFFICE CHANNELS WHR5575

OCTOBER 1, 1981

DEAR MAGGIE

AS YOU KNOW, MY ADMINISTRATION HAS UNDERTAKEN A RIGOROUS AND EXHAUSTIVE REVIEW OF U.S. STRATEGIC FORCES WITH A GOAL OF DEVELOPING THE MOST EFFECTIVE PLAN TO MODERNIZE THESE FORCES AND COUNTER THE GROWING SOVIET THREAT. THIS PLAN IS NOW COMPLETE, AND I WILL MAKE IT PUBLIC ON FRIDAY. BECAUSE OF THE SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES AND BECAUSE OF THE INTERRELATIONSHIP OF THE BRITISH AND U.S. DEFENSE PROGRAMS, I WANT YOU TO KNOW MY DECISIONS BEFORE THEY ARE MADE PUBLIC.

THE PLAN CALLS FOR A COMPREHENSIVE MODERNIZATION OF ALL MAJOR ELEMENTS OF OUR STRATEGIC FORCES AND SUPPORTING COMMAND AND CONTROL SYSTEMS. THIS BROAD APPROACH PERMITS A COHERENT PROGRAM TO SHARE THE CAPABILITIES NECESSARY TO SUPPORT OUR OBJECTIVES AND OUR STRATEGY. THE MAJOR ELEMENTS OF THIS PLAN ARE:

DEVELOPMENT AND PRODUCTION OF AT LEAST 100 MX MISSILES WITH INITIAL DEPLOYMENT OF SOME MX MISSILES IN EXISTING TITAN OR MINUTEMAN SILOS THAT WILL BE RECONSTRUCTED FOR GREATER HARDNESS. WE WILL PURSUE R&D ON PROMISING LONG-TERM BASING OPTIONS LEADING TO A DEPLOYMENT DECISION BY 1984. ALL WORK WILL BE STOPPED ON THE MULTIPLE PROTECTIVE SHELTER BASING FOR MX CURRENTLY UNDERWAY.

ACCELERATED DEVELOPMENT AND DEPLOYMENT OF THE D-5 TRIDENT II MISSILE, AND CONTINUED CONSTRUCTION OF TRIDENT SUBMARINES AT A RATE OF AT LEAST ONE PER YEAR. DEPLOYMENT OF NUCLEAR CRUISE MISSILES ON EXISTING SUBMARINES TO IMPROVE IN THE NEAR TERM OUR STRATEGIC RESERVE FORCE -- THAT PART OF OUR STRATEGIC DETERRENT THAT COULD BE WITHHELD TO DETER FOLLOW-UP SOVIET ATTACK ON THE U.S. AND ITS ALLIES.

DEPLOYMENT OF AN IMPROVED VERSION OF THE B-1 BOMBER AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, COUPLED WITH CONTINUED DEVELOPMENT OF AN ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY BOMBER WITH STEALTH CHARACTERISTICS FOR DEPLOYMENT IN THE 1990S.

IMPROVEMENTS IN STRATEGIC DEFENSES, INCLUDING MODERNIZATION OF OUR AIR DEFENSES, VIGOROUS RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT ON BALLISTIC MISSILE DEFENSES, AND IMPROVEMENT OF CIVIL

END OF PAGE #1

DEFENSES.

EXTENSIVE IMPROVEMENTS IN OUR COMMAND, CONTROL AND COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEMS.

THIS COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAM WILL CORRECT DEFICIENCIES THAT HAVE RESULTED FROM THE RAPID EXPANSION OF SOVIET MILITARY POWER AND, PERHAPS MORE IMPORTANT, IT WILL DEMONSTRATE OUR RESOLVE TO RESTORE THE STRATEGIC BALANCE AND TO MAINTAIN FLEXIBLE, RESPONSIVE, AND SURVIVABLE RETALIATORY FORCES. IT IS IMPORTANT TO RECOGNIZE THAT WITHOUT SUCH A PROGRAM THERE WOULD BE NO INCENTIVE FOR THE SOVIETS SERIOUSLY TO NEGOTIATE MEANINGFUL AND SUBSTANTIAL ARMS REDUCTIONS, A COURSE TO WHICH MY GOVERNMENT REMAINS FULLY COMMITTED.

I HAVE ARRANGED, THROUGH APPROPRIATE CHANNELS, FOR YOUR DEFENSE AND FOREIGN MINISTERS TO BE INFORMED OF THESE DECISIONS IN GREATER DETAIL.

SINCERELY,
RONALD REAGAN

0576
65575

NNNN

RECEIVED AT 0357 GMT/02. Pen.

N.B. BY LAMESA TALKS TALK SYMBOL @ 4162
AS ABBREVIATION FOR 'AND'

Deleted to charts via Acheson 05/20/81



77
Sub
Spence

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

29 September 1981

B/P

TRIDENT NEGOTIATIONS

Lord Trenchard's visit to the United States in mid-October is now likely to fall in the period between President Reagan's public announcement of the American decision to go for Trident D5 and our own policy decision on whether or not to follow suit (see your Secretary of State's Top Secret minute to the Prime Minister no. MO 18/1/1 of 14 September). Given these circumstances, the Prime Minister asked, just before her departure on 25 September, whether Mr. Nott would agree:

- a. that Lord Trenchard should not initiate any discussion of the subject with Mr. Carlucci or others;
- b. that, if Mr. Carlucci or his colleagues take the initiative in raising the matter with Lord Trenchard, the latter should confine himself to indicating that we were most grateful for Mr. Weinberger's helpful letter of 24 August and that (as our Embassy in Washington have already explained to both the Pentagon and the State Department) we expect to be in touch with the Americans as soon as we have taken our own policy decision, which is likely to be within the next few weeks.

When Mr. Nott returns from abroad on 8 October you may like to ascertain whether he does agree with a. and b. above, and if so to ensure that Lord Trenchard is instructed accordingly before his departure on 12 October.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Brian Fall (Foreign and Commonwealth Office) and David Wright (Cabinet Office).

T. P. LANKESTER

N.H.R. Evans, Esq.,
Ministry of Defence.



10 DOWNING STREET

SN-
m hm

AND
PERSONAL / SECRET

DRAFT LETTER TO MR N H R EVANS, MOD
FROM MR LANKESTER

for file Note: this draft was prepared
by Mr Lankester. I agreed with
him that my sending it to
Mr Nott's PS would be the
best way of ensuring that Mr Nott
agreed with the line proposed
in Nott's min. of 23/9.

Trident Negotiations

Lord Trenchard's visit to the United States in mid-October ^{is} is now likely to fall in the period between President Reagan's public announcement of the American decision to go for Trident D5 and our own policy decision on whether or not to follow suit (see your Secretary of State's Top Secret minute to the Prime Minister no. MO 18/1/1 of 14th September). Given these circumstances, the Prime Minister asked, just before her departure on 25th September, whether Mr Nott would agree

- a. that Lord Trenchard should not initiate any discussion of the subject with Mr Carlucci or others;
- b. that, if Mr Carlucci or his colleagues take the initiative in raising the matter with Lord Trenchard, the latter should confine himself to indicating that we were most grateful for Mr Weinberger's helpful letter of 24th August and that (as our Embassy in Washington have already explained to both the Pentagon and the State Department) we expect to be in touch with the Americans as soon as we have taken our own policy decision, which is likely to be within the next few weeks.

When Mr Nott returns from abroad on 8th October you may like to ascertain whether he does agree with a. and b. above, and if so to ensure that Lord Trenchard is instructed accordingly before his departure on 12th October.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Brian Fall in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and to David Wright in the Cabinet Office.

SECRET



76

*SD
Dance*

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

Mr. Wright

Trident Negotiations

The Prime Minister has read Sir Robert Armstrong's minute of 23 September, reference A05636.

Before we write to Lord Trenchard's Private Secretary as suggested, the Prime Minister would like to be sure that Mr. Nott agrees with the line proposed. Could you, or your colleagues, please check that this is the case. (I realise that Mr. Nott is away, but he will be back before Lord Trenchard leaves for the USA, I think.)

L. P. LANKESTER

25 September, 1981.

SECRET

SECRET

MR. ALEXANDER

Trident Negotiations

75 I think he ought to find out Mr. Nott's view first. He will be back before Oct. Agree that I should write as in the draft overleaf?
 Prime Minister
 23/9

I was concerned to learn recently that during his visit to the United States as the guest of Mr. Carlucci (the Under Secretary for Defense) in mid-October Lord Trenchard had in mind to discuss the terms and conditions on which we might procure Trident D5 rather than C4, if that is what we decide we want. I think that this would be premature and possibly counter-productive for our relations with the Americans on this subject; and so do the Foreign Office and the Ministry of Defence at official level. Our decision (as Mr. Nott made clear to the Prime Minister on 15th September) will not be taken until the later part of October. Thereafter, if we do go for D5, we shall need to conduct with the Americans a negotiation which will be no less delicate than its predecessor in 1979-80 and will be complicated by unresolved internal Washington issues about the respective positions of the Pentagon and the State Department under the Reagan Administration. In these circumstances fence-rushing and wire-crossing should clearly be avoided; and we should in any case gain little from lobbying Mr. Carlucci, who is not expected to be central to American decision-making in this field. We may well need to engage Ministers in due course, in order to ensure that we drive the best possible bargain with the Americans; but that will be a matter for the Prime Minister, Lord Carrington and Mr. Nott after the decision is taken, rather than for Ministerial approaches at a lower level before then.

2. Ministry of Defence officials have put these considerations to Lord Trenchard. He has concluded (i) that he should not after all raise the subject with Mr. Carlucci but (ii) that he will need to respond if it is raised with him. His officials remain apprehensive that he may interpret (ii) rather too liberally. If the Prime Minister agrees, therefore, I think it would be a wise precaution for you to write to Lord Trenchard's Private Secretary along the lines of the attached draft. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office agree.

RA

Robert Armstrong

23rd September 1981

SECRET

SECRET

DRAFT LETTER TO MR. C. V. BALMER, MOD
FROM MR. ALEXANDER

Trident Negotiations

Lord Trenchard's visit to the United States in mid-October is now likely to fall in the period between President Reagan's public announcement of the American decision to go for Trident D5 and our own policy decision on whether or not to follow suit (see the Secretary of State's Top Secret minute to the Prime Minister no. MO 18/1/1 of 14th September). In these circumstances he will clearly not wish to initiate any discussion of the subject with Mr. Carlucci or others. If Mr. Carlucci or his colleagues take the initiative in raising the matter with Lord Trenchard, the latter should in the Prime Minister's view confine himself to indicating that we were most grateful for Mr. Weinberger's helpful letter of 24th August and that (as our Embassy in Washington have already explained to both the Pentagon and the State Department) we expect to be in touch with the Americans as soon as we have taken our own policy decision, which is likely to be within the next few weeks.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Brian Fall in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

SECRET

SECRET



DS
Defence 74

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Principal Private Secretary

18 September 1981

Dear David,

UK STRATEGIC NUCLEAR FORCE

The Prime Minister was grateful to your Secretary of State for his minute of 14 September 1981 about the UK Strategic Nuclear Force. She has also seen the Chancellor of the Exchequer's minute of 17 September.

As you know, the Prime Minister had a brief word with Mr. Nott about his minute after Cabinet on Tuesday this week. She now looks forward to the further report which Mr. Nott has promised and which will serve as a basis for collective Ministerial discussion.

I am sending copies of this letter to John Halliday (Home Office), Brian Fall (Foreign and Commonwealth Office), John Kerr (HM Treasury) and David Wright (Cabinet Office).

Yours sincerely,

Marie L. Williams

David Omand, Esq.,
Ministry of Defence.

SECRET

S E C R E T



4. I am sending copies of this minute to the Defence Secretary, the Home Secretary, the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary, and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

(G.H.)

17 September 1981

Ref 72



Copy No 1 of 6 copies
Page 1 of 3 pages

Note.
The Prime Minister
discussed this minute briefly
with Lord Carrington on 14
NOK this morning after Cabinet

MO 18/1/1

1
This should be
sent
Can it be done after
Cabinet?

Prime Minister.

This is all beginning to sound
a bit worrying. But I do not think
you need do anything immediately.
Rather, I suggest you wait for Mr
NOK's full note.

PRIME MINISTER

UK STRATEGIC NUCLEAR FORCE

14/18

In my minute of 21st August reporting my meeting with the US Defense Secretary I undertook to produce a paper on the choice between the C4 and D5 versions of the Trident missile once we had secured confirmation of the US decision to undertake development of D5. Although we are still awaiting the US announcement, you have received the letter from Cap Weinberger dated 24th August which confirms US intentions - and an expressed willingness to grant us the option of choosing D5. I was hoping to provide the necessary memorandum before my departure (for three weeks) on Wednesday morning, so that at least my colleagues were aware of the broad parameters of the situation before October. But although we have been working on it here for several months, I am not yet ready to provide a sufficiently comprehensive summary of the situation, particularly as President Reagan has not yet announced the US decision.

2. Apart from the inherent complexity of the choice the position is further complicated by the discovery several months ago that we have little option but to "re-motor" the existing Polaris rocket motors. We are examining urgently ways of reducing this expenditure which could amount to as much as £300 million over the next six years (only partly provided for in our costings) - but I have come to the firm conclusion, given that the Soviets would be bound to learn of failures in our Polaris test firings, that we must clearly incur substantial expenditure on this matter to retain the credibility of the existing deterrent until the 1990s. I have therefore taken the decision to proceed with Polaris re-motoring.



3. In regard to the choice of D5, I shall need to give colleagues in MISC 7 another budgetary profile of Trident expenditure and show its likely impact for our overall defence capability in the years until 1995. But my first tentative conclusion is that D5 need not cost more over 15 years than say £500 million than the now substantially higher estimate for C4 (and given the major advantages of commonality it could prove even cheaper in the end, but we cannot take this into the reckoning on our forward projections).

4. To help to accommodate this cost and to fit the cost of re-motoring Polaris into our existing budget will probably require us to try and slip the date for the deployment of Trident by one or two years. With Chevaline and new rocket motors we can retain a viable strategic deterrent over a short extension of this kind. In industrial terms we have probably got this option with D5 but it would be very much more difficult with C4 where we are on the very end of the US production line. But any slippage in the deployment of Trident will raise complex problems in relation to the subsequent new construction programme at Barrow, and the nuclear refitting schedules at Rosyth in the key years. Moreover I need to refine further the cost saving option of using US East Coast facilities (rather than the full and rather costly programme envisaged for Scotland). You will wish to consider the broader political implications of such a course. We are also still working on substantial cost savings in the field of nuclear materials (my minute to you of 1st September).

5. I regret my inability to provide you with a fuller political industrial and financial picture for a few more weeks. It looks as if the choice of D5 is pretty overwhelming. For this reason I shall avoid expenditure on items strictly related to the C4 option,



recognising that there is a chance that it could lead to greater expenditure than we now plan if we decided to keep on the C4 path. In view of the US determination to help us (and the fact that there should be surplus and hence cheap US C4 missiles available from the earlier ending of their C4 programme) I think the risks are very slight. But I must report them to you.

6. Once President Reagan has announced the expected change in US policy, (and we are constrained until then) we shall need to follow up with detailed discussions with US officials in order to obtain the fuller information we shall need as a basis for our decisions.

7. If it would be helpful to you to have an oral explanation of any feature of this note, I could give it to you on Tuesday or before 9 am on Wednesday morning when I depart.

8. I am copying this minute to the Home Secretary, the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary and the Chancellor of the Exchequer; and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

SW

14th September 1981

Ministry of Defence

TOP SECRET

SECRET



10 DOWNING STREET

cc FCO
HMT
MOD
HC
CO

B
71

THE PRIME MINISTER

14 September 1981

Dear Mr. Weinberger,

Thank you for your letter of 24 August, conveying President Reagan's decision to adopt the D5 missile in your Trident boats, and to make that missile available to the United Kingdom should we wish to adopt it.

I greatly welcome both decisions; and I look forward to your public announcement of your plans for the United States' Trident programme. Together with colleagues, I shall be considering your generous offer to make the D5 missile available to us, and I expect our people will be in touch with yours shortly on this.

I share your pleasure at this further evidence of your Administration's determination to strengthen the mutual security of the Alliance, and of the warm spirit of co-operation between our two countries.

All best wishes.

Yours sincerely

The Honourable Casper Weinberger.

Margaret Thatcher

SECRET

8
HL

70



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

Type for PM's signature

10 September 1981

And

Dear Michael,

My letter of 26 August, covering Mr Weinberger's letter of 24 August to the Prime Minister about the US decisions on the Trident D5 missile and offering it to the United Kingdom promised a draft reply.

I now enclose a draft which has been seen and agreed by Mr Nott.

Copies of this letter and its enclosure go to the Private Secretaries to the Secretary of State for Defence, the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Home Secretary, and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

Yours ever,

(F N Richards)
Private Secretary

M O'D B Alexander Esq
10 Downing Street
LONDON
SW1

DSR 11 (Revised)

DRAFT: minute/letter/teleletter/despatch/note**TYPE:** Draft/Final 1+**FROM:**

Reference

PRIME MINISTER

DEPARTMENT:**TEL. NO:**

SECURITY CLASSIFICATION

TO:

Your Reference

Top Secret
 Secret
 Confidential
 Restricted
 Unclassified

The Hon Casper Weinberger
 Secretary of State for Defense
 The Pentagon
 Washington DC
 USA

Copies to:

PRIVACY MARKING

SUBJECT:

.....In Confidence

Thank you for your letter of 24 August, conveying President Reagan's decision to adopt the D5 missile in your Trident boats, and to make that missile available to the United Kingdom should we wish to adopt it.

CAVEAT.....

I greatly welcome both decisions; and I look forward to your public announcement of your plans for the United States' Trident programme. Together with colleagues, I shall be considering your generous offer to make the D5 missiles available to us, and I expect John Nott will be in touch with you shortly on this.

I share your pleasure at this further evidence of your Administration's determination to strengthen the mutual security of the Alliance, and of the warm spirit of cooperation between our two countries.

Enclosures—flag(s).....

Defence

7 September 1981

Trident

The Prime Minister has seen and taken note of the Chancellor of the Exchequer's note to her of 1 September on this subject.

I am sending copies of this letter to David Omand (Ministry of Defence), John Halliday (Home Office), Brian Fall (Foreign and Commonwealth Office) and David Wright (Cabinet Office).

MODBA

John Kerr Esq
HM Treasury.

SECRET

~~TOP SECRET~~
IV A
683



MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
MAIN BUILDING WHITEHALL LONDON SW1
Telephone 01-~~300 7000~~ 218 2111/3

MO 25/3/4

2nd September 1981

Dear Mike,

In your letter of the 21st August you asked for speaking notes for the Prime Minister's appearance on the Jimmy Young Programme on the 9th September.

/ I now attach brief speaking notes on defence topics which might be raised. You will note that we have included a line to take on the improvements to the US strategic forces which, we understand, are likely to be announced on the 7th September. This should be treated as Secret until an announcement is made. We will be circulating a fuller version of the line we intend to take in response to queries on the US decision.

Yours sincerely
Nick Evans

(N H R EVANS)

M A Pattison Esq

SECRET

SECRET

JIMMY YOUNG PROGRAMME - DEFENCE ISSUES

Recent decisions on Defence Priorities

Make quite clear not talking about cuts. Committed firmly to NATO aim of 3% real increase annually to mid decade. Heavy burden, but sure British people see the need in view of massive threat.

Our job to ensure money is spent to best effect. Need for a thorough fresh look at priorities in view of rising costs and rapid developments in technology. Had to face hard choices, but stress not giving up any major NATO roles. Not scrapping the Royal Navy. Aim to reduce support costs and phase out some older ships - but new frigates planned as well.

Realise this has its critics, but only realistic alternative to cut deep into BAOR. Not on - if did not play our part in holding Front Line, no need for convoys. By same token must defend UK itself - aim to strengthen air defences.

Trident

Intend to go ahead with Trident. UK's is only independent European nuclear capability committed to NATO. Important contribution to deterrence, valued by our Allies.

Have had this capability since 1950s, and would be folly to give it up in today's world. But time to modernise and Trident best way. Of course in close touch with US about production details.

SECRET

Enhanced Radiation Warheads

US decision to produce Enhanced Radiation Warheads - not bombs - an important one. Have made it very clear that will consult Allies on any proposals to deploy these weapons. Too many exaggerated and misleading notions about their effects. All nuclear weapons emit neutrons - no difference in principle from other nuclear systems. Not enough attention to the Soviet armoured threat they could help deter.

Anti-Nuclear Opinion

Agree with anti-nuclear protesters that nuclear war is appalling. Disagree with unilateralists about how best to prevent it in real world. We must aim for genuine multilateral reduction of arms. Not go for empty unilateralist gestures.

Dangers outside NATO area

Recognise with our Allies that can be dangers to Western security from events outside NATO area. We play our part in helping our friends, for example in the Persian Gulf, to defend themselves. And we have flexible forces which we can deploy in case of need.

Defence Changes and Effects on Jobs

Will be reductions for both servicemen and civilians. But redundancies will be kept to minimum, and investment in British defence industries will continue to rise.

SECRET

Opportunity to stress value placed on the Armed Forces.
Government's concern is to ensure they are equipped for the job.

[US Strategic Forces Improvements (If announcements are made
before 9th September.)]

General Line

Greatly welcome the decision to modernise the US strategic forces. Measures will significantly enhance NATO's strategic deterrent posture. And will do something to offset substantial recent acceleration and modernisation of Soviet strategic forces.

Implications for UK Trident programme

We have a close interest in the US plans. As has been made clear we are still studying the final configuration of the UK Trident force, including the choice of missile, and the US decision [on Trident II (D5)] is a major factor to be taken into account in these studies.]



MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
 MAIN BUILDING WHITEHALL LONDON SW1
 Telephone 01-938 2022 218 2111/3

MO 25/3/4

2nd September 1981

Dear Chris

PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT TO SCOTLAND -
TRIDENT DEPOT

The Scottish Office are providing briefing for the Prime Minister's forthcoming visit to Scotland, and I understand that this includes a piece on the planning issues raised by the proposed new Trident Depot at Coulport. The Scottish Office brief has been agreed with MOD officials and sets out the present position. There is, however, one additional factor which my Secretary of State has asked me to draw to your attention in this personal note.

The Defence Secretary has asked me to say that he expects later this month to be sending the Prime Minister a report on the present status of the Trident project, and he will include in this the possibility that there may be greater scope than previously thought for co-operation with the US Navy over some of the missile processing and storage functions by using American facilities. This would not remove the need for a Depot near Coulport but it would obviously effect its size and layout. At this stage we are far from being able to say whether this is a practicable and economic alternative but Mr Weinberger, the US Defense Secretary spoke favourably of the idea when he met the Defence Secretary on 21st August.

My Secretary of State has not yet had an opportunity to brief the Secretary of State for Scotland on the latest developments, but I believe he is intending to do this himself when he returns to London next week. Meanwhile, for the purpose of the Prime Minister's visit the "line to take" on the issue is as set out in the Scottish Office/MOD brief.

Yours ever,

David

(D B OMAND)

C A Whitmore Esq



Treasury Chambers, Parliament Street, SW1P 3AG
01-233 3000

Ernie Amster

PRIME MINISTER

ms

Amst

TRIDENT

John Nott's note to you of 21 August foreshadowed the US decision, which Weinberger has since confirmed, to develop a Trident II D5 missile to replace the Trident I C4 by 1989. As I understand it, that gives us the option of deciding now to follow the US to D5, and therefore to drop our place on the end of the current (and last) US C4 production line, avoiding the need to commit a further substantial sum in the near future.

2. Clearly this is a most important decision. If we were to keep our place in the C4 production line, but subsequently decide to go for D5, we could waste a substantial sum. If, on the other hand, we were to drop our place, we would be taking a crucial step towards altering the decision we took in MISC 7 last year, and deciding to go for D5 and the larger submarine which it would require.

3. I look forward to seeing the paper which John Nott promised in paragraph 4 of his note. But it might be helpful if I mention now that I am not opposed in principle to D5. I am aware that to go for larger missiles and submarines would involve significantly larger initial capital expenditure. Trident costs would certainly exceed the £5,000 million (at summer 1980 prices) which was the upper limit of the range envisaged when we took our decision last year to buy Trident I, and is the figure on which public attention has focussed. Some of this additional capital cost would fall in the early and mid-1980s. Moreover, D5 is yet to be developed, so that estimates of its cost must be uncertain and may escalate significantly. Yet, despite all these points, my instinct is that



a move to D5 would be right: to be stuck with a system no longer in service with the Americans could in the end prove very expensive - as the Chevaline experience shows - in terms of through-life costs (including maintenance, modernisation, and support costs.)

4. We have recently reconfirmed the decision that all Trident costs must be met from within Defence Budget totals, and John Nott will I am sure be considering how to minimise the extra capital costs of D5. The following three possibilities occur to me:-

- (a) I understand that D5 is a much more capable missile than C4, and that a 12 tube D5 submarine would have a capability superior (in terms of the deterrence options then presented to MISC 7) to the 16 tube C4 system on which we settled last year. The difference in the initial capital cost of a 12 and 16 tube D5 system would be significant.
- (b) The capital costs of D5 could be significantly reduced - perhaps by several hundred million pounds, otherwise falling due in the 1980s - if we were to use US missile processing facilities to the hilt, and so reduce the costs of a new depot at Coulport.
- (c) I understand that the present ageing Polaris motors are to be replaced with entirely new motors from 1986. This project will cost several hundred million pounds between now and 1986. But it will extend the life of the missiles, with their improved Chevaline front-end, which is not yet in service, further into the 1990s. To get proper benefit from the expenditure on remotoring, and Chevaline, it would make sense to review the planned in-service date (1992) for Trident. Relaxing the Trident deadlines would permit substantial economies.

I hope that all three options will be fully explored.



5. I am sending copies of this minute to the Defence Secretary, the Home Secretary, the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary, and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

G.H.

1st September 1981

CONQUEROR

MA

67 Defence



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

Prime Minister

Confirmation of the
U.S. Trident decision.We will let you have
a draft reply shortly.

26 August 1981

Dear Willie,

MAF 26/1/81

I enclose a letter from Mr Weinberger to the Prime Minister reporting President Reagan's decision to procure the Trident D5 missile and to make the D5 available to the United Kingdom if we wish to purchase it. As the Defence Secretary recorded in his minute to the Prime Minister of 21 August, these developments were foreshadowed in his discussions with Mr Weinberger that day. They were subsequently confirmed in telegram number 2497 from our Embassy in Washington.

In forwarding Mr Weinberger's letter, the Chargé d'Affaires in Washington has emphasised the importance of respecting Mr Weinberger's confidence; he points out that the American decision to use D5 missiles is likely to be announced in the US only in the second week of September.

We are consulting the Ministry of Defence about the terms of a draft reply from the Prime Minister. This will be submitted shortly.

Copies of this letter and its enclosure go to the Private Secretaries to the Secretary of State for Defence, the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Home Secretary and Sir Robert Armstrong.

Yours ever,

(F N Richards)
Private Secretary

Willie Rickett Esq
10 Downing Street
LONDON
SW1

66

DIA

SECRET UK EYES A



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

26 August 1981

The Prime Minister has seen your Secretary of State's minute of 21 August, reporting his discussion with the US Defense Secretary on US strategic nuclear decisions.

She will be content to see us stall on the C4 expenditure due on 1 September, and she now awaits the letter from President Reagan which Mr. Weinberger indicated would be forthcoming.

She also looks forward to seeing your Secretary of State's promised paper on these issues.

I am sending copies of this letter to John Halliday (Home Office), Francis Richards (Foreign and Commonwealth Office), John Wiggins (HM Treasury) and David Wright (Cabinet Office).

M. A. PATTISON

Brian Norbury, Esq.,
Ministry of Defence

SECRET UK EYES A

NM

SECRET

65
Ps/10 Downing St
(2)

GR 140
D E D I P
SECRET

FM WASHINGTON 242345Z AUG 81
TO IMMEDIATE F C O
TELEGRAM NUMBER 2497 OF 24 AUGUST
AND TO MODUK (FOR PS/S OF S AND QUINLAN)

FOLLOWING PERSONAL FOR ACLAND AND GILLMORE.
YOUR TELNO 1249: MR WEINBERGER'S MEETING WITH DEFENCE SECRETARY.

1. SECRETARY WEINBERGER TELEPHONED THIS EVENING TO LET ME KNOW THAT HE HAD TODAY WRITTEN TO THE PRIME MINISTER ABOUT THE POINT ON TRIDENT MISSILES WHICH HAD ARISEN ON 21 AUGUST IN DISCUSSION BETWEEN HIMSELF AND MR NOTT. HE HAD NOW BEEN IN TOUCH WITH THE PRESIDENT AND WAS WRITING TO SAY THAT THE DECISION HAD BEEN TAKEN. HE HAD UNDERSTOOD FROM MR NOTT THAT WE WERE OPERATING TO A VERY TIGHT DEADLINE. ALTHOUGH THERE WOULD BE NO ANNOUNCEMENT HERE FOR SOME WEEKS, HE WANTED TO LET US KNOW THE DECISION NOW. I SAID THAT I KNEW THE PRIME MINISTER AND MR NOTT WOULD BE MOST GRATEFUL THAT HE HAD FOLLOWED THIS UP SO QUICKLY.

2. MR WEINBERGER'S LETTER TO THE PRIME MINISTER CLASSIFIED SECRET, HAS NOW BEEN RECEIVED AND FOLLOWS BY TOMORROW'S BAG. IT CONFIRMS THAT THE DECISION IS TO USE THE D5 MISSILE.

3. GIVEN THAT NO DECISION IS LIKELY TO BE ANNOUNCED FOR SOME WEEKS HERE, IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT WEINBERGER'S CONFIDENCE SHOULD BE PROTECTED.

THOMAS

[COPIES SENT TO NO 10 DOWNING STREET]

LIMITED
HD/DEFENCE D
PS
PS/PUS
MR GILLMORE

COPIES TO
PS/S OF S)
MR R HASTIE-SMITH) MOD
PS/CHANCELLOR OF EXCHEQUER
SIR R ARMSTRONG CABINET OFFICE

SECRET

(we have not yet received this)

SECRET

THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

WASHINGTON, THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

64



24 AUG 1981

Her Excellency
Margaret Thatcher
Prime Minister of Great Britain
10 Downing Street
London
England

Dear Prime Minister:

As a result of my meeting with John Nott, I understand that an early decision by the U.S. on the D-5 missile for our Trident submarines would greatly assist the budgetary planning of Her Majesty's Government.

I am pleased to inform you that President Reagan has authorized me to advise you now, in advance of the public announcement, that we will use the D-5 missile in our Trident boats and will make that missile available to you should you desire to buy it. I would expect our public announcement to be made in a few weeks. I hope that this will prove helpful to you as you plan for the configuration of the U.K. Trident program.

I am especially pleased that the cooperation of our governments in strengthening our mutual security is again reflected in this decision.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Jasper W. Minkler", is written below the word "Sincerely,".

Classified by: Sec Def
Review on: 24 August 1987

SEC DEF CONTR No. X15865

SECRET



MO 14/2

Full mtg record
on USA: Aug 80:
US defence Policy

We saw mtg. the
President's letter.
MM.

63
2.
Prime Minister

It seems right to stall
the September payment.
We will now await the
President's letter

PRIME MINISTERUS STRATEGIC NUCLEAR DECISION

MAP
24/1000.

At the meeting which I had with the US Defense Secretary this morning Cap Weinberger said that he expected the whole range of US strategic nuclear decisions to be announced by President Reagan following the US Labour Day in the week beginning 7th September. Following his talks with President Reagan in Los Angeles, he thought that a decision in favour of the Trident D5 system, as opposed to C4, was about 98% certain with an In Service date of 1989 or sooner if possible.

2. If the US introduces the D5 system into service in this timescale, there are strong logistic and financial arguments against our sticking uniquely to the C4 system in the 1990s. Following the decision we have already taken, we have to commit ourselves to a further immediate payment of \$150M on procuring the C4 system by 1st September - a substantial proportion of which will be nugatory if colleagues eventually decide that we should follow the American example and go for the D5 system. Given this problem Cap Weinberger thought he could get the President to write to you by 1st September to confirm the American decision and so enable us, if we so chose, to avoid committing the further immediate payment of \$150M to the C4 programme. The Presidential letter might indicate that if the UK chose to procure the D5 system in the changed circumstances, the terms on which the system was procured



would be no less favourable to the UK than the C4 arrangements agreed with President Carter.

3. In the face of a new, and awkward, situation this is a most helpful offer. Weinberger and I both recognised that any such action must remain strictly secret until the President's public announcement of US strategic decisions, and thereafter until we had made our own decision on the best future strategic system to fit into the British Trident submarines. I told the US Defense Secretary that it might be November before we should be in a final position to take a UK decision. I do not think there should be too much difficulty in stalling on the UK expenditure on C4 by 1st September on technical grounds, thereby avoiding any appearance of having prejudged a D5 decision.

4. I thought I should let you and colleagues know of this at once. I will put a paper to you within the next few weeks.

5. I am sending copies of this minute to the Home Secretary, the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary and the Chancellor of the Exchequer; and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

Ministry of Defence
21st August 1981

FW

cis
C. A. Whitmore, Esq.



CABINET OFFICE

With the compliments of
Sir Robert Armstrong KCB, CVO
Secretary of the Cabinet

70 Whitehall, London SW1A 2AS
Telephone: 01-233 8319

TOP SECRET

Defence 62

Copy No 3 of 3 Copies

Ref. A05309

Prime Minister

MR WADE-GERY

To see

c Mr Whitmore

AMH

24 July 81

Trident

The Prime Minister told me that she had not had an opportunity during the course of her bilateral meeting with President Reagan to raise the question of Trident. She asked me to have a word with Mr Meese.

2. I spoke accordingly to Mr Meese on Tuesday 21 July.
3. I said that we were aware that the US Administration had to take a decision about whether to go for D5. We had a considerable interest in this decision since, if they decided to go for D5, we should have to decide whether to do so as well. If we were to decide that it might well make sense to go for D5 once the Americans had done so, we should have to cancel orders for long lead items for C4. We were already spending money on these orders; the sooner we could take our decision, and (if necessary) cancel orders and stop unnecessary payments, the better. We, therefore, had an interest in the American decision being taken soon.
4. I went on to say that, if the Americans did decide to go for D5, there would have to be a further round of Anglo-American negotiations on the subject, certainly in the event of our deciding to follow suit and almost certainly in the more unlikely event of our deciding to stay with C4. On our side negotiations would be handled (as in the past) by the Cabinet Office, supported by the Ministry of Defence and Foreign Office. I should be glad to know from Mr Meese in due course how he would like to handle these matters from their side; whether the Cabinet Office should look to a contact in the White House or to Mr McFarlane (the State Department official with whom I dealt on the renegotiation of the Anglo-US nuclear understandings); and which American Departments would be involved in the team on the American side.
5. Mr Meese took note of these points and promised to be in touch in due course.

ROBERT ARMSTRONG
ROBERT ARMSTRONG

24 July 1981

TOP SECRET

SECRET



61 Defence

MO 18/1/1

PRIME MINISTER

TRIDENT

We have to take decisions very soon about various aspects of the Trident force, especially submarine design. This involves the question of whether to stay with Trident I (C.4) or go for Trident II (D.5).

2. The issues are complicated and important, and I shall of course bring them to my colleagues. But the complication is heightened by the fact that the US themselves have not yet decided whether to go for D.5. It seems increasingly certain that they will, and increasingly likely that they will do so fairly soon. But until this is settled our own decision-making is made very awkward.

3. I believe therefore that it would be useful if you mentioned the matter briefly when you see President Reagan in Ottawa. It would not be necessary or appropriate to say firmly now that we wanted D.5, still less to get into questions of terms. We need simply to register the point that we are much interested in their decision on the future of D.5, and hope it will be taken soon.

/ 4. I attach at Annex a background note.

5. I am sending copies to the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary and the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

J.W.

Ministry of Defence

15th July 1981

SECRET

TRIDENT: C.4 AND D.5

1. The July 1980 UK/US agreement on Trident was for the C.4 missile. D.5 seemed to lie too far in an uncertain future to be a candidate.
2. C.4, already operational with the US Navy, carried up to eight MIRVs. D.5 could be in USN service from 1989 and would carry up to fourteen more accurate MIRVs. The ranges are much the same (4000-6000 nm depending on warhead).
3. There are two reasons why we need to decide soon whether to stay with C.4 or switch to D.5 -
 - a. We are already having to commit money on C.4; if we really want D.5, the sooner we stop this the better.
 - b. We need to decide our basic submarine configuration in the near future. The choice of missile may make a difference to the number of missile tubes.
4. Against the disadvantage of extra cost D.5 would have the key advantage of much longer assurance of commonality with the US (C.4 could conceivably be phased out of US service only a few years after our deployment of it was complete in 1995). It would also give us greater operational capability, and so more insurance margin against advances in Soviet capability (especially ABMs). Furthermore it could enable us to use - if we so decided - the American basing and maintenance facilities off the East Coast of the US; thus substantially reducing our major financial commitment to a major storage and maintenance depot at Coulport, Scotland (where Strathclyde are increasingly anti-Trident).



The Secretary of State for Defence expects to recommend to his colleagues that D.5, if developed and if made available to the UK, would be the better choice.

5. We cannot take it formally for granted that the US would accede to a UK request for D.5, nor that the terms (eg on R&D levy) would be the same as for C.4. These matters would be for Presidential decision. But the Pentagon view, from Mr Weinberger down, plainly favours a UK shift to D.5.

6. It was originally thought that the US would not take a D.5 decision until 1983, or perhaps late 1982. There are however now increasing signs - especially given the problems over how to base the MX land-based ICBM - that the Administration may be disposed to a considerably earlier decision. DoD indications are that a UK push in this direction would not be ill received.



Def
Cambridge :
Monday 11 am.
Defence P13

CHEVALINE

The following statement is being issued by the MOD Press Office, to deal with enquiries following reports of remarks by Mr Nott to the press yesterday.

"As regards the cost of Chevaline, when full development funding was sought in 1974 the estimate at the prices then current was £240M. As work progressed this proved a serious under-estimate, and by the end of 1977 the figure was over twice as high in real terms. There has been no significant further escalation in real terms since then. The current figure of £1000M reflects inflation

As regards timescale, development is far advanced, and extensive work has already been done in equipping submarines to receive and operate the new system; the introduction of the modified missiles will not have to await major refit periods. We are not prepared to give our exact planning dates."

The current estimate for the project remains about one thousand million pounds, as Mr Pym told the House on 24th January 1980 and Mr Nott has recently re-affirmed. (In line with custom, this figure is a hybrid in terms of price levels, since past expenditure is included at the historic levels prevailing when it was reviewed.)

The Times (Mr Peter Hennessy) recently published a forecast of the dates at which successive submarines with Chevaline would enter service. His dates are wrong (too late) because he assumed, mistakenly, that the introduction of Chevaline had to await the next major refit for each boat. We would not wish to give the right dates publicly.

The Public Accounts Committee has given notice that it intends to enquire into the Chevaline project.

Nott says cost of Chevaline 'has gone bananas'

From Philip Webster, Warrington

Mr John Nott, Secretary of State for Defence, admitted yesterday that his ministry had experienced difficulties with the Royal Navy's controversial £1,000m Chevaline improvement to its strategic nuclear deterrent and that the cost of the programme had "gone bananas".

Mr Nott, speaking at a press conference in Warrington where he was campaigning on behalf of Mr Stanley Sorrell, Conservative candidate in the by-election, was confirming reports published in *The Times* in the past eight days.

He said the Ministry of Defence thought it knew what had gone wrong with the new front end for the Polaris missile. He hoped that the first of the Chevaline-improved warheads would be in service by mid-1983.

The Times reported on June 30 that the warheads and decoys of the complicated Chevaline system had failed to separate properly in the most recent of flight trials off Cape Canaveral, Florida. It reported yesterday that the Commons Public Accounts Committee is to investigate procurement of Chevaline in the next session. Cost estimates rose from about £250m in April, 1974, to £1,000m in January 1980.

Mr Nott described as nonsense a contention in a letter to *The Times* on Monday by Air Vice-Marshal Stewart

Menaul that the Trident missile system could be obsolete before it was introduced in the early 1990s.

The air vice-marshal wrote that the most important aspect of recent intelligence information about Soviet activities was their huge research and development efforts in space-based chemical lasers and charged particle beam weapons.

Against such defences, in the latter part of this decade or the first half of the next the Chevaline programme would be useless and Trident might be obsolete before it was introduced in 1992-95.

Mr Nott said there were no grounds for believing that a system would be developed in the next decade which could successfully knock out a ballistic missile system.

Mr Nott asked whether it was really suggested that the United States would be considering going into the Trident II ballistic missile system and the MX missile system if it believed a laser and particle beam weapons system that could knock out ballistic missiles was about to be invented.

"Is it suggested that the Soviet Union would be going into a whole range of new ballistic missile systems if they believed they could get lasers up into space which could knock out ballistic missiles? We know they cannot."

Dockyard tug-of-war

By Henry Stanhope, Defence Correspondent

The Royal Navy and civilian management played tug-of-war over control of the royal dockyards, Sir John Mallabar, the industrialist, told MPs yesterday.

Sir John chaired the committee which recommended 11 years ago that a trading fund should be established for the four dockyards, enabling the Government to measure their efficiency in terms of profit and loss.

A similar scheme has been successfully adopted for the Royal Ordnance Factories. But the dockyards were very reluctant to accept the idea.

Sir John, aged 80, was giving evidence to the Commons Select Committee on Defence

who are inquiring into the royal dockyards. The study was begun before last week's announcement that one at Chatham, is to close and another at Portsmouth is to be severely slimmed down.

Sir John, a former chairman of Harland and Wolff shipyard, said local port admirals kept intervening in dockyard matters, like industrial disputes, which should have been left to the chief executive.

But all four dockyards in 1970 were clearly under-employed and their productivity had gone down disastrously. By setting up a trading fund the Government could have discovered which one of the four should have been closed.

Design doubt in crash plane

By Arthur Reed, Air Correspondent

Widow will battle over £478 rates debt

From Our Correspondent Cambridge

Mrs Agnes Parker staunchly refused to pay rates on her property in the side, Longstanton, near a bridge, because she feels she has paid enough throughout her life and because she will accept any "charity" in the way of benefits from Government.

Yesterday Mrs Parker brought up eight children, tiny thatched cottage, pushed before Cambridge magistrates in a wheelchair, be questioned about her age and why she had not paid South Cambridgeshire District Council £478 rates on the cottage and the bungalow which she now lives, which built to replace the cottage.

Mrs Parker, who is deaf, was told by the magistrates that because of her refusal to pay the rates she would spend one day in custody but because of her age and physical state the court decided she could be released immediately. Then the magistrates told her she would have to pay her outstanding arrears.

Mr Robert Turrell Clark, the district council, said: "We must consider ourselves against this decision, but would appear to destroy the whole system of council rates."

Earlier, Mrs Parker told court: "I object to seeing people legally robbed and having sufficient money to maintain the means of life, but not claimed any benefits from the state because I have the results of that sort of thing in riots in Brixton and other places which are caused by a system of getting something nothing. My children, in a riot, they do not take drugs, they do not take anything from the state."

Mrs Parker's daughter, Mary Norris, flew from the court for the case and she told court: "My mother brought eight children in very poor conditions and the cottage she in previously was almost down, with rain coming in the thatch. It took three years to have the bungalow built. Because she has thrifty she has been penalised."

**BAN ON BI
LORRIES
DEFERRE**

By Michael Baily
Transport Correspondent

ONE PAGE ONLY 60
COPY NO 2 OF 5 COPIES

No 10. A.R. 39

NBcm

MJ

KⁿFCS/81/74SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DEFENCEBritish Nuclear Test Programme

1. Thank you for my copy of your minute of 3 June about the 1982-83 programme. I have now seen the Prime Minister's Private Secretary's letter of 10 June agreeing with your proposals.
2. I agree that the prospects for a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty are uncertain. The US policy review is incomplete and its outcome unsure. Nevertheless, if the HURDLE PRIME design is likely to provide an acceptable fall-back, the possibility of testing restrictions need not deter us from starting the development of a more advanced design.
3. I am sending copies of this minute to the Prime Minister and Sir Robert Armstrong.

(CARRINGTON)

Foreign and Commonwealth Office
15 June 1981

TOP SECRET

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File 59
A7

10 DOWNING STREET

No. 10. A.R. 38

Deferco

From the Principal Private Secretary

10 June 1981

Dear Brian,

BRITISH NUCLEAR TEST PROGRAMME

The Prime Minister has seen your Secretary of State's minute of 3 June 1981 about the 1982/83 nuclear test programme. She agrees that we should go ahead with arrangements for the DICEL POST test in the autumn of 1982 and the first HOLBROOK test in mid-1983.

I am sending copies of this letter to John Halliday (Home Office), Brian Fall (Foreign and Commonwealth Office), John Wiggins (Treasury) and David Wright (Cabinet Office).

Yours sincerely,

Miss Whitman.

Brian Norbury Esq.,
Ministry of Defence.

TOP SECRET

ATOMIC

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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

8 June 1981

Effects of Industrial Action on
Polaris and Chevaline

The Prime Minister has seen and taken note of the Defence Secretary's minute to her of 3 June on this subject.

I am sending copies of this letter to John Halliday (Home Office), Brian Fall (FCO), John Wiggins (HM Treasury), Jim Buckley (Lord President's Office) and David Wright (Cabinet Office).

M. O'D. B. ALEXANDER

Brian Norbury Esq
Ministry of Defence

SP



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LETTERCODE/SERIES <i>PREM 19</i>	Date and sign
PIECE/ITEM <i>447</i> (one piece/item number)	
Extract/Item details: <i>Minute from MOD to Prime Minister dated 3 June 1981 (folio 57)</i>	
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LETTERCODE/SERIES <i>PREM 19</i>	Date and sign
PIECE/ITEM <i>417</i> (one piece/item number)	
Extract/Item details: <i>Minute from MoD to Prime Minister dated 3 June 1981 (folio 56)</i>	
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Reference

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Principal Private Secretary

25 February 1981

CHEVALINE FLIGHT TRIALS

I have shown the Prime Minister your letter of 23 February 1981 and she was grateful for this further information about the implications of the failure of two of the Chevaline flight trials last November.

I am sending copies of this letter to George Walden (FCO) and David Wright (Cabinet Office).

C. A. WHITMORE

Brian Norbury Esq.,
Ministry of Defence.

SECRET

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LETTERCODE/SERIES <i>PREM 19</i>	Date and sign
PIECE/ITEM <i>417</i> (one piece/item number)	
Extract/Item details: <i>Letter from Norbury to Whitmore dated 23 February 1981 (folio 54)</i>	
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53
Defence

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Principal Private Secretary

12 February 1981

No. 10 A.R. 36

British Nuclear Test Programme

The Prime Minister has seen and taken note of the Defence Secretary's minute of 10 February 1981 about the results of the Hurdle Prime underground nuclear test which took place on 17 December 1980.

I am sending copies of this letter to John Halliday (Home Office), George Walden (Foreign and Commonwealth Office), John Wiggins (HM Treasury) and David Wright (Cabinet Office).

B.M. Norbury, Esq.,
Ministry of Defence.

SECRET ATOMIC

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LETTERCODE/SERIES <i>PREM 19</i>	Date and sign
PIECE/ITEM <i>41?</i> (one piece/item number)	
Extract/Item details: <i>Minute from MOD to Prime Minister dated 10 February 1981 (folio 52)</i>	
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Extract from Record
PM + S/1 defence 10.2.81

Subject filed as reference:
Oct 79: Future UK Policy.

- 4 -

any war would be a relatively long drawn out affair, and that reserves would be necessary.

In a brief discussion on the nuclear deterrent, the Foreign Secretary expressed the hope that the forthcoming debate in the House would not be confined to Trident, but would deal with our nuclear defence policy as a whole, including questions of arms control. The Defence Secretary confirmed that it was his intention to deal with all the issues. It was essential to do so since two-thirds of the Party and two-thirds of the Cabinet were opposed to the procurement of Trident. Even the Chiefs of Staff were not unanimous. He himself believed that the decision was right, but also believed that in the end we would have to acquire 5 submarines and spend £10 b rather than £5 b. The Foreign Secretary said that he also was in no doubt about the decision. Failure to acquire Trident would have left the French as the only nuclear power in Europe. This would be intolerable. The Prime Minister, the Foreign Secretary and the Defence Secretary all agreed on the need to couple arms control with deterrence. The Defence Secretary added that he hoped nothing would be said in Washington or elsewhere in the next few months to suggest that HMG was committed to the acquisition of ERW and/or chemical weapons. To do so would add greatly to the problems of justifying our nuclear defence policy. He was confident he could win the argument by the autumn. Thereafter the acquisition of ERW, which was almost certainly desirable on military grounds, could be reconsidered.

It was agreed that the Lord Privy Seal should wind up the debate in the House of Commons when it took place.

Ministerial Organisation in the Ministry of Defence

The Defence Secretary said that he would be approaching the Prime Minister in the summer to ask her to abolish single Service Ministers. He wished to move to a Ministerial organisation based on a Minister of State for Procurement, a Minister of State

/ for



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LETTERCODE/SERIES <i>PREM 19</i>	Date and sign
PIECE/ITEM <i>417</i> (one piece/item number)	
Extract/Item details: <i>Letter from Whitmore to Norbury dated 5 February 1981 (folio 51)</i>	
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Extract/Item details: <i>Minute from Armstrong to Alexander dated 3 February 1981, with attachment (folio 50)</i>	
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Extract/Item details: <i>Letter from Norbury to Whitmore dated 30 January 1981 (folio 49)</i>	
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② PA
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MINISTRY OF DEFENCE WHITEHALL LONDON SW1A 2HB

TELEPHONE 01-218 9000
DIRECT DIALLING 01-218 6169

MO 18/1/1

22nd December 1980

Dear Norman,

As you know, I had wanted a debate in the House before Christmas on our Trident decision. However, because the Select Committee on Defence are engaged in a study on the subject, I was prepared to wait for their report which it was expected they would produce early in the New Year.

The report is now most unlikely to be ready before late March or April, and because of the decisions which must be taken on Trident I just cannot wait until then for a debate. I have, therefore, been in touch with the Committee and they would go along with a debate on Trident in the week of 16th February before they leave the following week for a visit to the United States, and by which time they will at least have published their evidence and a summary.

I have already been in touch with the Chief Whip about this, and I would be most grateful if you would arrange for a Trident debate in the week of 16th February.

I am sending copies of this letter to the Prime Minister; Peter Carrington and Ian Gilmour; and Michael Jopling.

J. Pym

J. Pym

Francis Pym

The Rt Hon Norman St John Stevas MP

SECRET

Defence 48



MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
MAIN BUILDING WHITEHALL LONDON SW1
Telephone 01-~~938 7022~~ 218 2111/3

MO 18/1/1

17th December 1980

Dear Michael,

Prime Minister.
mb
tw
17xii

BRITISH NUCLEAR TEST PROGRAMME

Brian Norbury wrote to Clive Whitmore on 10th December to let him know of a slight delay, because of unfavourable weather conditions, for the December Hurdle Prime test. I am now writing to confirm my telephone call to you earlier this afternoon. The firing eventually took place at 1510 London time this afternoon. I understand that it will be sometime before the outcome of the test is known, but preliminary results indicate that the device functioned successfully.

A short press release reporting the test is being issued today.

I am copying this letter to John Halliday (Home Office), George Walden (FCO), John Wiggins (HM Treasury) and David Wright (Cabinet Office).

Your sincerely
J D S Dawson

(J D S DAWSON)

M O'D B Alexander Esq

SECRET

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47

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Principal Private Secretary

11 December 1980

Dear Porini,

BRITISH NUCLEAR TEST PROGRAMME

Thank you for your letter of 10 December 1980.

The Prime Minister was grateful to be warned of this further delay in the Hurdle Prime test.

I am sending copies of this letter to John Halliday (Home Office), George Walden (FCO), John Wiggins (HM Treasury) and David Wright (Cabinet Office).

Yours sincerely,

J.M. [Signature]

B.M. Norbury, Esq.,
Ministry of Defence.

SECRET

98

SECRET

Defence 45



MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
MAIN BUILDING WHITEHALL LONDON SW1
Telephone 01-~~3307822~~ 218 2111/3

MO 18/1/1

20th November 1980

NB/M
→
MW
20x:

Dear Chris,

BRITISH NUCLEAR TEST PROGRAMME

The Hurdle Prime test for December to which the Prime Minister has already agreed (your letter of 21st October in reply to mine of 20th October) will need to be put back to 10th December from the planned date of 4th December.

I thought that I should advise you of this but add that there is nothing untoward about the delay: it has no implications for the success of the test.

I am sending copies of this letter to John Halliday (Home Office), George Walden (FCO), John Wiggins (HM Treasury) and David Wright (Cabinet Office).

Yours and
Buran

(B M NORBURY)

C A Whitmore Esq

SECRET



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PIECE/ITEM <i>417</i> (one piece/item number)	
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43

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Principal Private Secretary

21 October 1980

Dear Brian,

BRITISH NUCLEAR TEST PROGRAMME

I have shown the Prime Minister your letter of 20 October 1980, and she agrees that the Hurdle Prime test planned for the 4 December should go ahead.

I am sending copies of this letter to John Halliday (Home Office), George Walden (FCO), John Wiggins (Treasury) and David Wright (Cabinet Office).

Yours etc,

Steve Whitman.

B.M. Norbury, Esq.,
Ministry of Defence.

SECRET

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LETTERCODE/SERIES <i>PREM 19</i>	Date and sign
PIECE/ITEM <i>417</i> (one piece/item number)	
Extract/Item details: <i>Letter from Norbury to Whitmore dated 20 October 1980 (folio 42)</i>	
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CONFIDENTIAL

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
MAIN BUILDING WHITEHALL LONDON SW1
Telephone 01-~~3307822X~~ 218 2111/3

Defence

MO 18/1/1

14th October 1980

1. *Prime Minister*
✓
To see

2. *Mr. Jeffrey*
✓

14x.

ms

Dear Chris,

CHEVALINE FLIGHT TRIALS

My Secretary of State has asked me to let you know, for the Prime Minister's information, the plans for the final series of Chevaline development flight trials.

The series, which began in September 1977, is due to conclude in mid-November (although there will later be Service acceptance trials). Three missiles will be launched from HMS RENOWN while she is sailing, submerged, some thirty miles off Cape Canaveral. The missiles are scheduled for launch on 14, 18 and 20 November.

Although the arrival of RENOWN at Port Canaveral will itself have to be the subject of a statement to the press (as is normal when our submarines arrive in the US for "shakedown" tests following refits) the publicity arrangements for each of the trials firings will be the same as for previous trials, that is, notification will be issued to the media, both locally and in the UK, two days before launch but with publication embargoed until launch. - No post-launch release will be issued unless something goes wrong. An updated Press Office brief will be used to deal with any enquiries from the media.

The No 10 Press Office will be informed of the results of the trials.

I am copying this letter to George Walden (FCO) and David Wright (Cabinet Office).

*Yours sincerely,
Bourne*

(B M NORBURY)

C A Whitmore Esq

CONFIDENTIAL

SECRET



41
no. R4

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Principal Private Secretary

23 September, 1980

Dear Bowen,

British Nuclear Test Programme

The Prime Minister has seen your letter of 17 September and she agrees that the nuclear test planned to take place on 23 October should go ahead. The way is therefore clear for your Secretary of State to issue the necessary authorisation.

The Prime Minister would like to give the Cabinet advance warning of the test and of the press announcement, and I look forward to receiving further advice from you on this point.

I am sending copies of this letter to John Halliday (Home Office), George Walden (Foreign and Commonwealth Office), John Wiggins (HM Treasury) and David Wright (Cabinet Office).

Yours ever,

Heri Whitmore

Brian Norbury, Esq
Ministry of Defence

SECRET

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The National Archives

LETTERCODE/SERIES <i>PREM 19</i>	Date and sign
PIECE/ITEM <i>417</i> (one piece/item number)	
Extract/Item details: <i>letter from Norbury to Whitmore dated 17 September 1980 (folio 40)</i>	
CLOSED FOR YEARS UNDER FOI EXEMPTION	
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39



Defence

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Principal Private Secretary

12 September 1980

Dear Sir,

BRITISH UNDERGROUND NUCLEAR TEST PROGRAMME

The Prime Minister has considered the Defence Secretary's minute of 3 September 1980 about the nuclear test programme. She has also seen the Lord Privy Seal's minute of 9 September and the Chancellor of the Exchequer's letter of 10 September.

The Prime Minister agrees that we should confirm with the Americans our intention to proceed with the two British tests planned for next year, subject to the normal review of each test shortly before the firing dates, and that we should accept the American request for an early financial commitment to the 1981 programme.

I am sending copies of this letter to George Walden (FCO), John Wiggins (Treasury) and David Wright (Cabinet Office).

Yours sincerely,

Heri Whinn.

B.M. Norbury, Esq.,
Ministry of Defence.

[Handwritten mark]

SECRET



38

2 115

Treasury Chambers, Parliament Street, SW1P 3AG
01-233 3000

10 September 1980

The Rt. Hon. Francis Pym MP
Secretary of State for Defence

Dr Francis

BRITISH NUCLEAR TEST PROGRAMME

I have seen your minute of 3 September to the Prime Minister. My understanding is that the costs will be met from within the Defence Budget and that expenditure will not be incurred in advance of work being carried out. I therefore have no objection to your entering into the early financial commitment which the US Government has requested in respect of the two tests proposed for 1981.

I am sending copies of this letter to the Prime Minister, the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

[Handwritten signature]

GEOFFREY HOWE



SECRET

Prime Minister.

37

Are we agreed that we should go firm on the programme of two tests for 1981, together with the early financial commitment of \$5 million which the Americans want. Content?

PRIME MINISTER

*Agreed
no.*

British Nuclear Tests

- Play A.

The Secretary of State for Defence's minute to you of 3rd September (MO 28/5) recommends that we should now go firm on the 1981 programme of tests. Two tests are contemplated, one in the autumn and one (which we would have preferred earlier) in December. The Ministry of Defence need to commit themselves now to \$5 million as the eventual cost; they will of course meet this from within the agreed Defence Budget.

2. The tests will form an important part of our progress towards designing warheads for our new Trident missiles in the 1990s. Neither the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary nor the Chancellor of the Exchequer are expected to raise any objection. The Comprehensive Test Ban negotiations remain stalled and are unlikely to prove an obstacle. I therefore recommend that you give Mr. Pym the approval he seeks, once the Lord Privy Seal (in Lord Carrington's absence) has commented.

*They are both content - see
pages B and C*

*as he now has in
his minute on
page B.*

RA

(Robert Armstrong)

9th September 1980

SECRET



Defence
36

Prime Minister

BRITISH UNDERGROUND NUCLEAR TEST PROGRAMME

The Defence Secretary sent me a copy of his minute to you of 3 September. I agree with his proposal that we should now confirm to the Americans our intention to proceed with the 1981 test programme and to meet the American request for an early financial commitment.

Francis Pym assesses the prospects for an agreed cessation of testing during 1981 as being remote. I think that this is right. For reasons similar to those explained when we last considered the test programme (Peter Carrington's minute of 3 January), there remains a chance that the Dingbat II test, now delayed until December 1981, could be at risk if the CTB negotiations were given a real push by both the Americans and Russians in 1981. But I do not think this possibility is firm enough to hold up our confirmation to proceed with our programme.

I am sending copies of this minute to the Defence Secretary, the Chancellor of the Exchequer and Sir Robert Armstrong.

1.49.

9 September 1980

SECRET



The National Archives

LETTERCODE/SERIES <i>PREM 19</i>	Date and sign
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Defence



10 DOWNING STREET

NOTE FOR THE FILE

BF to MODBA on return to consider whether the exchanges with European leaders about Trident, prior to the announcement in Parliament, might usefully be downgraded from Top Secret.

MA

ABX 1.9.80

(26 August 1980)

The texts of the messages can be downgraded to 'Confidential'. Any related monitoring should remain Top Secret.

Paul

1.9.80

MFJ

CONFIDENTIAL

26 August 1980

I enclose a copy of a message which the Prime Minister has received today from Signor Cossiga about the decision to acquire Trident.

I am sending copies of this letter and its enclosure to George Walden (Foreign and Commonwealth Office), John Wiggins (HM Treasury) and Barry Hilton (Cabinet Office).

MAP

Christopher Jebb Esq
Foreign and Commonwealth Office

CONFIDENTIAL

MFJ

26 August 1980

In the absence of Michael Alexander on holiday, I am writing to thank you for your letter of 26 August, with which you enclosed one to the Prime Minister from Signor Cossiga. I will of course bring this to the Prime Minister's attention at once.

MAP

His Excellency Signor Andrea Cagiati



2

10 DOWNING STREET

PRIME MINISTER

Here is a somewhat delayed
reply from Signor Cossiga to
your message about Trident.

24/7

Confidential translation (below)

MAQ

26 August 1980

WJK

The Ambassador

*Italian Embassy,
6881 4. Grosvenor Square,
London. W.1.*

TOP SECRET

26th August, 1980

Dear Mr. Alexander,

Having only today come back from a period of vacation, I have been instructed by the Italian Prime Minister to forward to Mrs. Thatcher the enclosed letter. *24/7/80*

I would be most grateful if you could let the Prime Minister have Signor Cossiga's letter together with the rough translation, also enclosed.

Very sincerely yours

Andrea Cagiati
Andrea Cagiati

Encs.

M. O. B. Alexander, Esq.,
Private Secretary to the Prime Minister
(Oversaes Affairs),
10, Downing Street,
London S.W.1.

TOP SECRET

SUBJECT



T 169/80
PRIME MINISTER'S

IL PRESIDENTE DEL CONSIGLIO DEI MINISTRI
DELLA REPUBBLICA ITALIANA

PERSONAL MESSAGE

SEGRETISSIMO

SERIAL No. T 149A/80

Roma, li 24 luglio 1980

Caro Signora Thatcher

La ringrazio della lettera in data 15 luglio 1980 con la quale Ella mi ha informato della decisione del Governo britannico di procedere, a seguito di approfondite deliberazioni, alla sostituzione del sistema d'arma "Polaris" con il più avanzato "Trident I". Nel contempo ho appreso che il Presidente degli Stati Uniti ha manifestato la disponibilità americana alla fornitura al Regno Unito del sistema d'arma prescelto.

Nel prendere atto dei dati trasmessimi in ordine alle caratteristiche del nuovo sistema d'arma, condivido la Sua valutazione che la decisione adottata dal Governo britannico corrisponde, oltre che agli interessi del Regno Unito, anche a quelli più generali della Alleanza Atlantica, in quanto risulterà in tal modo accresciuta la sua forza di dissuasione.

E' al tempo stesso motivo di viva soddisfazione per l'Italia quanto Lei mi ha precisato nel senso che

./.

S.E.
Signora Margaret Thatcher
Primo Ministro del Regno
Unito di Gran Bretagna e
Irlanda del Nord
10, Downing Street
L O N D R A

SEGRETISSIMO



IL PRESIDENTE DEL CONSIGLIO DEI MINISTRI
DELLA REPUBBLICA ITALIANA

SEGRETISSIMO

pag. 2-

il maggiore onere derivante dalla sostituzione dei Polaris non diminuirà l'impegno del Regno Unito per l'attuazione dei programmi già concordati nell'ambito dell'Alleanza incluso il rafforzamento delle forze convenzionali, tanto più necessario sul teatro europeo in ragione dei possibili maggiori impegni degli Stati Uniti in aree esterne al perimetro dell'Alleanza.

Desidero infine confermarLe, da parte mia, la piena fiducia nella bontà dei risultati ai quali condurrà l'impegno che l'Italia ed il Regno Unito, insieme agli altri Alleati, dedicano alla ricerca di soluzioni dei problemi che ci confrontano nell'ambito dello sforzo per la difesa comune.

SEGRETISSIMO

TOP SECRET

ROUGH TRANSLATION

Dear Mrs. Thatcher,

Thank you for your letter of the 15th July 1980 with which you informed me of the decision taken by the British Government, after intensive deliberations, to proceed to the replacement of Polaris with the more advanced Trident I.

I have in the meantime been informed of President Carter's willingness to supply the UK with the chosen system.

Having considered the data kindly sent to me about the characteristics of the weapon, I share your opinion that the decision taken by the British Government satisfies the interests of the UK as well as those of the Atlantic Alliance since it will increase its power of dissuasion.

It is at the same time cause of great satisfaction for Italy what you say about the increased financial burden for the substitution of Polaris not diminishing the UK commitment for the implementation of the programs already in existence within the Alliance, including the strengthening of the conventional forces much more necessary in the European theatre in view of a possible increase in the United States commitments in area outside the perimeter of the Alliance.

On my part, I wish to confirm my complete trust in the positive results which will be achieved by Italy and the UK, together with the other allies, in their search for a solution to the problems facing us in the framework of our efforts for a common defence.

The Rt. Hon.,
Mrs. Margaret Thatcher, M.P.,
10, Downing Street,
LONDON, S.W.1.

Yours sincerely,

Francesco Cossiga.



CONFIDENTIAL

Defence

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

23 July 1980

Message from Chancellor Schmidt

I enclose a copy of a message which the Prime Minister has received this afternoon from Chancellor Schmidt about the decision to acquire Trident.

I am sending copies of this letter and its enclosure to George Walden (Foreign and Commonwealth Office), John Wiggins (HM Treasury) and David Wright (Cabinet Office).

M. O'D. B. ALEXANDER

Brian Norbury, Esq.,
Ministry of Defence.

9B

SUBJECT *Defence*
**PRIME MINISTER'S
PERSONAL MESSAGE
SERIAL No. T148/80**

886750A BKBN D FSNR.: 1629

23.7.1980

FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY
THE FEDERAL CHANCELLOR

T148/80

(Already copied to F.R.G. Post (2))

THE RT. HON. MARGRET THATCHER, M.P.,
PRIME MINISTER OF THE KINGDOM
OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND,
LONDON

Prime Minister

mt As. Schmidt

-- GEHEIM MATLICH GEHEIMGEHALTEN --

DEAR PRIME MINISTER,

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PROMPT INFORMATION ABOUT THE DECISION TO MODERNIZE THE BRITISH POLARIS. ALTHOUGH THIS IS A PURELY NATIONAL AFFAIR BETWEEN THE NUCLEAR POWERS INVOLVED, THE DECISION NEVERTHELESS HAS IMPORTANT IMPLICATIONS FOR THE ALLIANCE AND THE GLOBAL BALANCE OF FORCES.

I WELCOME THE DECISION TAKEN BY THE UNITED KINGDOM BECAUSE THE MODERNIZATION OF THE BRITISH NUCLEAR POTENTIAL WILL CONTRIBUTE TOWARDS MAINTAINING THE BALANCE OF FORCES.

I ALSO PARTICULARLY APPRECIATE THE FACT THAT IT HAS BEEN POSSIBLE TO FIND A SOLUTION WHICH, ON THE ONE HAND, MEETS THE TECHNOLOGICAL REQUIREMENTS OF THE COMING CENTURY AND, ON THE OTHER, KEEPS WITHIN AN ECONOMIC SCOPE THAT WILL PREVENT ANY WEAKENING OF THE CONVENTIONAL FORCES OF THE UNITED KINGDOM AND HENCE OF THE ALLIANCE. I BELIEVE THEREFORE THAT THE RESOLVE OF THE UNITED KINGDOM, WHICH HAS THUS BEEN REAFFIRMED, TO STRENGTHEN ITS CONVENTIONAL FORCES, INCLUDING THE 3 PER CENT REAL ANNUAL INCREASE IN DEFENCE SPENDING, CONSTITUTES A MOST IMPORTANT SIGNAL.

WITH WARM REGARDS,
YOURS SINCERELY,
(SGD.) HELMUT SCHMIDT+++

XBT QSL

010
12 DOWNING STREET,
S.W.1.

With
The Private Secretary's
Compliments



Government Chief Whip

12 Downing Street, London SW1

2
MS

21 July 1980

During a discussion which I had on 18 July with the Leader of the Opposition, I raised the question of a possible debate before the Summer recess on Trident missiles.

Mr Callaghan said that as far as he was concerned he thought that his position on this matter had been slightly misunderstood. He was not specifically pressing for a Parliamentary debate before the Summer Recess, but he thought that there ought to be a wider debate in the country on an issue of this importance before the Government took a final decision on this matter followed at a later stage by a debate in the House.

He suggested that one possible means of achieving this would be to have a Select Committee comprised of Privy Councillors and senior Members which would examine the whole issue and report to the House of Commons. Mr Callaghan felt that the decision on this issue could affect the whole balance of the structure of the armed forces and when people such as Lord Carver appeared to be expressing some disquiet about the decision, it was difficult not to take account of what they had to say.

I should mention that this was in the nature of a private conversation but I asked him whether he would be prepared for me to pass his views on. He agreed that this could be done.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Clive Whitmore, Robin Birch and David Wright.

Prime Minister

To see.

(M MACLEAN)

B Norbury Esq
Ministry of Defence
Main Building
Whitehall
SW1A 2HB

I gather Mr (you is
in favour of a debate before the
recess. But there can't simply not
be time for one if we are to
have a procedure debate as well
before the House recess. This 28/7/80

Ref: A02675

fs
Am
24/7

Prime Minister

(2)

We have never received a satisfactory explanation from the

PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL

Americans as to why they panicked on 14 July. But it is noteworthy that they chose to brief senior Congressional leaders six days before you were due to tell Cabinet & DIS so without consulting us.

PRIME MINISTER

mf.

Sir Nicholas Henderson has obtained, by means which he has not *Am*

24/7

disclosed to me, a copy of the briefing given by the White House to Congressional Leaders to prepare them for the Trident announcement. I attach a copy herewith. We are not supposed to have seen it, and cannot therefore take issue with the White House either on the timing or the substance; but I do not think I would want to anyway. It was probably advisable, in United States domestic political terms, for the President to provide advance briefing to the Congressional Leaders; and, though we might take issue with the suggestion that it was we who were insisting on very tight secrecy, the briefing's references to the importance of the British alliance are interesting and welcome.

I am sending copies of this minute and the briefing to the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary and the Secretary of State for Defence.

REA

(Robert Armstrong)

21st July 1980

PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL

11 July 80

*Synopsis of Information Provided
to Sen Far Relations and House Int. Relations Committees*

-- On ~~Thursday, June~~ ^{Tue, July} 15, Prime Minister Thatcher will be informing the House of Commons of her decision to modernize the existing British strategic nuclear deterrent force of POLARIS SSBNs.

-- In this connection, she has requested to the President that the United States sell the UK TRIDENT I missiles. These new missiles would be carried in new submarines that will be built in Britain and would go into service in the early 1990s. The warheads would of course be provided by the United Kingdom.

-- The President has informed the Prime Minister that he agrees to sell the TRIDENT I Missile.

-- This is an important strategic decision for both the United States and the United Kingdom. It culminates lengthy sensitive bilateral discussions and analysis.

-- The Independent British deterrent force has been an important element of the NATO deterrence structure for some time. We strongly favor maintaining a viable British strategic nuclear capability into the twenty-first century. We agree with the British assessment that the MIRVed TRIDENT is the best way for them to achieve this.

-- Strategic cooperation is also an important -- if not the central -- component of the close cooperation between the US and UK, a relationship that encompasses close cooperation on foreign and defense policy across-the-board. It is crucial for the future that this special relationship be maintained.

-- The TRIDENT sale will also be financially beneficial for the US. We estimate that it will be worth \$2.5B in 1980 dollars for the US, including a 5 percent surcharge to cover our already sunk R&D costs. Further, to make an additional contribution to our R&D expenses, the British have agreed to man -- at their cost -- the highly capable RAPIER missile system, which we will buy to defend US airbases in the UK from air attack.

-- In connection with this sale, the British have stated that it is their objective to take advantage of the economies made possible by US cooperation on the TRIDENT sale to re-inforce their efforts to upgrade their conventional forces.

-- The sale is consistent with SALT. As you know, we made clear that cooperation with our Allies would be permitted under the SALT II Treaty. The Senate strongly supported this position. The British deterrent force was clearly in everybody's mind.

-- The sale will be made under US laws and procedures. This means that we will notify the Congress, as called for by Section 36-b of the Arms Export Control Act.

-- We will need your help to ensure a smooth and expeditious Congressional review as called for in Section 36-b. To avoid delays in their program, the British need to be able to start work under a formally binding agreement in the early Fall.

-- It is our intention to submit our formal notice to the Congress when you reconvene on July 21. (We believe the nature of this case justifies abbreviating the normal twenty-day "informal" notice that we normally give to Congressional staffs before submitting our formal notice -- which involves a continuation of long-standing cooperation with our closest ally)*

* Senator Church, Representative Zablocki only.

-- To assist the Congress, I am prepared -- along with others in the Administration -- to provide you with whatever details that you need.

-- I must ask that you keep this information in the strictest confidence until the Prime Minister makes her announcement on ~~Thursday~~ ^{Tuesday}. The British have strongly requested that we keep these facts limited to a very few people, but the President felt that it is important that you have advance notice.

CONFIDENTIAL

~~Prime Minister~~

MAD
18
W + fg
Rh Whitmore
Print. 2/7

Ref. A02667

MR. ALEXANDER

Polaris Successor

We have now received from Sir Nicholas Henderson President Carter's reply to the Prime Minister's letter about the supply of Trident I missiles and also the President's reply about the supply of special nuclear materials. In addition, Sir Nicholas Henderson has sent us Mr. Harold Brown's letter to the Secretary of State for Defence about the joint understanding on the sale of Trident. I attach the two letters from the President to the Prime Minister and a copy of the letter from Mr. Harold Brown to the Secretary of State for Defence.

*All dated
14.7.80*

2. The President's reply on the supply of Trident and Mr. Harold Brown's letter to the Secretary of State for Defence have already been published in Cmnd. 7979. The President's letter on the supply of special nuclear materials is not, of course, for publication.

3. I am sending a copy of this minute to Brian Norbury with copies of the two letters from the President and the original of the letter from Mr. Brown and a copy of the minute together with copies of all three letters to George Walden.

(D.J. Wright)

18th July, 1980

REPLACEMENT OF POLARIS BY TRIDENT

Britain has possessed her own nuclear weapons since the early 1950s. The effectiveness of our current Polaris force is being improved under the Chevaline* programme, but by the early 1990s it will be over 25 years old and we will not be able to rely on it much after then.

NATO's strategy is above all to deter aggression. The aim of deploying strategic nuclear weapons is to prevent war, by making it clear to a potential aggressor that however much force he might use against NATO, he could not hope to win. We have great confidence in the commitment of the United States to the defence of Europe. But deterrence is a matter of perceptions - particularly those of a potential adversary.

A future Soviet leadership might consider gambling - however misguidedly - that it could use military force in Europe without becoming involved in strategic nuclear war with the US. Our possession of a powerful strategic capability which, while committed to NATO, is under our own independent control, provides vital insurance against such misperceptions and thereby helps to maintain peace.

After a careful examination of the options, the Government has decided that the most cost-effective replacement would be the Trident 1 submarine-launched missile system. President Carter has indicated that the US are prepared to provide the missiles. The submarines and nuclear warheads will be designed and built in this country. We shall decide in two-three years whether to have four or five boats. The force will be under the operational control of the British Government, but will be committed to NATO in the same way as the Polaris force.

The capital cost of the system will be about £4½ to 5 billion spread over fifteen years. That is a substantial sum, but must be seen in perspective. It is unlikely to absorb more than about 3% of defence spending over the period - or to put it another way, less than one quarter of one percent of our national income. Over 70% will be spent in this country, providing a substantial amount of employment.

* A major and complex development of the 'front end' of the Polaris missile.
(Hansard Thursday 24.1.80)

None of us likes having nuclear weapons, but they cannot be disinvented. Until genuine and wide-reaching agreements can be negotiated with the Soviet Union, any reduction in NATO's defences is likely to increase rather than reduce the risks of war. British nuclear weapons have helped to keep the peace in Europe for 30 years; this decision is intended to help them to do so for another 30.

Paymaster General's Office
68 Whitehall
London SW1A 2AT

17 July 1980

SECRET ATOMIC



34

Copy no 2 of 6 copies

No. 10 A.R. 33

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Principal Private Secretary

17 July 1980

Plutonium Loan Arrangements

The Prime Minister has seen your Secretary of State's minute of 14 July and is content with the proposed arrangements with the Americans for the loan of a quantity of plutonium.

I am sending copies of this letter to John Halliday (Home Office), George Walden (F.C.O.), John Wiggins (H.M. Treasury) and David Wright (Cabinet Office).

C. A. WHITMORE

19/2/81. copy 3 returned from
Home office with request for destruction
copy 3 destroyed 19/2.
SOP
19.2.

B. M. Norbury, Esq.,
Ministry of Defence.

SECRET ATOMIC

Mr Whitmore

We have been checking what happened about referring the original decision to acquire Poland to the Cabinet.

2. The policy decision to go for Poland when Skybolt was cancelled was taken in a very small group of Ministers (the Prime Minister, the Foreign Secretary, the Commonwealth Secretary and the Minister of Defence). Mr Macmillan went out to Nassau with the Foreign Secretary, the Commonwealth Secretary and the Minister of Defence; they negotiated a deal with President Kennedy; & presumably ad referendum

to the Cabinet. The terms of the agreement were telegraphed back to London with the views for accepting it; the Cabinet met under Mr Butler, and the conclusion was to send to the Ministers at Nassau an assurance of their unqualified support.

In effect, therefore Cabinet was invited to ratify the decision and the agreement, but played no part in arriving at the original decision or in laying down the negotiating brief.

RA

16. vii. 80

CONFIDENTIAL

Ref. A02641

PRIME MINISTER

Cabinet: Parliamentary Affairs

Under Parliamentary Affairs on 17th July you will want to tell the Cabinet of the background to the statement made by the Secretary of State for Defence to the House on 15th July about the eventual replacement of the Polaris force.

2. You had intended to raise the matter in Cabinet before an announcement was made, and the planned timing was for a discussion in the Cabinet on the morning of 17th July, before the Secretary of State for Defence made his statement in the afternoon of that day. Late on Monday evening, however, there was a warning from the White House that the New York Times had the full story, with details and dates, and was planning to carry the story of your correspondence with President Carter on Tuesday. Senator Baker also referred to the matter on television, though without details and dates. The White House canvassed the possibility of bringing forward the announcement by 48 hours so as to forestall the New York Times. After consulting a few colleagues (who took the view that bringing the announcement forward by 48 hours would be the best way out of a difficult situation) you agreed that the timetable should be advanced by 48 hours. Nothing in fact appeared in Tuesday's New York Times, but we have learnt that the correspondent, thinking that the announcement was to be on 17th July, thought he had a day in hand, decided to publish on 16th July, and is angry at having been forestalled.

3. You could say that the decision announced in the Secretary of State for Defence's statement was in line with the Government's general commitment to maintain the effectiveness of our strategic nuclear forces in the 1980 Defence White Paper which the Cabinet endorsed last January. It has been the tradition that specific decisions on defence nuclear equipment should not be taken to Cabinet, because of the extreme sensitivity of the subject (for instance, Mrs. Castle's diary complains about the failure of Sir Harold Wilson to consult Cabinet about Chevaline in 1974), and successive Cabinets have entrusted them

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

to the Prime Minister and the colleagues directly concerned. The decision announced on Tuesday was in fact taken some months ago, and you discussed with President Carter as long ago as December last the possibility that we might ask the United States Government to make the Trident system available. Though his response was encouraging, he insisted not only upon a delay of several months but also upon the tightest possible secrecy. The reasons for this insistence were initially the fear of damaging the prospects for ratification of SALT II, and later the fear of possible impact on decisions by some of the European allies on the modernisation plans for NATO's long-range theatre nuclear forces. We have successfully and scrupulously complied with this requirement of secrecy, and so until this week have the Americans: it is ironic that this leak, at the eleventh hour, should have come on the American side, and apparently at^a political level.

4. The gist of the decision is as follows. The Government regards the maintenance of a national strategic nuclear deterrent capability as an essential element in the defence effort we undertake for our own and Western security. The Chiefs of Staff have confirmed that from a military point of view they accord the highest priority to the maintenance of this capability. You have therefore asked, and President Carter has agreed, to supply us with the Trident I C4 MIRVed missile system. Once bought, it will be entirely in our own ownership and under our operational control. Like Polaris it will be assigned to NATO; but like Polaris it will be available for purely national use in a supreme emergency. As with Polaris, we shall design and build our own submarines and nuclear warheads for the system.

5. The Ministers directly concerned reached this decision after considerable study of possible alternatives. They concluded that by far the best buy to continue to give us an assured second strike capability was another submarine launched ballistic missile system, like Polaris, but with a multiple independently targetable re-entry vehicle capability to defeat the growing sophistication of the Soviet anti-ballistic missile defences. This virtually restricted the choice to an American system. The cost of developing such a system on our own would have been enormous. Of the American systems available, Trident I best meets our needs.

CONFIDENTIAL

6. Contrary to many Press reports, Trident will also be cheaper than any of the apparent alternatives (including sea-launched cruise missiles), since unlike them it will not have to be developed specially for the United Kingdom. Despite some public interest in their possibilities, ground-launched cruise missiles (GLCMs) do not amount to a strategic nuclear deterrent. Those stationed in this country will not have the range adequately to penetrate the Soviet Union. Because of Britain's limited geographical size they would also be too vulnerable to constitute our ultimate weapon, although the United States GLCMs we shall be accommodating will with others elsewhere be an important element in NATO's collective long-range theatre defences. We considered the theoretical alternative of a joint development with the French; but we did not pursue this, since even if they were willing (which given their different attitude to NATO they might well not be) the result seemed certain to be more expensive and less militarily effective than Trident I.

7. The Trident system will be supplied to us in a manner generally similar to that in which Polaris was supplied. This was a very favourable deal from the point of view of this country, and we can welcome the achievement of another deal on the same basis. Your exchange of correspondence with President Carter has now been published as a White Paper and the Secretary of State for Defence has also published an unprecedentedly full memorandum to explain the reasons for our decision.

8. We are arranging for the Secretary of State for Defence to be ready to deal with any supplementary questions which may arise.

REA

(Robert Armstrong)

16th July, 1980

Published Papers

The following published paper(s) enclosed on this file have been removed and destroyed. Copies may be found elsewhere in The National Archives.

House of Commons Hansard,

15 July 1980, columns 1235-1251

"Strategic Nuclear Deterrent"

Signed *A Wayland* Date *8 September 2011*

PREM Records Team

CONFIDENTIAL



MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
MAIN BUILDING WHITEHALL LONDON SW1
Telephone 01-~~930 7922~~ 218 2111/3

MO 18/1/1

15th July 1980

Dear Chris,

(A.)

MM.

POLARIS SUCCESSOR

I am writing further to David Wright's letter of earlier today to circulate copies of the Statement my Secretary of State will be making in the House this afternoon on the choice of a system to succeed Polaris as the United Kingdom's strategic nuclear force, and also copies of the explanatory memorandum my Secretary of State is having printed (and which will be available in the House of Commons this afternoon).

/ I am sending copies of this letter and of the attachments to the Private Secretaries to members of the Cabinet; Tony Mayer in the Department of Transport; the Private Secretaries to the Chief Whips in the House of Commons and the House of Lords; and David Wright (Cabinet Office).

Yours and
B M

(B M NORBURY)

C A Whitmore Esq

CONFIDENTIAL

PARLIAMENTARY STATEMENT

1. With permission, Mr Speaker, I should like to make a statement on the eventual replacement of the Polaris force which now provides Britain's strategic nuclear deterrent capability.
2. As the House knows, the Government regards the maintenance of such a capability as an essential element in the defence effort we undertake for our own and Western security. I made clear the reasons for this policy in the debate on 24th January.
3. We have studied with great care possible systems to replace Polaris. We have concluded that the best and most cost effective choice is the Trident submarine-launched ballistic missile system developed by the United States. President Carter has affirmed United States support for British retention of our strategic nuclear capability and US willingness to help us in this. An exchange of letters between my rt hon Friend the Prime Minister and the President, with a supplementary exchange between the US Secretary of Defense and myself, is being published today as a White Paper. The agreement we have reached is on the same lines as the 1962 Nassau Agreement under which we acquired Polaris. We shall design and build our own submarines and nuclear warheads here in the United Kingdom; and buy the Trident missile system complete with its MIRV capability from the United States. Once bought it will be entirely in our ownership and operational control, but we shall commit the whole force to NATO in the same way as the Polaris force is today. The new force will enter service in the early 1990s and will comprise four or five boats. We need not decide about a fifth boat for another two or three years, and we are leaving the option open meanwhile.

4. I am publishing a memorandum explaining our reasons for choosing Trident; advance copies of this memorandum are available in the Vote Office. It gives the very full account which I promised to the House, and I am sure the House will wish to study it.

5. We estimate the capital cost of a four-boat force, at today's prices, as up to five billion pounds, spread over fifteen years. We expect rather over half of the expenditure to fall in the 1980s. We intend to accommodate this within the defence budget in the normal way alongside other major force improvements. We remain determined to uphold and where necessary strengthen our all round defence capability; and this applies to our conventional forces no less than to our nuclear forces.

6. I intend that as much work as possible should go to British industry. At least seventy percent of the total cost will be spent in this country; and that will be reflected in a substantial amount of employment.

7. The decision I have announced is one of cardinal importance, as the House will recognise. The Government regard it as an essential reaffirmation of our national commitment to security and to co-operation with our Allies under the North Atlantic Treaty. The UK's continuing possession of a strategic nuclear capability remains a major element in our deterrent strategy, and a major contribution to the defence of Western Europe. As the House knows, our strategy, with that of our NATO Allies, is entirely and absolutely defensive in concept and scope. It is designed solely to preserve peace and prevent war. Until genuine wide-reaching multi-lateral arms control can be negotiated, any diminution in the pattern and structure of our wholly defensive capability must increase rather than reduce the risk of war, especially at a time when the Soviet Union is rapidly building up its massive military strength.

8. In these circumstances, and while we must regret the need for such weapons, the Government is confident that the decision I have now announced will have the general support of this House and of the country.



**THE FUTURE UNITED KINGDOM STRATEGIC
NUCLEAR DETERRENT FORCE**

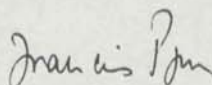
BRITAIN'S STRATEGIC NUCLEAR FORCE:

THE CHOICE OF A SYSTEM TO SUCCEED POLARIS

On 15 July 1980 the Government published the texts of letters exchanged between the Prime Minister and President Carter providing for the United Kingdom to buy from the United States the Trident weapon system, comprising Trident I ballistic missiles and supporting components for a force of British missile-launching submarines to replace the present Polaris-equipped force.

The new agreement is broadly similar to the 1962 Nassau Agreement (Cmnd 1915). Following that Agreement and the 1963 Polaris Sales Agreement the United States sold to the United Kingdom Polaris A.3 missiles and related equipment, together with continuing spares supply and maintenance support. The four nuclear-propelled submarines and the nuclear warheads for the missiles were designed and built in Britain. The Polaris force as a whole is entirely owned by the United Kingdom, and final decisions on its operational use rest with Her Majesty's Government alone; but it is committed to NATO and targetted in accordance with Alliance policy and strategic concepts under plans made by the Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR), save where Britain's supreme national interests otherwise require. The new Trident force will be acquired, committed and operated on the same basis.

The Government has already shown that it attaches much importance to helping wider understanding and more informed public discussion of major defence issues. The present issue is certainly a major one, one of the biggest that can face any British Government in the defence field. I undertook to Parliament on 28 April 1980 that when the Government's decision was taken I would publish as full an account as security would allow of the reasons for the choice of system. This memorandum makes good that undertaking. A few of the relevant factors cannot be published; but most can be given, and the Government believes they show clearly that the Trident system is the right choice for Britain.



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I - THE POLICY BACKGROUND

1. The basic policy case for Britain's continuing to contribute to NATO an independent strategic nuclear force was explained by the Secretary of State for Defence on 24 January 1980 to the House of Commons, which after debate backed the Government's policy by 308 votes to 52. A further account was given in paragraphs 201-204 of the Statement on the Defence Estimates 1980 (Cmnd 7826-I). The principal features are set out below.

2. NATO's strategy is above all one of deterrence, in which the possession of nuclear weapons plays a key part. If we ever have to face using them, the strategy will have failed in its prime purpose. That purpose is to influence the calculations of a potential aggressor decisively before he embarks at all - even with non-nuclear weapons - on aggression against any NATO country. The prime test of defence measures, above all in the nuclear field, is whether they help to make it less likely that aggressive war might be launched. How they might affect the course of such a war if it once started is essentially secondary. In the world of modern technology nothing can make major war anything other than appallingly destructive, whether or not nuclear weapons are used. The overriding objective must be to continue to prevent its outbreak. The best way to ensure this is to put plainly before any possible aggressor a clear chain of immense risk, outweighing any advantage he could hope to gain. The possession of nuclear weapons is cardinal to this. They cannot be disinvented; the only realistic course now available is to harness their existence to the service of peace in freedom, as NATO has done successfully for over thirty years.

3. Britain was a wartime partner with the United States in the development of nuclear weapons. We conducted our first independent test in 1952, and have had a full operational capability with our own delivery systems since the first V-bombers entered service in 1955. Since the late 1960s the main capability has been provided by the Polaris force, the effectiveness of which for the second half of its life is about to be heightened by the improvement known as Chevaline, which was described to the House of

Commons by the Secretary of State for Defence on 24 January 1980. The long-term policy issue therefore is not whether to acquire a strategic nuclear deterrent capability, but whether to give it up in the 1990s after having possessed it, through the decisions of both Conservative and Labour Governments, for nearly forty years. This issue falls to be settled in circumstances much less favourable for Western security than when the V-force and Nassau decisions were taken - there is for example a changed strategic balance and much stronger and more versatile all-round Soviet military capability than before, wielded moreover with the growing adventurism highlighted in Afghanistan. It would be strange to regard the curtailment of our deterrent insurance as timely and appropriate now.

4. Britain commits all its nuclear capability to NATO in conformity with concepts of collective deterrence worked out in the joint forum of the Nuclear Planning Group. The decisive consideration in favour of a British capability that is ultimately independent is the contribution it makes to NATO's strategy of deterrence and thus to our own national security.

5. The United States has massive nuclear striking power. It has repeatedly made clear by its words and actions, including its major force deployments in Europe, its total commitment to help defend the integrity of its European allies by whatever means are necessary, without exception. The Government has great confidence in the depth of resolve underlying the United States commitment. But deterrence is a matter of perception, and perception by a potential adversary. The central consideration is what that adversary may believe, not what we or our Allies believe; our deterrence has to influence possible calculations made by leaders whose attitudes and values may differ sharply from those of the West. The decision to use United States nuclear weapons in defence of Europe, with all the risk to the United States homeland this would entail, would be enormously grave. A Soviet leadership - perhaps much changed in character from today's, perhaps also operating amid the pressures of turbulent internal or external circumstances - might believe that it could impose its will on Europe by military force without becoming involved in strategic nuclear war with the United States. Modernised US nuclear forces in Europe help guard against any such misconception; but an independent capability fully under European control provides a key element of insurance. A nuclear decision would of course

be no less agonising for the United Kingdom than for the United States. But it would be the decision of a separate and independent power, and a power whose survival in freedom would be directly and immediately threatened by aggression in Europe. The nuclear strengths of Britain or France may seem modest by comparison with the superpower armouries, but the damage they could inflict is in absolute terms immense. (A single Polaris submarine carries more explosive power than all the munitions used in World War II.) An adversary assessing the consequences of possible aggression in Europe would have to regard a Western defence containing these powerful independent elements as a harder one to predict, and a more dangerous one to assail, than one in which nuclear retaliatory power rested in United States hands alone.

6. Our contribution to the Alliance in this field is unique. France, like Britain, has powerful nuclear forces under independent national control; but her distinctive policy - well understood, long established and firmly held - debars her from undertaking the clear commitment to collective Alliance deterrent concepts, planning and strategy which we have made. No other European member of NATO is even remotely a potential candidate to contribute independent nuclear forces. The Government regards this distinctive British contribution to NATO as of great importance. Our Allies recognise its significance, as they made clear for example in the 1974 Ottawa Declaration of the North Atlantic Council.

7. British nuclear forces include both strategic and lower-level components. If we had only the latter they could not serve the key "second-centre" deterrent purpose, since the threat of their use would not be credible. An aggressor faced with an armoury comprising only non-strategic nuclear weapons would know that he could if necessary use strategic nuclear weapons to overbear it without risking strategic retaliation upon himself; and since he would know that his opponent too must realise this, he could be confident that the non-strategic weapons were most unlikely to be used. The harsh logic of deterrence requires that the nuclear decision-maker should have evident power to take his resistance all the way to the strategic level if the aggressor will not desist. If Britain's nuclear contribution to NATO is to fulfil its distinctive role in deterrence, it must include an effective strategic element.

II - GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS ON SYSTEM CHOICE

8. The particular features and comparative merits of individual candidate systems need to be seen against the background of various general considerations which bear upon any choice of system for this task.

The "Second-Centre" Role

9. If Britain is to meet effectively the deterrent purpose of providing a second centre of decision-making within the Alliance, our force has to be visibly capable of posing a massive threat on its own. A force which could strike tellingly only if the United States also did so - which plainly relied, for example, on US assent to its use, or on attenuation or distraction of Soviet defences by United States forces - would not achieve the purpose. We need to convince Soviet leaders that even if they thought that at some critical point as a conflict developed the US would hold back, the British force could still inflict a blow so destructive that the penalty for aggression would have proved too high.

10. There is no way of calculating exactly how much destruction in prospect would suffice to deter. Clearly Britain need not have as much power as the United States. Overwhelming Britain would be a much smaller prize to an aggressor than overwhelming the United States, and a smaller prospective penalty could therefore suffice to tilt his assessment against starting aggression that would risk incurring the penalty. Indeed, one practical approach to judging how much deterrent power Britain needs is to consider what type and scale of damage Soviet leaders might think likely to leave them critically handicapped afterwards in continuing confrontation with a relatively unscathed United States.

11. The Soviet Union is a very large and powerful state, which has in the past demonstrated great national resilience and resolve. Its history, outlook, political doctrines and planning all suggest that its view of how much destruction would constitute intolerable disaster might differ widely from that of most NATO countries. Appalling though any

nuclear strike would be, the Government does not believe that our deterrent aim would be adequately met by a capability which offered only a low likelihood of striking home to key targets; or which posed the prospect of only a very small number of strikes; or which Soviet leaders could expect to ward off successfully from large areas of key importance to them. They might even be tempted to judge that if an opponent equipped himself with a force which had only a modest chance of inflicting intolerable damage there might be only a modest chance that he would have the resolve to use it at all.

12. Successive United Kingdom Governments have always declined to make public their nuclear targetting policy and plans, or to define precisely what minimum level of destructive capability they judged necessary for deterrence. The Government however thinks it right now to make clear that their concept of deterrence is concerned essentially with posing a potential threat to key aspects of Soviet state power. There might with changing conditions be more than one way of doing this, and some flexibility in contingency planning is appropriate. It would not be helpful to deterrence to define particular options further. The Government however regards the considerations noted in paragraphs 10 and 11 above as important factors in deciding the scale of capability we need.

Readiness and Invulnerability

13. Since 1969 there has never been a moment when our Polaris force did not have at least one submarine on patrol, effectively invulnerable to pre-emptive attack and at high readiness to launch its missiles if required.

14. Most of our own and our Allies' non-strategic forces are not maintained permanently in this special combination of readiness and invulnerability; they are not generally deployed so as to survive "bolt-from-the-blue" nuclear attack - that is, attack without any political or military warning. NATO regards such attack as a remote hypothesis, and even such elements as the planned long-range theatre nuclear force of cruise missiles and Pershing IIs announced by NATO last December are not designed to cater for it. It may be asked therefore why strategic forces should meet so demanding a standard.

15. The answer is twofold. First, the potential consequences of any East/West war in the nuclear age are so immense that some deterrent insurance against even remote possibilities for its outbreak is warranted; and exceptional readiness in the strategic nuclear forces is the most effective and least costly form of insurance against massive surprise attack. Second, it is in part precisely because this insurance is maintained that we can frame most of our force plans on the assumption that a nuclear "bolt-from-the-blue" is very unlikely; it might not remain so if changed NATO dispositions seemed to offer an adversary a real chance of disarming us by a sudden strike. The Government believes therefore that we must maintain in a new force the standards of immunity to surprise and pre-emptive attack which the Polaris force has achieved so successfully since the 1960s.

Timescales

16. No-one can define now exactly when the Polaris force will have to be phased out. There are complex operational and technical factors, some of them hard to predict, and the likely prospect in several respects is of gradually declining effectiveness and mounting cost and risk rather than abrupt cut-off points or failures, though the possibility of these cannot always be ruled out.

17. Though the Chevaline programme will keep our Polaris missiles able to penetrate anti-ballistic-missile (ABM) defences into the 1990s, continuing Soviet effort in research and development, allowed by the 1972 ABM Treaty, might in time reduce our assurance of this, and growing Soviet competence in anti-submarine warfare (ASW), backed by a huge investment of resources, must tend in time to erode our current advantage and eventually make our submarines - built to designs now twenty years old, and not capable of being further modernised - less immune from detection and attack. It is clear from our own and US experience that hull life can last beyond the twenty years originally envisaged; but it is not extensible indefinitely, and in any event the on-board equipment - propulsion machinery, missile support systems and the like - is ageing and must at best pose a heavier maintenance load, with a growing risk that refit periods may be so prolonged or unexpected

defects at other times so serious that continuous patrol would be lost. In addition, the age of the systems, and the prospect that the phasing-out of Polaris from United States service in 1981 will leave the costs of maintaining support capability for it to be borne entirely by the United Kingdom, will make the force increasingly expensive to keep going.

18. Amid these uncertainties and risks the setting of a particular date for retiring the Polaris force must be a matter for judgement. This judgement must take into account the fact that the British force, unlike its United States counterpart, is not part of a powerful triad of complementary strategic forces (land-based ballistic missiles in silos; long-range bombers, soon to carry cruise missiles; and submarine-launched ballistic missiles) and that it is moreover of modest size with no insurance margin. We must consider how long the force would last not only if matters went well but also if they did not. Against all this background, the Government has concluded that responsible planning must look to progressive replacement of the present force beginning in the early 1990s.

19. In the 1960s, special efforts made it possible to have the first Polaris boat operational less than six years after the Nassau Agreement was signed. Systems are now more complex, and several critical leadtimes are now much longer. If we are to bring a new missile submarine force into service on time, design work for the boats themselves and other key force components must begin soon. This has set the timetable for studying all the system options.

20. Paragraphs 16-18 have discussed when a new force should enter service. But we have to consider also how long it should last. Re-equipment is very costly, and we cannot afford to undertake it as often as the super-powers. Ideally, we should like any new force to remain effective, as the Polaris force will have done, for at least twenty-five years - well into the second decade of the next century. To give high probability of this we need to choose a system which represents a big enough advance in capability to provide some margin to meet the greater operational demands which continuing efforts on the Soviet side must be expected to impose. Re-equipment providing only a small advance in capability could before long prove a false economy, and our

experience with Chevaline - costing about a billion pounds to modernise one aspect of the total force - shows that mid-life improvement can be a heavy task.

Cooperation with the United States in Procurement

21. For all its operational and technical merits, our successful Chevaline programme underlines a further consideration for the future - that in the immensely demanding technology of strategic missile systems the provision of features unique to Britain is very costly, even where access to United States information and industry can be acquired. This applies both to initial research, development and production and to subsequent support (which includes not just repair and spares supply but also such needs as testing, quality assurance, reliability data and trial firings). Given that, as with Polaris, our operational independence can remain unimpaired, there is great financial advantage in the maximum possible commonality with the United States, especially in view of their high technology, the massive scale of their own missile procurement and our long experience of working efficiently together. In addition, adopting a United States system already developed and tested makes it easier to assess likely cost than with systems requiring much further work. The cost of the original Polaris programme, based on a proven missile, turned out very close to the estimate made at the time of the Sales Agreement. Finally, choice of a proven system reduces the risk of unexpected delay.

III - SYSTEM OPTIONS

The Field of Study

22. The work leading up to the Government's decision has looked at a wide variety of system options which might at least in theory be available. It considered different launch platforms - seaborne (by various types of submarines or by surface vessels), airborne and ground-based - and the possibilities of using ships or aircraft for both strategic and other roles. Among delivery vehicles both ballistic and cruise missiles were examined, including alternative cruise missile systems and several different submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM) options such as retaining Chevaline-improved Polaris, varying degrees of further improvements to it, Poseidon and Trident. A number of approaches to procurement were considered - entirely national development and production, continued collaboration with the United States, or some European course. Different force sizes, and the possibilities of mixed forces of more than one system type, were also considered.

23. The terms of SALT I and SALT II, and the possibility of a comprehensive treaty ban on nuclear explosive tests, were taken into account. In practice they do not significantly narrow Britain's main system options. Arms control implications are discussed further in paragraphs 58-62.

24. Not all the possible combinations of system features (launch platform, missile type, procurement approach, force size) were studied to an equal degree of detail. Many clearly had to be ruled out on basic considerations, including some of those reviewed in Part II. The rest of this memorandum outlines so far as is possible the key factors bearing on the main options.

Launch Platforms

25. Britain abandoned the idea of launch platforms on the ground for strategic purposes (the position on theatre systems is different, for the reasons noted in paragraphs 14-15) as long ago as 1960, when the technically-promising

Blue Streak silo-based ballistic missile was cancelled as likely to be too vulnerable to surprise attack. Soviet developments since then, including the SS20 missile system, greatly reinforce this conclusion, and the use of mobile launchers would not change it in Britain's circumstances of a small territory within a very short flight time of Soviet land-based and sea-based missiles. No ground-launched force based in Britain could achieve the special standard of invulnerability to surprise attack appropriate for our ultimate strategic capability.

26. Missile launch from aircraft was clearly a possibility. We have successful experience of aircraft as a strategic deterrence force, and airborne systems offer much flexibility and ease of command and control. But vulnerability considerations like those in paragraph 25 still apply. Aircraft capable of launching strategic missiles need major airfields. The number of such airfields in Britain is limited, their positions are known and Soviet missiles could rapidly destroy them. To survive full-scale nuclear missile attack aircraft would need to be airborne and well clear of their airfields within a very few minutes. Our V-bomber force was able to maintain a substantial strike capability on runway alert for limited periods, but developments in Soviet capability would make reliance on this even more precarious in the future than when we decided in the 1960s to move to the surer system of Polaris submarines.

27. Maintaining launch aircraft permanently airborne might seem to solve the problem of airfield vulnerability. But this is very expensive. In addition, it cannot be sustained long if the support airfields are destroyed; and we would not wish to have no alternative but to regard strikes on such airfields as compelling the final launch of our ultimate capability, with all that this would imply. Moreover, no British Government would want to have numerous nuclear-weapon carriers constantly airborne, year in and year out, in crowded airspace over and around our small country.

28. We considered fitting long-range missiles to aircraft already planned for other roles - such as our substantial Tornado force now in production - so that they could also provide a strategic force. But reliance on this for our

main strategic capability had to be ruled out. The problem of airfield vulnerability would remain; moreover, the appearance of a low-cost bonus to an existing investment is illusory. Quite aside from the burdens of equipment modification, support and training for a very different additional role, an aircraft cannot be held in reserve for last-resort strategic strike and at the same time used (and hazarded) on other tasks. The clash of priorities could be very acute: it is precisely at the dangerous stages when we would most want to pose a clear and formidable strategic threat that our limited air power might need to be most fully committed in order to give the maximum chance of holding aggression at lower levels of conflict.

29. There is another limitation if aircraft are chosen as launch platforms. No air-launched ballistic missile has been developed since the United States abandoned Skybolt in 1962, and though the United States continues to give some thought to the possibilities there is no likelihood that such a missile could be available to us in the early 1990s, whether by purchase from the United States or by our own development. A British decision in favour of an air-launched system would therefore be also a decision in favour of a cruise missile system. The implications of that are reviewed in paragraphs 35-43 below.

30. Among options for sea launch, surface ships compare poorly with submarines. They are not markedly cheaper for a given missile-carrying capacity, speed or endurance; they are much easier for an enemy to find and track; and any attempt to combine the strategic task with others in present or planned ships would pose the problem of conflicting operational demands on much the lines already noted in paragraph 28.

31. This leaves submarines as clearly the best platforms for Britain's future strategic force. We have much expertise and highly satisfactory experience in operating them. Soviet investment in anti-submarine warfare is massive and their skills will continue to grow; but the Western technical and operational advantage remains substantial, and much effort is given to maintaining it. The sea is vast and opaque, and only a dramatic breakthrough on a large scale could give

the Soviet Union realistic hope of being able to count on destroying our submarines on patrol at a time of Soviet choosing. The likelihood of this is remote.

32. Our studies did not take for granted that we should continue to use large nuclear-propelled submarines. We looked at the possibilities of diesel propulsion, of small size (like the two-missile submersibles suggested by some non-official studies in the United States) and of in-shore patterns of operation. But though diesel submarines can be quieter than nuclear-propelled ones and so harder to detect when fully submerged, they must periodically expose themselves to recharge batteries; it may not be easy to build diesel submarines big enough, or with enough electrical power, to carry a substantial number of missiles; a large number of relatively small submarines would demand much scarce manpower; and diesel submarines have not the sustained speed and endurance to exploit so fully the wide ocean areas and long patrol times away from base which nuclear propulsion provides. As to small submersibles (which would still have to be big enough to house complex fire control, navigation and communications equipment) it is far from clear that these would cost less than nuclear-propelled submarines for a given degree of assurance of a given level of striking power; they would require much system development work unique to Britain, since the United States shows no sign of adopting them; and it would be at best hazardous for Britain, which cannot afford several kinds of strategic force, to rely on pioneering so untried a concept. Operation around our own shores could make direct protection by our own forces against air or submarine attack easier, but it would also be more vulnerable to mining. Britain's coastal waters are moreover heavily used for a wide variety of purposes.

33. For all these reasons, nuclear-propelled ocean-going submarines remain the best launch platforms for a British missile force.

Delivery Vehicles

34. Candidate delivery vehicles to equip new submarines fall into two categories - cruise missiles (CMs) and ballistic missiles (BMs).

Cruise Missiles

35. The CM concept goes back to the wartime V.1, and several types were produced by both the United States and the Soviet Union in the 1950s and 1960s. In recent years, however, the convergence of several advanced technologies - new fuels; highly efficient small jet engines; micro-electronics, including miniaturised digital computers for control and for navigation by terrain contour mapping using data derived from satellites; and smaller nuclear warheads - has enabled the United States to develop CMs representing a step change in capability. These can fly for long distances - typically over 1500 miles - at very low altitudes (around one hundred feet) and navigate accurately to an aim point, while presenting an exceptionally small target for enemy air defences to detect, locate and attack. The systems now in prospect are the Boeing air-launched CM and the General Dynamics Tomahawk for ground and sea launch. They do not travel at very high speed - around 400-500 knots - but rely for protection mainly on low altitude, small radar cross-section, and evasive routeing to avoid known defence concentrations. The initial cost of the Tomahawk missile - excluding warhead, support, spares and overheads - is estimated at around one million dollars each.

36. The United States intends to deploy some 3,000 Boeing air-launched CMs (ALCMs) on B52s in its strategic force, and 464 ground-launched Tomahawks (GLCMs) as part of the programme to modernise its NATO-committed long-range theatre nuclear capability in Europe. The ALCMs are likely to enter service in 1982 and the GLCMs in 1983. In addition, Tomahawk is also to be deployed from surface ships or submarines for attacking enemy ships. No programmes for other possible maritime applications have been settled.

37. Our studies gave much attention to the possibility of using CMs as our strategic nuclear delivery vehicles. This attention concentrated mainly upon a possible purchase of Tomahawk from the United States. None of the technology is inherently beyond the capability of British industry, and indeed we received outline suggestions from British Aerospace for a supersonic CM. To embark upon a duplication of the United States research and development effort, especially for the relatively small numbers which we would want, would however inescapably take longer and cost more per missile.

38. CMs have many attractions. They cost much less each than Trident missiles; they are even more accurate; they are a good deal smaller and easier to store. The fact that they would take hours rather than minutes to reach targets in the Soviet Union is not important, since Western deterrent concepts do not envisage trying to catch Soviet missiles in their silos.

39. There are however major factors on the other side. The United States judges that present Soviet air defences have little chance against CMs; but with advancing technology the defence problem is not insuperable given time and effort, and Soviet defences against CMs, unlike ABM defences, are not limited by Treaty. It is impossible to put precise figures on what proportion of CMs Soviet air defences in the two decades from the early 1990s - roughly the timeframe we want for our new strategic system - might succeed in shooting down; but we must reckon with the possibility that it could progressively become very substantial, especially since we probably could not afford to re-equip with new and better CMs as often as the United States may well do to keep pace with defences in this new and rapidly changing field. We have to take into account also that whereas the United States ALCM force can plan to saturate the defences of key strategic targets, we could not operate on the same scale. In addition, the apparent advantage of CMs over BMs in cost per missile is misleading. Trident can carry up to eight separately-targettable warheads; current CMs carry only one (and SALT II would prohibit CMs carrying more).

40. There are also considerations affecting the submarine. We, like the United States, have always judged it important that a strategic missile submarine should be able to fire its weapons within a short space of time, to avoid the risk that enemy action - by ASW forces or by "counter-battery" fire from land-based ballistic missiles, after the launch of our own missiles had perhaps revealed the submarine's position - might be brought to bear before all the missiles had been fired. Our Polaris boats accordingly can fire their full complement within a very few minutes. But this is much more difficult with CMs. With torpedo tubes - the only submarine-launch mode so far developed - repeated re-load would be necessary to launch a number of CMs anywhere near equivalent in striking power to a boatload of Trident BMs. The process would take hours, during which the

submarine would be at increasingly severe risk, and it might well not survive to complete the task. Alternative launch modes, such as vertical launch on the SLBM pattern, would require extensive new system development and submarine design. The United States has made some preliminary study of using such modes on a limited scale in hunter-killer submarines, but there is no United States development programme. Without such a programme (which even if undertaken might not match British strategic needs) the burden of development would fall entirely on us if we wanted such a solution.

41. There is a further operational point. Current CMs have much less range than BMs; moreover, at least with systems now in prospect there is a limit on how far off-shore a land-attack CM can be launched, since beyond a certain distance cumulative inertial-navigation errors may mean too high a risk that the missile will fail to make its landfall accurately enough to initiate the over-land navigation phase successfully. The effective range of a CM launched from the North Atlantic would be significantly less than that of Polaris. The sea-room available to the submarines, and their scope for evading improved Soviet ASW forces, would be restricted accordingly. Further technical development might well ease this restriction, but since it is not important to the major United States applications of CMs we cannot tell when or at what cost.

42. The factors in paragraph 40 relate essentially to a CM-launching submarine devoted entirely to the strategic role. We also considered the possibility of equipping each of our hunter-killer submarines with a small number of CMs, for launch through the torpedo tubes. But there are two difficulties about this. Firstly there is the problem of conflicting tasks, of the general kind already noted in paragraphs 28 and 30. Our non-strategic submarine force is already fully committed to its existing tasks, and the patterns of deployment and operation for the last-resort strategic role are very different from those for seeking out and attacking other submarines and surface ships. Secondly, it would not be possible to build up enough strike capability for strategic deterrence in "penny-packet" numbers of CMs on non-strategic submarines.

43. All this means that CMs are not in fact a cheaper option than BMs. For a given weight of striking power and a given level of probability of delivering it successfully, CM-based forces are in fact much more expensive. For example, eleven boats each capable of carrying eighty CMs would give less assured deterrent capability than a force of five boats each with sixteen Trident BMs; and it would cost at least a third as much again to acquire and about twice as much to run. One of the major reasons for this, important to bear in mind in all evaluation of delivery system options, is that for almost any submarine force the boats are a much more costly element than the missiles.

Ballistic Missiles

44. It would not be impossible for British industry to develop and build ballistic missiles for strategic use. We have however had no major capability in this field since the 1960s, and to re-acquire it now would be very expensive, take a long time and involve much uncertainty. This cannot be an attractive option.

45. The present Polaris missiles could be kept and fitted into new submarines. They would need new motors, produced from restarted production lines; this may be necessary anyway to match present force life, but not so certainly or on so large a scale as would be needed if the missiles were kept beyond the early 1990s. Much of the missile support equipment would need to be replaced at the outset, and this would be costly and difficult, particularly as much of it would have been long out of production. Removing equipment from the present boats and fitting it into the new ones might not be cheap or easy, and would entail major problems in maintaining continuous operational capability during the transition; the alternative of new manufacture for all the equipment would be very costly, especially as most of it is already long out of production. The missiles and the related equipment, afloat and ashore, would be costly to maintain, both because of age and because spares and replacements would increasingly have to be specially manufactured to technological standards long since superseded in industry. It would be necessary to buy extra missiles - long out of production - and extra Chevaline

elements to support the force for longer. Moreover, unless we were to make the very bold assumption that Polaris missiles would remain satisfactory until beyond 2010, we should have to build submarines capable at some point in their life of accommodating a different missile of a type which (since Trident production will not continue indefinitely) we could not easily predict now.

46. For all these reasons, a force based on the existing missiles in new submarines would not be cheap and perhaps not highly reliable. Nevertheless, it would be cheaper initially than an entirely new force in capital cost - in very broad terms, possibly by around forty per cent - though subsequent running costs would tend to be higher. Such a saving would in itself be highly valuable. The difficulty is that the resulting force would be of uncertain value and short life. For operational reasons a force based on Polaris - even with the Chevaline improvement, designed essentially for the forecast environment of the 1980s and early 1990s - would be able to maintain a high deterrent assurance in the later 1990s, let alone beyond that, only if the advances in Soviet ability to counter it proved unexpectedly modest. If such a hope were disappointed we should be faced with a choice between keeping a force of much reduced deterrent credibility and effectiveness, and changing our plans at short notice. Such a change would certainly have to be made at high cost and probably in haste, wastefully and with difficulty. It would be seriously irresponsible to undertake on such a basis what would still be, by any standards, a major investment.

47. We considered also various possibilities for acquiring new versions of the basic Polaris missile, improved mainly by the use of more modern and powerful rocket fuels to give more range and payload (though short of Trident standards) as an insurance against improved Soviet capabilities. Any of these possibilities would entail a substantial R&D programme covering the missiles themselves, the altered interface with Chevaline, and related equipment. The procurement costs - which cannot be assessed as firmly as those for the already operational Trident system, and carry greater risk of escalating - would have fallen entirely on Britain, as would all the costs of setting up and sustaining support arrangements for a system that had never been in

United States service. The amount would depend on how big an improvement over the present Polaris capability was sought, but missile system costs could well be twice those of Trident, for a smaller and less assured capability. Moreover, concerns like those in paragraph 46 would arise about effective operational life, though perhaps less quickly.

48. Another possibility, considered at an early stage, was a European solution. Collaboration in the European context could have been of considerable political significance. But it was soon apparent that this option had a number of disadvantages, in particular related to cost. There is no likelihood that the United Kingdom could have acquired by this route an effective deterrent force at a cost, either in initial investment or in subsequent support, which could compare with that for the proven Trident system, especially when account is taken of the economic advantages of our long-established arrangements for collaboration with the United States in nuclear forces. The Government therefore sees no adequate basis on which such an option could now have been pursued.

49. We considered also the adoption of the Poseidon system, which the US would have been willing to make available when it begins to phase out of US service by about 1990. Poseidon entered service in 1971, is of the same size as the present Trident missile, and is a MIRVed* system capable of carrying up to fourteen warheads of substantially smaller size and yield than Trident or our own Polaris. Range varies with payload, but with a reduced number of warheads it is about 300 nautical miles more than that of Polaris A.3.

50. Poseidon would be an effective system, but particularly because of its shorter range it would offer less long-term insurance than Trident against improved Soviet capabilities. The initial purchase price would be lower, but several other factors offset this. The age of the missiles and related equipment would mean higher maintenance costs, and almost certainly a major re-motoring programme before long. We should have to bear all the continuing support costs for a system no longer in United States service. We should also have to undertake a very extensive British warhead development and testing programme and perhaps further work to adapt the missile system to our warheads. In all, it is unlikely that the cost would be lower, and the system would be less good.

*MIRV: multiple independently-targettable re-entry vehicles

51. Trident I is a three-stage ballistic rocket designed to carry up to eight independently-targettable warheads. The maximum range is from about 4,000 to 6,000 nm, depending on the number of warheads. The first missiles went to sea on operational service with the United States Navy in 1979. They are initially replacing Poseidon missiles in some existing submarines and they will later be fitted in the new OHIO-class submarines. MIRV capability and long range give excellent margins of long-term insurance against further advances in Soviet ABM and ASW capability; and improved guidance techniques give better accuracy than earlier systems have offered. The Trident system is likely to remain in United States service for many years to come, during which all the economies of commonality will be available to us.

52. We considered whether there would be any advantages in a "non-MIRV" Trident. MIRV capability is however integral to the system design, and deliberately to remove it and substitute MRV* capability would entail a major re-design and re-testing programme, leading to a missile degraded in performance and unique to Britain. Missile system costs would probably be at least double those of Trident, for a greatly reduced capability. A de-MIRVed Trident would have the additional disadvantage - common also to the Polaris-based options discussed in paragraphs 45-47 - that it would offer much less insurance than the full system against any possibility that in the long term ABM defences might not remain under the present Treaty constraints.

53. A concept for a larger SLBM known as Trident II is being studied in the United States, and the OHIO-class submarines will be big enough to take such a missile. It would give still greater range and payload, naturally at higher cost. The US Government however is not expected to decide for another two or three years whether to proceed with Trident II. Our own choice now could not be made dependent on uncertain possibilities like this.

*MRV: multiple re-entry vehicles (not independently targettable)

Force Size

54. There are two main variables to force size: the number of missiles per submarine, and the number of submarines. They interact in some degree.

55. The optimum number of missiles per submarine involves a compromise between conflicting factors. For a given total complement of missiles, the fewer the boats the lower the cost but also the greater the risk of too many eggs in one basket - this last being a particularly important consideration for a relatively small force like ours. We considered eight, twelve, sixteen and twenty-four missiles per boat. Of these options twenty-four, as in the very large United States OHIO submarines, is more than we need (given that we have to have at least four boats anyway, as paragraph 56 explains). At the other extreme, eight missiles would lead to a much larger number of boats for a given total capability, and this drives up costs and manpower demands. The choice between twelve and sixteen is less clear-cut, but on balance we believe it best to plan for sixteen, which is the number used in our present force, the French SLBM force, and the United States Polaris and Poseidon forces (and also most of the Soviet SLBM force).

56. Deciding the number of boats is more difficult. Four is the minimum needed to sustain without fail at least one always on patrol. System improvements may improve the ratio of operational to non-operational time, but not to the point at which a force of three submarines could be sure of sustaining continuous patrol for more than a few years. A force of five can maintain two on continuous patrol, yet because force overheads do not rise proportionately with numbers the extra cost would not exceed fifteen per cent. A fifth boat would also offer a margin of insurance against possible risks, such as marked relative improvement in Soviet ASW or losing a boat by accident or major unforeseen defect. But the skill and dedication of our personnel have enabled us to manage successfully with four boats for over a decade, and the extra capital cost of a fifth in the Trident era, though modest in proportionate terms, is still very large in absolute terms - perhaps in the order of six hundred million pounds.

57. No immediate decision is needed on the choice between four and five, since major expenditure related only to a fifth boat would not arise for two or three years from now. The Government intends therefore to keep the option open and to take a final decision in 1982 or 1983 in the light of the latest information and judgements on relevant operational, international and resource factors, including the defence budget situation.

IV - ARMS CONTROL

58. Throughout its consideration of Polaris replacement the Government has kept in mind the relationship between its prospective decision and arms control considerations. Strong support for practical, balanced and verifiable arms control measures remains a key element in our approach to ensuring peace and security. The Government, like all its allies in NATO, much prefers arms control to arms expenditure whenever the circumstances, and the will on both sides of a potential agreement, make this an effective alternative.

59. The Government believes that the implementation of the bilateral US/Soviet SALT II agreements signed last year in Vienna is in the interest of international security, and keenly hopes that conditions in which ratification can go ahead will soon be restored. The decision to modernise our own strategic force in the 1990s is entirely compatible with this view. The continued Anglo-American cooperation provided for in the exchange of letters on Trident is fully consistent with the terms of the SALT II Treaty, and indeed this long-established cooperation was clearly in the mind of the United States, as Congressional testimony has indicated, when it rejected Soviet demands for "no-transfer" provisions. The scale of our new capability will in no way disturb existing and prospective East/West relativities. For example, even if we eventually choose to go to the higher figure of five boats, when the force was fully operational in the mid-1990s it would represent in relation to Soviet strategic forces at that time (assuming these to be limited to SALT II levels) about the same proportion of delivery systems as - and a rather lower proportion of warheads than - the Polaris force did in relation to Soviet forces when it was completed in 1970.

60. The Government strongly supports the regime established by the Non-Proliferation Treaty of 1968, and hopes to see it extended by the accession of more countries and the development of a broader international consensus on the terms of nuclear trade. The Review Conference of the Treaty will be held in August 1980 and the United Kingdom will play a full part. The Government remains committed to pursuing negotiations on effective measures of nuclear

disarmament in accordance with Article VI of the Treaty. For example, the Government continues to support the conclusion of a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, and we are participating fully in the Geneva negotiations with the United States and the Soviet Union. Nothing in our requirements for the new force will lead us to modify our support for a successful outcome to these negotiations as soon as practicable.

61. But nothing in the Non-Proliferation Treaty requires the existing nuclear powers unilaterally to abandon or let decay their basic capabilities, which are inescapably a key part of the established structure of global and particularly East/West security, whose collapse would bring grave dangers for all nations. Moreover, the Government sees no realistic ground for supposing that unilateral gestures of renunciation by Britain - gestures which there is not the slightest likelihood that any other nuclear power would emulate - would make any marked or lasting difference to the prospects of accession to the Treaty by those comparatively few nations which might be capable within a reasonable time of acquiring some nuclear weapons capability, but whose assessment of their own national interest has so far led them to decide against accession.

62. Finally, Britain's strategic SLBM force lies outside the category of those United States and Soviet long-range land-based theatre nuclear forces about whose limitation the United States last December invited the Soviet Union to negotiate.

V - COSTS

63. The costs of the proposed Trident force cannot be estimated in close detail at this stage - further discussions are needed with the United States authorities, and in several respects such as submarine design and numbers the costs will depend upon decisions which have yet to be taken. In broad terms, however, we assess the likely order of capital cost for a four-boat force, at today's prices, at around four-and-a-half to five billion pounds, spread over some fifteen years. Rather over half of this would be likely to fall in the 1980s. The total would cover submarines, missiles, warheads and support equipment and facilities, including new construction required at the Coulport armament depot, the Faslane operating base and elsewhere.

64. Of the total initial cost over seventy percent will be spent with British establishments and industry, the biggest elements being in shipbuilding, construction and warhead procurement. The Government will seek every opportunity that is economically and operationally sensible for British industrial participation so as to bring the proportion to a maximum, although to increase it very markedly would be likely to entail substantial extra capital or running cost.

65. There has rightly been widespread public interest in the effect which the replacement of the Polaris force will have upon other aspects of the defence programme. Money spent on this is money not spent on other things. If it can be assumed that future total allocations to defence would be no lower without Polaris replacement than with it, forgoing Polaris replacement would obviously make it possible to fund additional or earlier force improvements somewhere else.

66. It is however important to keep in view the scale and significance of this, from several standpoints. The capital cost of the Trident force will be spread over about fifteen years. The Government's expenditure plans, announced in the most recent White Paper on Public Expenditure *, provide for defence spending to rise by 3% a year in real terms

*Cmnd 7841

over each of the next three years, giving by 1983/84 a budget some 13% higher in real terms than in 1979/80. No-one can be sure exactly what the size of the budget will be in the ten years thereafter, but the capital cost of the Trident programme is unlikely to absorb on average more than 3% of the total budget between 1980 and 1995. The equipment element of the programme is unlikely to absorb more than 5% of the equipment component of the defence budget over this period. The total cost might absorb some 1½% of the total during the build-up in the first half of the 1980s, some 5% (or 8% of the equipment component) in the main spending period from 1985 to 1990, and then 1-2% between 1990 and 1995. We spent much higher proportions in the 1950s on the build-up of the V-bomber force. Even after spending on the Trident force, the Government is still planning to spend more on conventional forces than it does now. The accommodation of large re-equipment programmes is a normal part of defence planning and budgetting. Tornado procurement costs more than the estimated cost of the Trident force, and is currently absorbing some 7% of the defence budget without distorting the rest of the defence programme. Once capital investment is past, the Trident force should be notably inexpensive - probably well below 2% of the defence budget from the mid-1990s. In terms of manpower, which may increasingly become a key constraint upon our defence effort, the Trident force should be broadly as economical as Polaris, which requires only 2500 servicemen - under 1% of Service manpower.

67. There are accordingly no easy comparisons to be made with other defence capabilities. There would be little point, for example, in diverting the full capital sum to buying more ships, tanks or aircraft which in the long term we could not afford to run and could not hope to man. The rising real cost of defence equipment is a general cause for concern, but this problem is not specific to the Polaris successor. For all these reasons, impressions that we could sustain much larger conventional forces without Polaris replacement than with it are well wide of the mark.

68. As the Prime Minister's letter to President Carter makes clear, the Government is convinced and determined that the provision of the new Trident force should not prevent or emasculate continued improvement in other areas of our contribution to NATO. It believes moreover that the modernisation of the independent British element in NATO's strategic nuclear forces is a central element of that contribution, not a luxury or a diversion. No alternative use of British resources would provide a comparable strengthening of collaborative Alliance deterrence to aggression.

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CABINET OFFICE

70 Whitehall, London SW1A 2AS Telephone 01-233 8319

From the Secretary of the Cabinet: Sir Robert Armstrong KCB CVO

Ref. A02623

15th July, 1980

British Strategic Nuclear Force

By the direction of the Prime Minister, Sir Robert Armstrong has instructed me to let you know that it had been the intention of the Prime Minister at the Cabinet meeting on Thursday 17th July to inform the Cabinet that she had written to President Carter to ask him to make available to this country the Trident I ballistic missile system as the replacement weapon for Polaris. I attach a copy of her letter.

This timetable has been upset by the fact that we have now been informed by the Americans that a New York newspaper is likely to be publishing the details of this request today. President Carter has therefore sent an immediate reply to the Prime Minister, of which I enclose a copy of the text, conveying the agreement of the United States to supply the Trident I system to this country and the Secretary of State for Defence will make a statement in the House of Commons to announce this fact this afternoon. The exchange of letters between the Prime Minister and President Carter will be published as a White Paper as soon as possible.

I am sending copies of this letter and the enclosures to the Private Secretaries of all members of the Cabinet, the Minister of Transport and the Chief Whip and for information to Clive Whitmore.

D. J. WRIGHT

(D. J. Wright)
Private Secretary

J. F. Halliday, Esq.

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10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

10 July 1980

Dear Mr. President,

As you are aware the United Kingdom Government attaches great importance to the maintenance of a nuclear deterrent capability. It will be necessary to replace the present Polaris force in the early 1990s, and having reviewed the options, the Government has concluded that the Trident I weapon system best meets the need to maintain a viable nuclear deterrent capability into the 21st century. I write therefore to ask you whether the United States Government would be prepared, in continuation of the cooperation which has existed between our Governments in this field since the Polaris Sales Agreement of 6 April 1963, to supply on a continuing basis, Trident I missiles, equipment and supporting services, in a manner generally similar to that in which Polaris was supplied.

The United Kingdom Government would wish to purchase sufficient missiles, complete with multiple independently targettable re-entry vehicles and less only the warheads themselves, together with equipment and supporting services, on a continuing basis to introduce and maintain a force of 4 British submarines (or 5 if the United Kingdom Government so prefer), close coordination being maintained between the Executive Agencies of the two Governments in order to assure compatibility of equipment.

The successor to the Polaris force will be assigned to the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, like the Polaris force; and except where the United Kingdom Government may decide that supreme national interests are at stake, the successor force will be used for the purposes of international defence of the Western alliance in all

/ circumstances.

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circumstances. It is my understanding that cooperation in the modernisation of the United Kingdom nuclear deterrent in this way would be consistent with the present and prospective international obligations of both parties.

In particular, I would like to assure you that the United Kingdom Government continues to give whole-hearted support to the NATO Long-Term Defence Programme and to other strengthening of conventional forces. The United Kingdom Government has substantially increased its defence spending, in accordance with NATO's collective policy, and plans to make further such increases in the future in order to improve the effectiveness of its all-round contribution to Allied deterrence and defence. In this regard the objective of the United Kingdom Government is to take advantage of the economies made possible by the cooperation of the United States in making the Trident I missile system available in order to reinforce its efforts to upgrade its conventional forces.

If the United States Government is prepared to meet this request, I hope that as the next step the United States Government will be prepared to receive technical and financial missions to pursue these matters, using the framework of the Polaris Sales agreement where appropriate.

Yours sincerely
Raymond Whelan

The President of the United States of America.

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TEXT OF THE PRESIDENT'S LETTER TO THE PRIME MINISTER

The White House,
Washington

July 14, 1980

Dear Madame Prime Minister:

In reply to your letter of July 10, 1980, I am pleased to confirm that the United States attaches significant importance to the nuclear deterrent capability of the United Kingdom and to close co-operation between our two Governments in maintaining and modernising that capability. To further that objective, the United States is prepared to supply the United Kingdom Trident I missiles, equipment and supporting services, as you propose in your letter, subject to and in accordance with applicable United States laws and procedures.

I view as important your statements that the Polaris successor force will be assigned to NATO and that your objective is to take advantage of the economies made possible by our nuclear co-operation to reinforce your efforts to upgrade the United Kingdom's conventional forces. As you know, I regard the strengthening of NATO's conventional and nuclear forces as of highest priority for Western security.

I agree that as the next step in implementing these agreed arrangements, our two Governments should initiate the technical and financial negotiations which you propose.

Sincerely,

Jimmy Carter

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32

Prime Minister

Print

TOP SECRET AND PERSONAL

Ref. A02606

Copy No. 1 of 4 Copies

MR. ALEXANDER

MS.

Print - 18/7

I delivered the Prime Minister's personal message for President Giscard d'Estaing to Monsieur Jacques Wahl at the Elysee on Saturday, 12th July at 11.00 am. Monsieur Wahl said that he could not immediately give it to the President, who had gone down to the country, being tired after his visit to Germany and wishing to prepare himself for the rigours of Bastille Day on 14th July. But he would let him know on a secure line that the message had been received, and its general purport. He supposed, and I confirmed, that a positive response was to be expected.

2. Monsieur Wahl did not comment on the substance of the message, though it clearly came as little of a surprise to him.
3. In subsequent conversation we touched on a number of matters:
 - (1) Monsieur Wahl said that the President's visit to Germany had gone well. Though it was the first State visit since 1962, no particular importance needed to be attached to that. It was the fact, however, that with every exchange of visits the relationship became closer and deeper. On this occasion, for the first time, there had begun to be some discussion of the possibility of closer defence co-operation between France and Germany. Monsieur Wahl was anxious that we should not underestimate the significance of this, and of the President's recent speech on the modernisation of the "force de dissuasion" and the development of the neutron bomb, as indications of a new development in the evolution of French defence policy. He emphasised that, while the French Government understood the limitations on the possibilities for defence co-operation between Britain and France, they would wish to develop these links to the greatest possible extent: the co-operation with Germany was not intended to be exclusive.

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(2) Monsieur Wahl said that the strength with which we had pursued our objective in the negotiations on the Community Budget had engendered some suspicion in the Community. On occasions it had not been clear whether we were simply pursuing a short term objective with single-minded vigour or whether we were in fact out to "wreck the boat". Our attitude in the further negotiations which were now about to start would be carefully studied from this point of view. Monsieur Wahl also reverted to the point he had made to me earlier in the year about the need for our trade to adjust to our membership of the Community, not least as a means of reducing our net contributions.

I said that we had certainly pursued our objective in the negotiations with determination, not only because of our financial problems at home but because of the impossibility of justifying the situation in which Britain was the largest net contributor. In the negotiations which were about to start we should be looking for equitable solutions, and, like our partners, would no doubt pursue them with vigour. But that was not a reason to question our commitment to membership of the Community, which the Prime Minister had several times reasserted. As to our trade, the proportion of our total trade which was with the Community had risen from about 32 per cent when we joined to about 40 per cent now: a very considerable shift over so short a time.

Referring to enlargement, Monsieur Wahl said that I should understand the French position: they were not against enlargement in principle, but it was a question of timing. Negotiations for enlargement were bound to take longer, and the Community needed to consolidate its existing position. He commented that, once we had a Community of 12, Britain was bound to be a net contributor, given that the three new members all had gross national product per head substantially lower than that of the existing members of the Community.

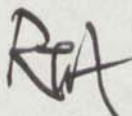
Monsieur Wahl said that he would like to explain to me the French position on the Common Agricultural Policy. When it started, it had been important to the French to have a system of intervention with

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surpluses paid for out of Community funds. This was not now important to the French - Monsieur Wahl claimed that the French did not produce surpluses - and in the forthcoming discussions the French objective would be to retain a single price within the Community, higher than the world price, for agricultural products, and free movement within the Community; but they would be content to see surpluses financed from other than Community sources.

- (3) Monsieur Wahl asked whether we were contemplating any initiative in Namibia. This was an area in which British and French interests, particularly in uranium, coincided. It was very important to us both that there should be 10 years' stability in that part of the world. We could not just leave it to the South Africans. It was a part of the world in which the French Government thought that the British Government for historical reasons were best placed to take the lead. I said that we were certainly concerned about the situation in Namibia, but that I did not think that we had any present plans for an initiative.
- (4) I said that the Prime Minister was looking forward to her next meeting with President Giscard in Bordeaux in September. This would be an important occasion, and the Prime Minister was expecting to be accompanied not only by the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary but also by three or four other senior Ministers. Monsieur Wahl took note of this, indicating that the President would welcome this and would expect to respond in kind.



(Robert Armstrong)

15th July, 1980

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See MODBA note
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Page No. 1 of 2 pages.

10 DOWNING STREET

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SUBJECT

Defence

THE PRIME MINISTER

15 July 1980

PRIME MINISTER'S
PERSONAL MESSAGE
SERIAL No. TI43/80

Dear Signor Corriga,

As you know, we have been giving much thought in recent months to the question of a successor to our present Polaris force. I wanted personally to let you know that, after intensive deliberations, the Government has concluded that the best course is to replace Polaris in the early 1990s with the US Trident weapons system. I have therefore formally asked President Carter whether the United States Government would be prepared to supply Trident I missiles and equipment (including the MIRV capability) and supporting services on broadly the same basis as Polaris was supplied.

The size of the new force will be not less than four submarines. The option of a fifth boat will remain open for the time being, since it is not necessary to decide this yet. The submarines themselves, and the nuclear warheads, will be designed and manufactured in the United Kingdom.

Like Polaris, the successor force will be assigned to NATO. It will nevertheless, as now, be wholly owned by us and under our sole operational control.

/I am convinced

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Page 2 of 2 pages

I am convinced that this decision is not only in the best interests of the United Kingdom but in those of the Alliance as a whole, to whose security the United Kingdom's continuing possession of a strategic deterrent capability will remain a major contribution. The Trident force will, I believe, place us in the best possible position to operate effectively well into the 21st century in whatever strategic environment we then face.

I should like to emphasise that we remain committed to the strengthening of our conventional forces, including the 3% real annual increase in our defence spending and support of the force improvements programmes already discussed in the Alliance.

I hope that the Government will be able to announce a favourable response from President Carter to this request in the House of Commons in the afternoon of Thursday, 17 July. I attach particular importance to letting you know of our decision in advance of my announcement, but I would be grateful if, till then, you will regard this information as confidential to yourself.

I enclose a copy of a note which we shall be giving our other Allies just before the announcement.

I have sent similar messages to Chancellor Schmidt and President Giscard d'Estaing.

Louis Mountbatten
Raymond Stedman

His Excellency Signor Francesco Cossiga

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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

July 14, 1980

SUBJECT

PRIME MINISTER'S

PERSONAL MESSAGE

SERIAL No. T1418/80

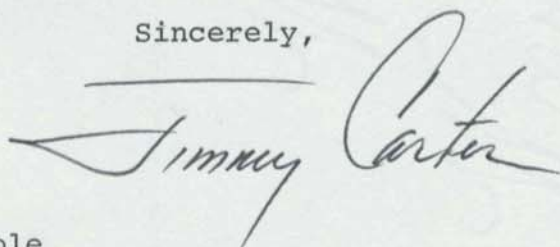
Dear Madame Prime Minister:

In reply to your letter of July 10, 1980, I am pleased to confirm that the United States attaches significant importance to the nuclear deterrent capability of the United Kingdom and to close cooperation between our two Governments in maintaining and modernizing that capability. To further that objective, the United States is prepared to supply the United Kingdom TRIDENT I missiles, equipment and supporting services, as you propose in your letter, subject to and in accordance with applicable United States laws and procedures.

I view as important your statements that the POLARIS successor force will be assigned to NATO and that your objective is to take advantage of the economies made possible by our nuclear cooperation to reinforce your efforts to upgrade the United Kingdom's conventional forces. As you know, I regard the strengthening of NATO's conventional and nuclear forces as of highest priority for Western security.

I agree that as the next step in implementing these agreed arrangements, our two Governments should initiate the technical and financial negotiations which you propose.

Sincerely,



The Right Honorable
Margaret R. Thatcher, M.P.
Prime Minister
London

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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

July 14, 1980

SUBJECT

PRIME MINISTER'S

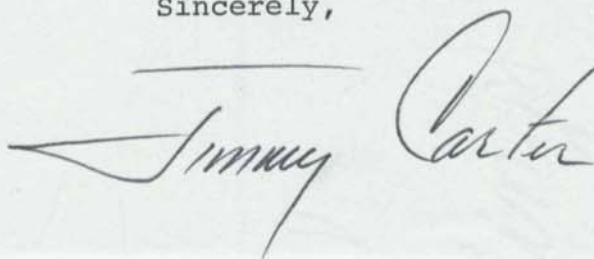
PERSONAL MESSAGE

SERIAL No. T141^c/80

Dear Madame Prime Minister:

In connection with my letter to you today regarding modernization of the nuclear deterrent capability of the United Kingdom, I want to assure you that the United States is willing in principle to supply special nuclear materials to the United Kingdom deterrent program which were beyond your own capacity to provide, subject of course to the United States Government's ability to provide such materials in light of its own requirements and availability of supply.

Sincerely,



The Right Honorable
Margaret R. Thatcher, M.P.
Prime Minister
London

SECRET



THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301

July 14, 1980

The Honorable Francis Pym
Secretary of State
Ministry of Defence
Main Building, Whitehall
London SW1A 2HB England

Dear Francis:

The purpose of this letter is to record our joint understanding on certain aspects of the agreed arrangements for the sale of the Trident (C-4) missile system and associated equipment to the United Kingdom, which will not be explicitly reflected in the exchange of letters between the President and the Prime Minister.

It is understood that:

- (1) The Polaris Sales Agreement of 1963 and its implementing agreements will be the general pattern for the sale of the Trident (C-4) system.
- (2) In particular, the United Kingdom will pay a contribution to research and development costs for the Trident I (C-4) system in accordance with the formula set forth in the Polaris Sales Agreement, that is to say, a surcharge of 5% on the cost of the missiles and equipment purchased under the agreement.
- (3) In addition, the United Kingdom acknowledges that waiver by the United States of research and development recoupment in excess of that covered by the formula set forth in the Polaris Sales Agreement will fully satisfy the requirement that the United States Government give defense assistance of corresponding value to the United Kingdom defense budget in return for the manning by the United Kingdom of Rapier air defense of United States Air Force bases in the United Kingdom.

I am pleased that we have been able to resolve these and related issues, and I regard the arrangements agreed between our two countries on this matter as an important contribution to our continued close defense cooperation, which enhances the security not only of the United States and United Kingdom, but of our allies and the world generally.

*With best personal wishes,
Harold*

LETTERCODE/SERIES <p style="text-align: center;">..... <i>PREM 19</i></p> PIECE/ITEM <i>417</i> (one piece/item number)	Date and sign
Extract/Item details: <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Minute from MOD to Prime Minister dated 14 July 1980 (folio 30c)</i></p>	
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Prime Minister

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L.G. Schmidt 17/7 Schmidt
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Ref. A02604

MR. ALEXANDER

mb.

I delivered the Prime Minister's personal message for the Federal Chancellor to Herr Bernd von Staden at the Bundeskanzleramt on Friday, 11th July at 5.00 pm. Herr von Staden said that the Chancellor was leaving for Hamburg in an hour's time; in case he might have any comment on the Prime Minister's letter, he would take it straight round and give the Chancellor the opportunity of reading it before he left for Hamburg. After a short time Herr von Staden returned and said that the Chancellor would like to see me himself.

2. The Chancellor made no comment on the substance of the Prime Minister's message, though he said that he thought that the timing was good. He went on to ask me to convey to the Prime Minister a message from him about his visit to Moscow.

3. The Chancellor said that when he was in Moscow he had talked to the whole of the Soviet leadership, not just on one but on three occasions; and, he said, he had spoken with a determination and stubbornness which could not have been surpassed by the Prime Minister herself. What he had said had not differed in any respect from what had been agreed at the two meetings in Venice. Mr. Brezhnev and Mr. Gromyko were the only two people in the world who knew that what President Giscard had said in Warsaw, what Chancellor Schmidt had said in Moscow and what the Community and Western leaders assembled in Venice had said on East-West relations and Afghanistan were identical. He had also repeated the message in his speech at the official dinner, and in the published reports some sections of that speech were omitted and the Soviet Press had made up for the omissions by paragraphs which began:

"It is a pity that Chancellor Schmidt did not say"

The sophisticated Soviet reader would understand.

4. The Chancellor said that he had once again made it clear to the Soviet leadership, and he thought that they understood, that they could not drive wedges between the members of the Western Alliance, and that there would be no tacit acceptance of the invasion of Afghanistan.


TOP SECRET AND PERSONAL

5. The Chancellor thought that the Soviets had miscalculated the risks they were running by invading Afghanistan, both the risks in Afghanistan itself and the risks of public condemnation by the rest of the world, including the Third World and the Islamic countries. He thought that they had been puzzled by the Western reaction, and wanted to limit further damage. The recent withdrawals had been merely propaganda: the troops concerned were of no particular use to them in Afghanistan. After the Olympic Games they would have three options: either to come out of Afghanistan - which the Chancellor thought was inconceivable - or to go to the opposite extreme, move in in great strength and crush the opposition all over the country, or to hold the main cities and specific key points but not to try to subjugate the rebels in the remoter parts. He had made it very clear to the Soviet leadership that an intensification of their military strength and activities in Afghanistan would further damage their relations with the West.

6. The Chancellor said that the Olympic Games, and the possibility of West Germany after all participating in them, had not been mentioned during his talks, though one could see from the Lenin Hills the Olympic Stadium and all the floodlights for the Games.

7. He said that the Russians were interested in the ratification of SALT II. They could not understand why President Carter could not proceed with the ratification. He had endeavoured to explain to them the reality of President Carter's problems with Congress, but he did not think that he had made much impression. They genuinely failed to comprehend a system in which the Government could be prevented from doing what it wanted to do by a Parliament. He said that he found the Soviet leadership apprehensive about the unpredictability of the present United States Administration. He commented on two aspects of the Soviet leadership: their elderliness and their extreme isolation. Both of these characteristics tended to root their thinking in the past and make them cautious, even nervous, in looking into the future. The Chancellor stressed in particular the isolation: it seemed that none of the

TOP SECRET AND PERSONAL

TOP SECRET AND PERSONAL

Politburo spoke any other language but Russian and that meant that everything which they read and heard about the outside world was at second hand and filtered. It was very important that some direct bridges should be kept open.

8. The Chancellor said that the Soviet leadership had hinted at a new initiative on troop withdrawals in Europe by Russia and the United States. They appeared to be ready to talk in terms of withdrawing 34,000 men (a figure which was subsequently increased to 40,000) in exchange for the withdrawal of 13,000 American troops.

9. On personalities, the Chancellor said that Mr. Brezhnev was in a good deal better shape than when he had last seen him two years ago. I asked whether Mr. Brezhnev seemed to be in command and control; the Chancellor said that he was very much in command, though he was not clear whether he was in control. It was noticeable that he had spoken only from briefs, either those which he had in front of him or notes passed to him by Mr. Gromyko: he had not spoken extempore. He read well and clearly, but the Chancellor felt that he was either unable or unwilling to risk any departure from the Politburo line, to which it appeared that Mr. Gromyko's interventions were designed to hold him. He was walking with much greater ease than two years ago: cautiously, but not haltingly. The Chancellor described Mr. Kosygin as "fully present". He had intervened in the discussions of political and military matters, and he led the economic discussion "with sovereignty". But he went on a little too long for Mr. Brezhnev: at one moment Mr. Brezhnev turned to him and said: "How much longer are you going on?"; Mr. Kosygin replied "Only two or three sentences" and then drew to an early close. Mr. Gromyko was very much as usual, and very much in charge of the discussion of foreign policy. The Chancellor said that he had been much impressed by Mr. Suslov. Mr. Suslov had a good colour, though he must now be over 75. The Chancellor said that he had asked Mr. Suslov whether he read a lot, and Mr. Suslov said that he read two or three hours a day. The Chancellor thought that he was very much the guardian of the pure milk of the dogma.

TOP SECRET AND PERSONAL

10. The Chancellor asked about the state of the British car industry. I said that it was in considerable difficulties: demand for new cars had fallen sharply in the last two months. British Leyland's market share had dropped to a record low point a month ago, though it had picked up again in the last few months with the introduction of a new model. Industry generally was undergoing a severe liquidity problem, though some industrialists believed that they would be through ^{with} the ~~most~~ of this by September. The Chancellor said that he was very worried about the prospects for the world steel industry and the world car industry. He thought that the recession in the United States would last for twelve months. No recovery could be expected before the Presidential election, and the Chancellor was apprehensive about the possibility that uncertainty would be prolonged by an inconclusive result of the election: he had been reading what he described as "your papers" about the situation that would arise if there was no overall majority in the electoral college for Carter or Reagan - Anderson had only to capture one large state for this to happen - and there was an interregnum of several weeks or months, with Mr. Mondale as Acting President, while the system produced a successor.

11. Turning to President Giscard's recent visit to Germany, the Chancellor said that it had gone very smoothly. The Chancellor three times referred to the President as "my friend Valery Giscard", but there seemed to be more of irony than warmth in this repeated use of the phrase. The Chancellor said that the President had been well received by the population, and had handled his speeches and public appearances well. The Chancellor had welcomed the fact that the President had publicly committed himself to the modernisation of the French "force de dissuasion"; he had liked the timing of the speech, before his own visit to Moscow. During the President's visit, the Chancellor had reviewed French troops, and he and the President had also conducted a joint review of French and German troops. There had been some talk of closer co-operation between France and Germany in defence matters, but the Chancellor did not think that there was very much behind that, and there was certainly no question of nuclear co-operation. The Chancellor made it clear that the emphasis on closer defence co-operation had



come from the French side. I asked him whether the President was thinking in terms of co-operation with Germany, or more widely with NATO. He said that the first was right, though it was his personal view that it would lead on to the second.

12. I had of course started by conveying the Prime Minister's greetings to the Chancellor, together with a statement of her wish that he should be told in good time and before he went on holiday the contents of her message; and I was accused for my pains of talking like a diplomat, a charge which I did my best not to deserve for the rest of the meeting, which lasted for about an hour. It concluded by the Chancellor sending his good wishes to the Prime Minister. I was to tell her, he said, that I left a Chancellor still at work at 6.00 pm on Friday evening, and with three hours more work still to do.

13. After my meeting with the Chancellor, Herr von Staden said that the Chancellor was aware that there was some feeling on our part that Herr Genscher had failed to brief the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary after the visit to Moscow; he thought that a desire to make amends for this in some degree was one of the factors behind the Chancellor's decision to talk to me himself.

14. I am sending copies of this minute to Mr. Walden and Mr. Norbury.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, consisting of the letters 'R' and 'A' in a stylized, cursive script.

ROBERT ARMSTRONG

14th July, 1980



With the compliments of
DEFENCE DEPARTMENT

**FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE
LONDON, SW1A 2AH**

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UNCLASSIFIED
DESKBY 150730Z
FM WASHINGTON 150345Z JUL 80
TO IMMEDIATE FCO
TELEGRAM NUMBER 2517 OF 14 JULY
INFO IMMEDIATE DESKBY MODUK (FOR QUINLAN) CABINET OFFICE (FOR WADE-
GERY)

US/UK DEFENCE RELATIONS

1. IN AN INTERVIEW TONIGHT ON ABC TELEVISION WITH BARBARA WALTERS
AT THE REPUBLICAN CONVENTION IN DETROIT, HOWARD BAKER (REPUBLICAN
LEADER IN THE SENATE) DISCLOSED THAT HE HAD JUST BEEN INFORMED BY
SECRETARY MUSKIE THAT THE ADMINISTRATION WERE GOING TO SELL TRIDENT
I MISSILES TO THE BRITISH

HENDERSON

FILES
DEF.D
ACDD
NAD
WED
JNV
CSCE
NEWSD

DIJ
IPD
PS
PS/LPS
PS/MRHURD
PS/PUS
SIR.A.ACLAND

MR. P.H. MOBERLY
MR FERUSSON

PRIME MINISTER

cc Mr Whitmore

Business Before the Recess

When you see the Chief Whip on Monday, you might perhaps have a word about the timing of any debate on nuclear weapons before the recess.

I attach a copy of Murdo's current plan for the three weeks beginning on 21 July. This is very much a working document from No.12, and the Chancellor of the Duchy has not seen it.

You will see from the plan that there is a certain amount of leeway left in the schedule. The debate on Members' pay is now to be taken on 21 July after 10 o'clock, so that as things stand Friday 25 July and Friday 8 August are both free.

In my view, especially given the exchanges after the business question on Thursday, we shall have to provide a day in Government time for a debate on nuclear weapons after the statement has been made. We must also face the possibility that we shall have to provide a day for a confidence debate if the Opposition table a censure motion.

As things stand, we might be able to accommodate both in the existing schedule without running into difficulties on legislation. If unforeseen problems arise, it would be possible - although the Chancellor of the Duchy would be furious - to defer the procedure debate scheduled for 29 July until the spill-over. But I hope that it will not come to that.

MS

11 July 1980

MONDAY	<p>21 July Supply (27th AD)</p> <p>N.I. (E.I.A. Order). ? Members Pay.</p>	<p>28 July Social Security Orders. Employment Bill - CCCA.</p>	<p>4 August Housing Bill CCCA.</p>
TUESDAY	<p>22 July Criminal Justice (Scotland) Bill - L.</p>	<p>29 July Procedure Debate Law Reform (Misc Procs) Bill - R + 3R</p>	<p>5 August Consolidated Fund Debate</p>
WEDNESDAY	<p>23 July Civil Aviation Bill - 3R. Criminal Justice (Scotland) Bill - 3R.</p>	<p>30 July Supply (28th AD)</p>	<p>6 August Tenants Rights Bill CCCA</p>
THURSDAY	<p>24 July Coal Bill - R + 3R.</p>	<p>31 July Supply (29th AD)</p>	<p>7 August Lenses Amendment Debate.</p>
FRIDAY	<p>25 July [Members Pay.] - to be taken on Monday 21 July</p>	<p>1 August Debate on May Ctee Report.</p>	<p>8 August.</p>

CONFIDENTIAL



MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
MAIN BUILDING WHITEHALL LONDON SW1
Telephone 01-930 7022

MO 18/1/1

11th July 1980

Dear C. live,

From Minister.

POLARIS SUCCESSOR

see also
attached note
MJC
KWL
llvi

(attached)
MS

My Secretary of State is still indisposed, but he has been told of the exchanges on the Business Statement in the House of Commons yesterday when the Opposition asked that a debate should be allowed after a statement on a Polaris successor.

As he has already explained to the Chief Whip my Secretary of State is strongly of the view that time should be found for such a debate: the claims on Parliamentary time that have been made by Defence in this session have not been great.

I am sending copies of this letter to the Private Secretaries to the Leader of the House and the Chief Whip; and to David Wright (Cabinet Office).

*Yours and
Bury*

(B M NORBURY)

C A Whitmore Esq

CONFIDENTIAL

the nod, he showed at pathy? Now that we are a Summer Supplementary Estimate of £230 million of expenditure, will he offer some for the hope that we shall opportunity to debate this session upon it is taken?

Mr. St. John-Stevas: As my hon. Friend is sympathetic towards the issue he has raised, both in the House and in correspondence, I do not think it is satisfactory that we have these procedures, but I think it is a subject that would be discussed in the procedure which we have promised the House in the Summer Recess.

With regard to what my hon. Friend the Leader of the Opposition has said about unemployment in the future, may I ask the hon. Member for the House whether he has any motion 748, about unemployment in Great Britain, and in the North-East of England in particular?

House is deeply shocked at increased number of unemployed women in the United Kingdom, with the decision of a firm to close a factory in the West Region; and calls Government to take special measures to face the hardship caused by the Government economic

Member of the House arrange a debate about the shocking unemployment in the North-West in particular, and in the country in general?

Mr. St. John-Stevas: I am, of course, sympathetic towards everyone in the House, of course, who is raised at the moment by unemployment, particularly in the North-East. It is for that reason that I think it is important in the region where the problem is so acute to retain their special status. That will enable those who are setting up, and who are creating new jobs in those areas, to have the highest level of assistance under the Industry Act. But I think the prospects for the

region—as, indeed, the prospects for employment in the country as a whole—depend on our success in the fight against inflation.

Mr. Budgen: Does my right hon. Friend agree that the problem of gaining control of public expenditure is now so urgent that the leisurely procedure that he suggests for considering the way in which we might consider Supplementary Estimates is not good enough, and that we must have an urgent debate about it, so that the House may consider whether it wishes to reassert its ancient rights of considering Supply?

Mr. St. John-Stevas: I hope that there will be nothing leisurely either in the approach to the debate or in the debate itself. As I indicated, it is a most urgent problem, and I hope that we shall proceed to tackle it, as action has been delayed for many years.

Mr. Hardy: Will the Leader of the House accept that there is a great deal that is contentious in the Government's proposals for agricultural capital grants? May we have an assurance that this matter will be debated on the Floor of the House and not sent to a Committee upstairs?

Mr. St. John-Stevas: I have no plans to have a debate on this matter in the coming week. I shall consider what the hon. Gentleman has said.

Mr. Eldon Griffiths: Does my right hon. Friend expect the Secretary of State for Defence to make a statement on arrangements to maintain an independent British strategic deterrent? If so, will there be a debate on this matter before the Summer Recess?

Mr. St. John-Stevas: That is a matter for my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence or for my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister.

I cannot see my way to arranging a debate at the moment because I am anxious not to delay the Summer Recess unduly.

Mr. Ashley: Has the Leader of the House read the recent report by the Equal Opportunities Commission, which shows that there is widespread discrimination against women in Britain today? As this discrimination is in-

creasing, and is offensive and damaging to many women, could we have an opportunity to debate discrimination against women?

Mr. St. John-Stevas: The right hon. Gentleman has referred to an important report. It may be that further action ought to be taken in that sphere, but I cannot promise a debate before the Summer Recess.

Mr. Silvester: In view of the comments of my right hon. Friend the Lord Privy Seal on 14 May, will my right hon. Friend ensure that the view of the House is taken before the Government finally decide to renew the right of individual petition to the European Court in January next year?

Mr. St. John-Stevas: I do not know what statement was made by my right hon. Friend the Lord Privy Seal on 14 May. If it is an important constitutional matter, I shall take an early opportunity to discuss it with him.

Mr. James Callaghan: There are two issues that the Leader of the House has answered on which I should like to press him further. The first is public expenditure. May we take it that no decisions will be announced before the end of the Session? If so, which is what I inferred from his statement, may we also take it that no statements will be made during the recess, when it is not possible to debate them? I should be grateful for a further indication of the Government's thinking on that matter.

Secondly, it will be intolerable if the Government make a statement on the strategic nuclear deterrent without a debate. There has been insufficient debate about the important issues raised by this matter—the balance between our forces, whether we can afford it, what it should be, and so on. I put it to the right hon. Gentleman that if the Government are to make a statement on this matter it is imperative that there shall be a debate so that the House can express its opinion, too.

Mr. St. John-Stevas: The Leader of the Opposition has raised hypothetical points. I have given no indication that there will be a statement on this matter. I have not ruled it out, but I certainly have not ruled it in. The logical point at

[Mr. St. John-Stevas.] which to raise the question of a debate is if and when a statement is made. At present I have no plans for a debate on the subject. If a statement is made, the right hon. Gentleman can raise this point again.

With regard to the public expenditure review, I stick to what I said. This is a normal review, which takes place in all Governments at this time of the year.

Mr. Callaghan: With respect, the Leader of the House has not answered the question. A normal review is going on. I have known many years when statements have been made. [Hon. Members: "In July?"] In July, certainly, by Governments of both parties. There is nothing exceptional about it. Therefore, it is not unreasonable to ask that if a statement is not made before the House rises for the Summer Recess it shall not be made until the House has had a chance to debate the issue. The Government cannot just creep away into the recess and then make statements either on Polaris or on public expenditure and expect the House to be satisfied.

Mr. St. John-Stevas: The Government are not creeping away from anything. The right hon. Gentleman has made a point without validity. I have had no requests for statements on these matters. The review that is taking place within the Cabinet at this moment, which has not reached a final conclusion, is the normal review that is carried out at this time of the year.

Several Hon. Members rose—

Mr. Speaker: Order. I propose to call those hon. Members who have been rising in their places.

Mr. Kilfedder: Why cannot the Leader of the House give a clear assurance that the Government will arrange for a debate before a decision is taken to replace Polaris—a decision that would cost thousands of millions of pounds and perhaps have the gravest possible consequences for the people of this country?

Mr. St. John-Stevas: We have had a debate on defence. I have had no application for a statement on nuclear policy.

Mr. Arthur Lewis: Will the Leader of the House, one day next week, look at

the daily worsening position of Members' correspondence being neglected by almost every Government Department? It now takes a couple of months to get an interim reply and three months to get a substantive reply to any ordinary question. Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that, having waited for six weeks for an answer to a letter, I tabled a question and got a reply within 24 hours? If he does not do something, every hon. Member will be tabling questions asking for replies to correspondence.

Mr. St. John-Stevas: I think that that point is being exaggerated by the hon. Gentleman.

Mr. Lewis: Ask Members.

Mr. St. John-Stevas: I do not have to ask Members. They would tell me pretty quickly if the general situation were as bad as the hon. Gentleman contends. Practice varies from one Department to another, but I do not believe that it is the normal practice in any Department that there should be no interim reply for, I think the hon. Gentleman said, three months.

Mr. Sheerman: Will the Leader of the House assure us that there will be an early opportunity to debate women's employment as well as equal opportunities and the effect of modern technology on their employment? Many hon. Members have the experience that I have in my constituency, of modern technology sweeping away and eating into women's employment, especially that of young female school leavers. This is an urgent problem. In my constituency the ratio of young female school leavers to male school leavers is two to one. This is a growing problem. Surely it is time that the House concentrated its mind on the problems of women's employment.

Mr. St. John-Stevas: I agree that it is a very important problem. The hon. Gentleman raised another aspect of the problem that was raised a few minutes ago. Important though it may be, I cannot promise a debate on this subject before the Summer Recess.

Mr. Hooley: Will the Leader of the House give an assurance that there will be a full-scale debate before the Government proceed with any plans to build a fast breeder reactor?

Mr. St. John-Stevas: I am grateful for that solicited tribute. I cannot, however, promise an early debate upon the subject.

Mr. Skinner: On the question of co-ordination of Government policy, will the Leader of the House tell us whether the Prime Minister will make a statement on the recent remarks of the Secretary of State for Industry in America, on the one hand, when he said that it would be a good thing for American investors to come over here because we paid low wages, and, on the other hand, a fortnight after that, when he said that wages in Britain were too high and that that was one of the reasons for unemployment? May we have that matter clarified?

Secondly, will the Prime Minister ensure that with regard to the statement by the Minister of Agriculture that unemployment benefit is now running at a rate of £7,000 million, out of a public sector borrowing requirement of £9,000 million, and is too high a price to be paid for the efforts to squeeze inflation out of the economy, a statement will be made on the question whether that is Government policy, especially at a time when the Government are giving aid and comfort to the steel bosses to throw people out of work, such as the people at Consett, which is the height of economic lunacy and is thereby adding more to the expenditure needed for the dole queues?

Mr. St. John-Stevas: After that, I am clearer about the hon. Member's views on the matter than about the various speeches—

Mr. Skinner: That is what the Secretary of State said.

Mr. St. John-Stevas: So the hon. Member says, but I would require to see the text of these statements and to check them against the version that the hon. Member is giving. However, as the hon. Member knows, when Ministers speak in their official capacity they are speaking on behalf of the Government. They are setting forth Government policy and they speak for the Prime Minister as well as for other members of the Government.

Mr. Eldon Griffiths: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I realise that the House is anxious to move on. However, I think that my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House said that he had not received any request for a statement on the modernisation of the British nuclear deterrent. For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of good order, perhaps I may tell you, Mr. Speaker, that my question to the Leader of the House a few moments ago was precisely a request for such a statement.

Mr. St. John-Stevas rose—

Mr. Speaker: Order. That was a point of order.

BILL PRESENTED

SEX DISCRIMINATION ACT 1975 (REPEAL)

Sir Ronald Bell, supported by Mr. Philip Holland presented a Bill to repeal the Sex Discrimination Act 1975; and for connected purposes: And the same was read the First time; and ordered to be read a Second time upon Friday 25 July, and to be printed. [Bill 249.]

~~TOP SECRET~~
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See MoS BA note
1.9.80

COPY NO. 2 OF 2 COPIES

~~30~~

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Principal Private Secretary

SIR ROBERT ARMSTRONG

SUCCESSOR TO POLARIS

I attach the signed letters about the replacement of Polaris from the Prime Minister to President Giscard, Chancellor Schmidt and Signor Cossiga. I also attach a spare set of copies for your own use.

We agreed this morning that you would deliver the messages to President Giscard and Chancellor Schmidt in Paris and Bonn. May I also leave it to your office to arrange the onward transmission to Rome of the letter to Signor Cossiga?

JW.

10 July 1980

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note 1.9.80

10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

10 July 1980

PRIME MINISTER'S
PERSONAL MESSAGE
SERIAL No. T140/80

Dear Chancellor Schmidt,

As you know, we have been giving much thought in recent months to the question of a successor to our present Polaris force. I wanted personally to let you know that, after intensive deliberations, the Government has concluded that the best course is to replace Polaris in the early 1990s with the US Trident weapons system. I have therefore formally asked President Carter whether the United States Government would be prepared to supply Trident I missiles and equipment (including the MIRV capability) and supporting services on broadly the same basis as Polaris was supplied.

The size of the new force will be not less than four submarines. The option of a fifth boat will remain open for the time being, since it is not necessary to decide this yet. The submarines themselves, and the nuclear warheads, will be designed and manufactured in the United Kingdom.

Like Polaris, the successor force will be assigned to NATO. It will nevertheless, as now, be wholly owned by us and under our sole operational control.

/I am convinced

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Page 2 of 2 pages

I am convinced that this decision is not only in the best interests of the United Kingdom but in those of the Alliance as a whole, to whose security the United Kingdom's continuing possession of a strategic deterrent capability will remain a major contribution. The Trident force will, I believe, place us in the best possible position to operate effectively well into the 21st century in whatever strategic environment we then face.

I should like to emphasise that we remain committed to the strengthening of our conventional forces, including the 3% real annual increase in our defence spending and support of the force improvements programmes already discussed in the Alliance.

I hope that the Government will be able to announce a favourable response from President Carter to this request in the House of Commons in the afternoon of Thursday, 17 July. I attach particular importance to letting you know of our decision in advance of my announcement, but I would be grateful if, till then, you will regard this information as confidential to yourself.

I enclose a copy of a note which we shall be giving our other Allies just before the announcement.

I am sending a similar message today to President Giscard d'Estaing.

Yours sincerely
Margaret Thatcher

His Excellency Herr Helmut Schmidt

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~~TOP SECRET~~

See MODBA note 1.9.80



10 DOWNING STREET

~~30A~~
c.c. H. Wafer-Gary
H. Hastie-Smith
**PRIME MINISTER'S
PERSONAL MESSAGE**
SERIAL No. TI41/80

THE PRIME MINISTER

10 July 1980

Dear Mr. President:

As you are aware the United Kingdom Government attaches great importance to the maintenance of a nuclear deterrent capability. It will be necessary to replace the present Polaris force in the early 1990s, and having reviewed the options, the Government has concluded that the Trident I weapon system best meets the need to maintain a viable nuclear deterrent capability into the 21st century. I write therefore to ask you whether the United States Government would be prepared, in continuation of the cooperation which has existed between our Governments in this field since the Polaris Sales Agreement of 6 April 1963, to supply on a continuing basis, Trident I missiles, equipment and supporting services, in a manner generally similar to that in which Polaris was supplied.

The United Kingdom Government would wish to purchase sufficient missiles, complete with multiple independently targettable re-entry vehicles and less only the warheads themselves, together with equipment and supporting services, on a continuing basis to introduce and maintain a force of 4 British submarines (or 5 if the United Kingdom Government so prefer), close coordination being maintained between the Executive Agencies of the two Governments in order to assure compatibility of equipment.

The successor to the Polaris force will be assigned to the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, like the Polaris force; and except where the United Kingdom Government may decide that supreme national interests are at stake, the successor force will be used for the purposes of international defence of the Western alliance in all

/ circumstances.

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CONFIDENTIAL

circumstances. It is my understanding that cooperation in the modernisation of the United Kingdom nuclear deterrent in this way would be consistent with the present and prospective international obligations of both parties.

In particular, I would like to assure you that the United Kingdom Government continues to give whole-hearted support to the NATO Long-Term Defence Programme and to other strengthening of conventional forces. The United Kingdom Government has substantially increased its defence spending, in accordance with NATO's collective policy, and plans to make further such increases in the future in order to improve the effectiveness of its all-round contribution to Allied deterrence and defence. In this regard the objective of the United Kingdom Government is to take advantage of the economies made possible by the cooperation of the United States in making the Trident I missile system available in order to re-inforce its efforts to upgrade its conventional forces.

If the United States Government is prepared to meet this request, I hope that as the next step the United States Government will be prepared to receive technical and financial missions to pursue these matters, using the framework of the Polaris Sales agreement where appropriate.

Yours sincerely

(

etc

The President of the United States of America.

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SUBJECT

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See Mo.DBA note
1.9.80



Page No. 1 of 2 pages.

10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

10 July 1980

**PRIME MINISTER'S
PERSONAL MESSAGE
SERIAL No. T139/80**

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/I am convinced

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~~TOP SECRET~~

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 2 of 2 pages

I am convinced that this decision is not only in the best interests of the United Kingdom but in those of the Alliance as a whole, to whose security the United Kingdom's continuing possession of a strategic deterrent capability will remain a major contribution. The Trident force will, I believe, place us in the best possible position to operate effectively well into the 21st century in whatever strategic environment we then face.

I should like to emphasise that we remain committed to the strengthening of our conventional forces, including the 3% real annual increase in our defence spending and support of the force improvements programmes already discussed in the Alliance.

I hope that the Government will be able to announce a favourable response from President Carter to this request in the House of Commons in the afternoon of Thursday, 17 July. I attach particular importance to letting you know of our decision in advance of my announcement, but I would be grateful if, till then, you will regard this information as confidential to yourself.

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I am sending a similar message today to Chancellor Schmidt.

Yours sincerely,

Margaret Thatcher

His Excellency Monsieur Valery Giscard d'Estaing

~~TOP SECRET~~

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Page 1 of 4 pages

9 (3 copies for 400/14)

SUCCESSOR TO THE UNITED KINGDOM POLARIS SYSTEM

Timing of Polaris Replacement

1. The United Kingdom Polaris strategic deterrent force came into operation in the late 1960s. A major improvement programme to maintain its effectiveness during the 1980s is now nearing completion. After that period, however, it will become increasingly difficult and expensive to maintain the operational capability of the force. Decisions therefore need to be taken now about a successor system to begin entering service in the early 1990s.

The Case for Trident

2. A wide range of possible options for a successor system has been examined in detail. Account has been taken of the need for a successor force to remain effective well into the 21st century, the timescale for acquisition, and the probable cost. Her Majesty's Government has decided that the operational requirement would best be met by purchase of the Trident I MIRV missile system from the United States, to be equipped with warheads developed and produced in the United Kingdom and carried aboard British-built nuclear submarines.

3. The choice of Trident reflects the need to deploy a force able to provide a degree of insurance against Soviet strategic defences in the longer term. The long range of Trident I and its MIRV capability will provide such an insurance against further advance in Soviet anti-submarine and anti-missile capabilities. Trident is thus related to the situation in the 1990s and beyond, just as Polaris (and the Chevaline programme to improve Polaris) were intended to cope with the existing and foreseen strategic environments of the 1970s and the 1980s.

/Anglo-US Cooperation

TOP SECRET

Anglo-US Cooperation

4. The United States Government's agreement to this request for cooperation in the modernisation of the United Kingdom force will continue the long-standing US/UK strategic cooperation which dates back to World War II and has traditionally involved the sharing of highly advanced strategic technology.

Contribution to NATO

5. The new Trident force will be assigned to NATO and dedicated to SACEUR targets, just as the Polaris force is now. Her Majesty's Government regards the maintenance of a viable and credible independent strategic deterrent as a vital element of its contribution to the Alliance. The decision to replace the Polaris force represents a reaffirmation of the strength of the United Kingdom commitment to the Alliance and thus to the defence of Western Europe.

6. The United Kingdom will, as with Polaris, have full operational control over the new force. This independent centre of decision-making increases the Alliance's general deterrent capability, thus strengthening strategic stability and collective security.

Size of the Force

7. The United Kingdom Trident force is initially planned as four submarines each carrying sixteen missiles, as with the present Polaris force. A fifth submarine would provide additional insurance against improved Soviet defensive capabilities and against accident or major equipment failure, but would add to the cost. A decision on a fifth submarine is not needed until 1982/83 and this option will therefore be kept under review until then.

SALT II

8. The United States made clear that the SALT II Agreements do not preclude cooperation with its allies, including cooperation on modernisation. Indeed, the United States has made clear that transfer of numerically limited systems is not necessarily precluded. The Soviets certainly understood this US position to apply with special strength to US/UK cooperation, given the intensive and long-standing pattern of cooperation between the United States and the United Kingdom.

SALT III

9. The Soviet Union will doubtless continue to demand the inclusion of non-United States strategic systems. Similar Soviet efforts in SALT I and II were successfully resisted by the United States. The proposed new force does not provide any new justification for such a demand. The United Kingdom will only be keeping pace with the technological improvement and expansion of Soviet systems.

10. By the mid-1990s, the United Kingdom Trident force will represent roughly the same proportion of Soviet strategic forces (assuming these are limited to SALT II levels) as the Polaris force did of the equivalent Soviet forces when it became fully operational in 1970. Indeed in absolute terms the gap between Soviet and United Kingdom warhead numbers will be very much greater in the 1990s than in 1970.

Theatre Nuclear Force Modernisation

11. Britain's strategic SLBM force lies clearly outside the category of those United States and Soviet long-range land-based theatre nuclear forces about whose limitation the United States has repeatedly invited the Soviet Union to negotiate.

12. The replacement of the UK Polaris force in the 1990s is quite separate from, though eventually complementary to, the planned programme to modernise in the 1980s the Alliance's land-based long-range theatre nuclear forces. The two forces are not interchangeable in military or deterrent terms. The GLCM/Pershing II force answers a somewhat different requirement: the NATO nuclear planning group identified a major gap in the selective employment capability of the Alliance against long-range theatre targets, and recommended that this should be met by the deployment of long-range land-based theatre missiles. The modernised UK force will be sea-based and thus cannot meet this need. It will contribute to NATO's deterrent capabilities at the central strategic level, but it is not well suited for selective employment at a lower stage of conflict. In addition, the technical characteristics of the new long-range theatre nuclear force system will differ significantly from those of the modernised UK force and can be expected to be targetted differently by SACEUR.

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Page 4 of 4 pages

Conventional Forces

13. Her Majesty's Government remain determined to maintain and strengthen the United Kingdom's conventional defence effort in accordance with undertakings already given in the Alliance. The economies made possible by cooperation with the United States, compared with the financial burden which would be associated with an independent modernisation programme, will make an important contribution to this process.

TOP SECRET

PERSONAL AND SECRET



Defence
26

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Principal Private Secretary

9 July 1980

Dear Michael,

Thank you for your letter of 7 July 1980 suggesting that the Prime Minister might send a personal letter to Colonel Klass.

This is an attractive (and original!) idea, but I do not think it is the sort of thing the Prime Minister would want to do. It is not quite her style - to use your own phrase.

Yours ever,

M.E.

M.E. Quinlan, Esq., CB,
Ministry of Defence.

PERSONAL AND SECRET

NW

Defence 25
✓
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NOTE FOR THE RECORD

Copy to: Mr. Whitmore -
Mr. Prescott (PMG's Office)
Mr. McDonald (Defence).

This note records the agreement reached with the Ministry of Defence on the announcement of the Polaris successor following the Prime Minister's decision not to make the statement.

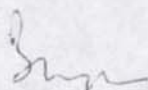
1. The Secretary of State for Defence to make the statement in the House.
2. The Secretary of State for Defence to record interviews immediately afterwards for BBC Radio and TV, ITN and IRN in time for the main early evening news bulletins.
3. The Lobby to be consulted on a confidential basis with a view to arranging a briefing by the Secretary of State for Defence for Lobby members at 6 p.m. (If this is not possible, the idea of a Lobby briefing by a Junior Minister will be explored).
4. Defence correspondents to be invited to the Ministry of Defence at 3.30 to receive copies of the Secretary of State for Defence's statement and supporting memorandum and to be given the opportunity of reading the documents before an unattributable briefing from the Permanent Secretary and supporting officials.
5. The interested and expert resident foreign press to be briefed, as required and according to the judgment of the Ministry of Defence, by the Ministry.

/6. The

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6. The Ministry of Defence to organise, as required and according to its judgment, supplementary briefings on subsequent days for resident foreign journalists.

7. Ministry of Defence to provide a speaking note for circulation in the Paymaster General's series.



B. INGHAM

9 July, 1980

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24



MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

MAIN BUILDING WHITEHALL LONDON SW1A 2HB

Telephone 01-218 2111/3 (Direct Dialling)

01-218 9000 (Switchboard)

MO 18/1/1

9th July 1980

Nyck: MS 9/7
to sm.
MH
SW

Dear Clin,

POLARIS SUCCESSOR

Thank you for your letter of 7th July (which arrived after we had had a word).

My Secretary of State is content to make the Statement in the House of Commons about the Government's decision on the replacement of Polaris.

I am sending a copy of this letter to David Wright in the Cabinet Office.

Yours and
Brian

(B M NORBURY)

C A Whitmore Esq

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23



COPY NO. 4 OF 4 COPIES

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Principal Private Secretary

SIR ROBERT ARMSTRONG

POLARIS SUCCESSOR

The Prime Minister has seen your minute AO2529 of 7 July 1980 and is content with the draft documents attached to it.

I have already let you have the signed letter from the Prime Minister to President Carter for despatch to Sir Nicholas Henderson.

The Prime Minister has slightly amended paragraph 6 of the draft letter to President Giscard, Chancellor Schmidt and Signor Cossiga to take account of the fact that she does not propose personally to make the statement in the House about the successor to Polaris (see my letter of 7 July to Mr. Norbury). The opening sentence of the paragraph will now read: "I hope that the Government will be able to announce a favourable response".

The Prime Minister has also deleted the word "most" from the last sentence of the same paragraph.

I will let you have the signed copies of the letters to President Giscard, Chancellor Schmidt and Signor Cossiga in the course of the next day or so.

I am sending copies of this minute to Mr. Walden (FCO) and Mr. Norbury (MOD).

AWW.

8 July 1980

TOP SECRET

g.

*These
sent to -
What signed
letter*

Are you content with these various documents?

You have seen the letter to President Carter (Annex A) before, and I have therefore had it typed for your signature. We need to get this off to Sir Nicholas Hammond tomorrow for him to hand over later in the week.

*tdh
7/21*

Ref. A02529

MR. WHITMORE

Polaris Successor

There are a number of documents which now need to be prepared in accordance with the decisions which Ministers have already taken.

2. At Annex A I attach a copy of the revised formal letter of request from the Prime Minister to President Carter. I should be grateful if you would arrange for this to be prepared in final form, signed by the Prime Minister and dated 10th July and returned to me so that I can arrange for it to be delivered on 11th July. At Annex B I attach a copy of the proposed reply from the President to the Prime Minister for convenience of reference.

3. At Annex C I enclose a proposed draft letter from the Prime Minister to President Giscard, Chancellor Schmidt and Prime Minister Cossiga. At Annex D I attach a proposed aide memoire which would both accompany the Prime Minister's letter at Annex C and be the main document which would be handed over to our other allies just before the formal announcement. At Annex E I attach a proposed draft statement for the Prime Minister to make on 17th July. The sentence in paragraph 3 in square brackets is dependent on the Prime Minister's agreement and the agreement of the United States Government that this supplementary exchange of correspondence should be published in the same publication as the main exchange between herself and President Carter. The final sentence in paragraph 6 in square brackets depends on the conclusions reached by OD on Tuesday, 8th July, when they discuss the Secretary of State for Defence's paper on the defence programme.

4. I need to inform Dr. Brzezinski of what we are proposing to say in the three documents at Annexes C, D and E, so that we can be sure that the Americans and ourselves speak with one voice to Parliament, to the Congress and to our allies. Before I do this, I should be grateful if you would let me know whether the Prime Minister is generally content with these drafts.

TOP SECRET



5. I am sending copies of this minute and attachments to the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary and the Secretary of State for Defence.

ROBERT ARMSTRONG

(approved by Sr. R. Armstrong
and signed on his behalf)

CONFIDENTIAL

7th July, 1980

TOP SECRET

REVISED DRAFT

TOP SECRET

United Kingdom text of draft letter from Prime Minister to the President

As you are aware the United Kingdom Government attaches great importance to the maintenance of a nuclear deterrent capability. It will be necessary to replace the present Polaris force in the early 1990s, and having reviewed the options, the Government has concluded that the Trident I weapon system best meets the need to maintain a viable nuclear deterrent capability into the 21st century. I write therefore to ask you whether the United States Government would be prepared, in continuation of the co-operation which has existed between our Governments in this field since the Polaris Sales Agreement of 6th April 1969, to supply on a continuing basis, Trident I missiles, equipment and supporting services, in a manner generally similar to that in which Polaris was supplied.

2. The United Kingdom Government would wish to purchase sufficient missiles, complete with multiple independently targettable re-entry vehicles and less only the warheads themselves, together with equipment and supporting services, on a continuing basis to introduce and maintain a force of 4 British submarines (or 5 if the United Kingdom Government so prefer), close co-ordination being maintained between the Executive Agencies of the two Governments in order to assure compatibility of equipment.

3. The successor to the Polaris force will be assigned to the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, like the Polaris force; and except where the United Kingdom Government may decide that supreme national interests are at stake, the successor force will be used for the purposes of international defence of the Western alliance in all circumstances. It is my understanding that co-operation in the modernisation of the United Kingdom nuclear deterrent in this way would be consistent with the present and prospective international obligations of both parties.

TOP SECRET

4. In particular, I would like to assure you that the United Kingdom Government continues to give whole-hearted support to the NATO Long-Term Defence Programme and to other strengthening of conventional forces. The United Kingdom Government has substantially increased its defence spending, in accordance with NATO's collective policy, and plans to make further such increases in the future in order to improve the effectiveness of its all-round contribution to Allied deterrence and defence. In this regard the objective of the United Kingdom Government is to take advantage of the economies made possible by the co-operation of the United States in making the Trident I missile system available in order to reinforce its efforts to upgrade its conventional forces.

5. If the United States Government is prepared to meet this request, I hope that as the next step the United States Government will be prepared to receive technical and financial missions to pursue these matters, using the framework of the Polaris Sales Agreement where appropriate.

REVISED DRAFT

TOP SECRET

Draft letter from the President to the Prime Minister.

In reply to your letter of _____, I am pleased to confirm that the United States attaches significant importance to the nuclear deterrent capability of the United Kingdom and to close co-operation between our two Governments in maintaining and modernising that capability. To further that objective, the United States is prepared to supply the United Kingdom with Trident I missiles, equipment and supporting services, as you propose in your letter, subject to and in accordance with applicable United States law and procedures.

2. I view as important your statements that the Polaris successor force will be assigned to NATO and that your objective is to use the economies made possible by our co-operation to reinforce your efforts to upgrade your conventional forces. As you know, I regard the strengthening of NATO's conventional and nuclear forces as of highest priority for Western security.

3. I agree that, as the next step in implementing these agreed arrangements, our two Governments should initiate the technical and financial negotiations which you propose.

DRAFT

ANNEX G
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Copy No .. of .. copies

PROPOSED LETTER FROM THE PRIME MINISTER TO PRESIDENT GISCARD,
CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT AND PRIME MINISTER COSSIGA

As you know, we have been giving much thought in recent months to the question of a successor to our present Polaris force. I wanted personally to let you know that, after intensive deliberations, the Government has concluded that the best course is to replace Polaris in the early 1990s with the US Trident weapons system. I have therefore formally asked President Carter whether the United States Government would be prepared to supply Trident I missiles and equipment (including the MIRV capability) and supporting services on broadly the same basis as Polaris was supplied.

The size of the new force will be not less than four submarines. The option of a fifth boat will remain open for the time being, since it is not necessary to decide this yet. The submarines themselves, and the nuclear warheads, will be designed and manufactured in the United Kingdom.

Like Polaris, the successor force will be assigned to NATO. It will nevertheless, as now, be wholly owned by us and under our sole operational control.

I am convinced that this decision is not only in the best interests of the United Kingdom but in those of the Alliance as a whole, to whose security the United Kingdom's continuing possession of a strategic deterrent capability will remain a major contribution. The Trident force will, I believe, place us in the best possible

position to operate effectively well into the 21st century in whatever strategic environment we then face.

I should like to emphasise that we remain committed to the strengthening of our conventional forces, including the 3% real annual increase in our defence spending and support of the force improvements programmes already discussed in the Alliance.

that the Government will be able

I hope ^{to} announce a favourable response from President Carter to this request in the House of Commons in the afternoon of Thursday, 17 July. I attach particular importance to letting you know of our decision in advance of my announcement, but I would be grateful if, till then, you will regard this information as ~~most~~ confidential to yourself.

... I enclose a copy of a note which we shall be giving our other Allies just before the announcement.

--- I am sending a similar message today to [Chancellor Schmidt] [President Giscard d'Estaing] [I have sent similar messages to Chancellor Schmidt and President Giscard d'Estaing].

TOP SECRET

ANNEX D

COPY NO OF COPIES
PAGE 1 OF 4 PAGES

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DRAFT AIDE-MEMOIRE ON POLARIS SUCCESSOR FOR TRANSMISSION TO ALLIED GOVERNMENTS

Summary to the UK Polaris System.

Timing of Polaris Replacement

1. The United Kingdom Polaris strategic deterrent force came into operation in the late 1960s. A major improvement programme to maintain its effectiveness during the 1980s is now nearing completion. After that period, however, it will become increasingly difficult and expensive to maintain the operational capability of the force. Decisions therefore need to be taken now about a successor system to begin entering service in the early 1990s.

The Case for Trident

2. A wide range of possible options for a successor system has been examined in detail. Account has been taken of the need for a successor force to remain effective well into the 21st century, the timescale for acquisition, and the probable cost. Her Majesty's Government has decided that the operational requirement would best be met by purchase of the Trident I MIRV missile system from the United States, to be equipped with warheads developed and produced in the United Kingdom and carried aboard British-built nuclear submarines.

3. The choice of Trident reflects the need to deploy a force able to provide a degree of insurance against Soviet strategic defences in the longer term. The long range of Trident I and its MIRV capability will provide such an insurance against further advance in Soviet anti-submarine and anti-missile capabilities. Trident is thus related to the situation in the 1990s and beyond, just as Polaris (and the Chevaline programme to

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improve Polaris) were intended to cope with the existing and foreseen strategic environments of the 1970s and the 1980s.

Anglo-US Cooperation

4. The United States Government's agreement to this request for cooperation in the modernisation of the United Kingdom force will continue the long-standing US/UK strategic cooperation which dates back to World War II and has traditionally involved the sharing of highly advanced strategic technology.

Contribution to NATO

5. The new Trident force will be assigned to NATO and dedicated to SACEUR targets, just as the Polaris force is now. Her Majesty's Government regards the maintenance of a viable and credible independent strategic deterrent as a vital element of its contribution to NATO. The decision to replace the Polaris force represents a reaffirmation of the strength of the United Kingdom commitment to the Alliance.

6. The United Kingdom will, as with Polaris, have full operational control over the new force. This independent centre of decision-making increases the Alliance's general deterrent capability, ^{thus} ~~this~~ strengthening strategic stability and collective security.

Size of the Force

7. The United Kingdom Trident force is initially planned as four submarines each carrying sixteen missiles, as with the present Polaris force. A fifth submarine would provide additional insurance against improved Soviet defensive capabilities and against accident or major equipment failure, but would add to the cost. A decision on a fifth

submarine is not needed until 1982/83 and this option will therefore be kept under review until then.

SALT II

8. The United States made clear in the negotiations that the SALT II Agreements did not preclude cooperation with its allies, including cooperation in modernisation. When the United States position about cooperation with its allies was explained during the SALT II negotiations, the Soviet Union was clearly aware that this applied particularly to US/UK cooperation, given the intensive and long-established pattern of cooperation between the United States and the United Kingdom.

SALT III

9. The Soviet Union will doubtless continue to demand the inclusion of non-United States strategic systems. Similar Soviet efforts in SALT I and II were successfully resisted by the United States. The proposed new force does not provide any new justification for such a demand. The United Kingdom will only be keeping pace with the technological improvement and expansion of Soviet systems.

10. By the mid-1990s the United Kingdom Trident force will represent roughly the same proportion of Soviet strategic forces (assuming these are limited to SALT II levels) as the Polaris force did of the equivalent Soviet forces when it became fully operational in 1970. Indeed in absolute terms the gap between Soviet and United Kingdom warhead numbers will be very much greater in the 1990s than in 1970.

Theatre Nuclear Force Modernisation

11. Britain's strategic SLBM force lies clearly outside the category of those United States and Soviet long-range land-based theatre nuclear forces about whose limitation the United States has repeatedly invited the Soviet Union to negotiate.

12. The replacement of the UK Polaris force in the 1990s is quite separate from, though eventually complementary to, the planned programme to modernise in the 1980s the Alliance's land-based long-range theatre nuclear forces. The programme agreed last December is designed to meet a gap now developing in the Alliance's capabilities for selective employment of nuclear weapons against targets on Soviet territory in a situation short of general nuclear release. Quite apart from the difference in timescale, considerations of accuracy, warhead numbers and yields make submarine-launched ballistic missiles not well suited for the selective employment role.

Conventional Forces

13. Her Majesty's Government remain determined to maintain and strengthen the United Kingdom's conventional defence effort in accordance with undertakings already given in the Alliance. The economies made possible by cooperation with the United States, compared with the financial burden which would be associated with an independent modernisation programme, will make an important contribution to this process.

1. With permission, Mr Speaker, I should like to make a statement on the eventual replacement of the Polaris force which now provides Britain's strategic nuclear deterrent capability.

2. As the House knows, the Government regards the maintenance of such a capability as an essential element in the defence effort we undertake for our own and Western security. My right hon Friend the Secretary of State for Defence has made clear the reasons for this policy, and the House has had several opportunities to debate it.

3. We have studied at considerable length possible systems to replace Polaris, and we have concluded that the best choice is the Trident submarine-launched ballistic missile system developed by the United States. President Carter has indicated United States support for British retention of a strategic nuclear capability, and willingness to make Trident available. An exchange of letters between him and myself [with a supplementary exchange between the Defence Secretary and the US Secretary for Defense] is published today as a White Paper. The agreement we have reached is broadly similar to the 1962 Nassau Agreement under which we acquired Polaris. We shall design and build our own submarines and nuclear warheads and buy the Trident missile system. Once bought it will be entirely in our ownership and operational control, but we shall commit the whole force to NATO in the same way as the Polaris force.

4. The new force will enter service in the early 1990s. We have taken no final decision on whether it should comprise four boats or five;


we shall decide this in about two years time in the light of all the relevant factors.

5. As he promised, my rt hon Friend the Defence Secretary is today publishing a memorandum explaining our reasons for choosing Trident. This is a very full account, and I am sure the House will wish to study it.

6. We remain determined to strengthen our all-round defence capability to help safeguard our security. It is our firm resolve to improve our conventional forces in parallel with modernising our nuclear forces. My rt. hon Friend's announcement on Tuesday of the acquisition of a new tank and a new mechanised combat vehicle illustrate this resolve. 7

7. The decision I have announced is one of cardinal importance, as the House will recognise. The Government regard it as a new and essential affirmation of our national commitment to security and freedom and to co-operate with our allies under the North Atlantic Treaty.

We shall be happy to expound and debate it fully; and we are confident that it will have the general support of this House and of our people.



SECRET

cc TH Ingham 21



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Principal Private Secretary

7 July 1980

POLARIS SUCCESSOR

The Prime Minister has been giving further thought to the announcement of the Government's decision on the replacement of Polaris and she has concluded that the statement in the House should be made by Mr. Pym rather than by herself. Perhaps you could let me know if your Secretary of State sees any difficulty about this.

I am sending a copy of this letter to David Wright (Cabinet Office).

G. A. WHITMORE

B.M. Norbury, Esq.,
Ministry of Defence.

SECRET

9B



MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

Main Building, Whitehall, London SW1A 2HB

Telephone (Direct Dialling) 01-218 2135

(Switchboard) 01-218 9000

From: Deputy Under Secretary of State (Policy and Programmes)

M E Quinlan

DUS(P) 359/80

C A Whitmore, Esq,
No 10 Downing Street,
Whitehall,
London.

7 July 1980

Dear Sir,

Could I trouble you with an unorthodox notion on a minor matter?

The (in some ways) remarkable smoothness with which the basic US policy decision on a Polaris successor was secured, and with which the substantive business has since proceeded, in my judgment owes a considerable amount to the fact that the key nuclear policy posts in the Pentagon have been occupied by two capable and strongly Anglophile individuals who both believe very strongly in the UK's staying in the business - Walter Slocombe and his Special Assistant, Colonel Richard L Klass. It has been very much Klass's special project; and it will be effectively his last Defence assignment, since severely deteriorating eyesight is forcing him this summer to end in his early forties a highly promising USAF career. It occurs to me to wonder whether the Prime Minister might be persuaded to send him a brief signed note on 17 July. (There is no risk that such an action would be regarded on the US side as a breach of protocol.) I attach a sketch of the sort of thing I have in mind.

An off-beat idea, I know; and I shall quite understand if you judge that this is out of proportion, or simply not in the Prime Minister's style.

*Yours ever,
Michael*

D R A F T

PERSONAL

Colonel Richard L. Klass, USAF,
Department of Defense,
Washington D.C. 20301,
USA.

President Carter and I have today announced the agreement on the provision of the Trident system for the modernisation of the British strategic nuclear deterrent force. I am aware of the highly constructive role you personally have played in helping forward this historic decision in the interests of Western security; and I send you my thanks and good wishes.

Original returned to
Press Office

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MR WHITMORE

POLARIS

Please see the Prime Minister's comment
on the attached.

2. Could you please advise?



B INGHAM

3 July 1980.

Original returned to *AD*
Press Office.

PRIME MINISTER

Polaris Successor - Announcement

I have discussed the presentation of this policy development with Ministry of Defence today and would like to secure your agreement to our recommendations. These are governed by the need to make the best use of the very limited time that will be available for the briefing of the media and radio and TV interviews.

The recommendations, based on the assumption that you will make the statement to the House, are:

- Defence correspondents to be invited to MOD at 3.30 to receive copies of your statement and the supporting memorandum and to be given an opportunity, without the option of leaving, of reading those documents and listening to a feed from the House of your statement and questioning; this would be followed by an unattributable briefing from the Permanent Secretary and supporting officials;
- the Secretary of State for Defence to record interviews for BBC Radio and TV, ITN and IRN between the conclusion of your statement and the main early evening news bulletins, i.e. between 5 and 6 p.m;
- the Secretary of State for Defence to brief the Lobby, if it can be so arranged, say, for half an hour from 6 p.m. to ensure that they get the right political steer;
- the interested and expert resident foreign press to be briefed, as required and according to the judgment of the Ministry of Defence, by the Ministry;

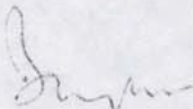
Do I have to make the statement?

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- the Ministry of Defence to organise, as required and according to its judgment, supplementary briefings on subsequent days for resident foreign journalists.

Are you content with these provisional arrangements and, more especially, for the Secretary of State for Defence to talk on radio and TV on the evening of the announcement? I personally see no alternative, given the time constraints, to Mr. Pym taking the full brunt of radio and TV if we are properly to explain the announcement to the nation.



B. INGHAM

2 July, 1980

SECRET



10 DOWNING STREET

Defence PO vs
be Mr Ingham
Mr Sanders

From the Principal Private Secretary

27 June 1980

Polaris Successor

Thank you for your letter of 23 June about the public presentation of the decision on a successor to Polaris.

Bernard Ingham and I think that it would be a very good idea if Ian McDonald were to come over here for a talk, as you suggest. Bernard's office will be in touch with him to arrange a time. I agree that this will mean that the circle of knowledge about the decision will have to be extended to him.

You also touched in your letter on the question of the statement that will have to be made in the House. I think that it would be a very good thing if you could put in hand the preparation of a draft.

G A. WHITMORE

B.M. Norbury, Esq.,
Ministry of Defence.

SECRET AND PERSONAL

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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

27 June 1980

Dear Brian,

Polaris Successor: Memorandum

The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary has seen the Prime Minister's comments on the Memorandum on the Polaris Successor attached to Mr Pym's minute of 10 June and your letter to John Wiggins of 19 June as well as other comments from colleagues on MISC 7.

Lord Carrington agrees with Mr Pym that there is a good case for making the memorandum as informative and detailed as security considerations allow. It is likely to gain wide readership abroad among informed opinion (eg in Congress and journalists) and a full presentation of the case for HMG's decision is most likely to steer opinion and to avoid misconceptions, particularly among our Allies. It might also pre-empt criticism based on an inadequate knowledge or understanding of all the factors involved.

I am sending copies of this letter to Clive Whitmore (No 10), John Chilcot (Home Office), David Wright (Cabinet Office) and John Wiggins (Treasury).

John Wiggins

8-24

(G G H Walden)
 Private Secretary

B M Norbury Esq
 Private Secretary to the Secretary of
 State for Defence
 Ministry of Defence
 Main Building
 Whitehall
 LONDON

TOP SECRET

COPY NO. 2
OF 2 COPIES



File Defence 17

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Principal Private Secretary

SIR ROBERT ARMSTRONG

I have shown the Prime Minister your minute A02430 of 24 June, 1980 about the timetable for telling President Giscard and Chancellor Schmidt about the decision on the successor to Polaris.

She agrees with the procedure and timing proposed in paragraph 5 of your minute.

She has also said that she would be delighted to entertain Dr Brzezinski if he comes to London on 16 July as the President's Emissary.

C. A. WHITMORE

26 June, 1980

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16.



Prime Minister.

TOP SECRET

MR. WHITMORE

Agree to procedure and timing proposed at X below?
Yes
You are free on 16th July. What you like to give De Broygnot's letter?
Yes.
16th 25th.

We have run into a problem on the timetable for telling President Giscard and Chancellor Schmidt about the decision on the Polaris successor.

2. You will remember that the present timetable is to deliver the Prime Minister's letter to the President on 11th July, to tell President Giscard and Chancellor Schmidt on 15th July, and to tell Signor Cossiga on 16th July. The Cabinet would be informed on 17th July, the Prime Minister would make a statement in the House of Commons that afternoon.

3. The difficulty arises from the fact that Chancellor Schmidt goes on holiday on 14th July, and will no doubt be away from Bonn on 12th-13th July (Saturday and Sunday). On the other hand President Giscard will be in Germany from 7th to 12th July for one of the regular series of Franco/German Summits.

4. I do not think that we can tell the Germans after Chancellor Schmidt has gone on holiday. It therefore looks as if we shall have to tell both him and President Giscard on Friday, 11th July. This is disadvantageous in that it prolongs the period between telling them and the date of the announcement. But I think that is a risk we have to take: we cannot bring the date of the announcement forward without creating a long period of delay between telling the Cabinet and the Prime Minister's public announcement.

X | 5. I therefore propose that we should send an Emissary to Bonn on Friday, 11th July; and that that Emissary should be empowered to inform the Personal Representatives of President Giscard and Chancellor Schmidt, probably M. Wahl and Herr von Staden, for transmission to the President and Chancellor only. They would be asked to keep the information in strictest confidence until the date of the announcement. If the Prime Minister is content with this arrangement, I shall need to discuss it with the White House.

6. This change need not affect the rest of the timetable, including the arrangements for the President's reply to the Prime Minister to be delivered in London on 16th July.



TOP SECRET

7. I gather that Dr. Brzezinski is thinking of himself acting as the President's Emissary to London. No doubt the Prime Minister would wish to see him herself and to receive the President's reply. I should be glad to know whether the Prime Minister wishes to entertain him, or whether she is content for me to do so. If she does not want to do so, I shall be very ready to offer him lunch or dinner, and (if he would like that) to arrange a small lunch party for him.

*Will be delighted
to entertain him.
RA*

(Robert Armstrong)

24th July 1980



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Principal Private Secretary

24 June 1980

POLARIS SUCCESSOR: MEMORANDUM

Thank you for sending me a copy of your letter of 19 June 1980 to John Wiggins about the draft memorandum on the successor to Polaris.

I have shown this to the Prime Minister, and she is content to leave the question of the length of the memorandum to Mr. Pym's judgement.

I am sending copies of this letter to John Chilcot (Home Office), George Walden (FCO), John Wiggins (HM Treasury) and David Wright (Cabinet Office).

C. A. WHITMORE

Brian Norbury, Esq.,
Ministry of Defence.



MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
MAIN BUILDING WHITEHALL LONDON SW1
Telephone 01-~~930 7622~~ 2111/3

MO 18/1/1

23rd June 1980

Dear Clive,

POLARIS SUCCESSOR

My Secretary of State has given further thought to the public presentation of a decision on a successor to Polaris. So far, I think, Ministers have not got much further than establishing that there should be an oral Parliamentary Statement (for which I would be happy to furnish a draft if required) and a publication by MOD of an accompanying Departmental memorandum.

A number of questions arise, such as whether there should be an on or off the record briefing of the media, and if so by whom, and whether there should be some more written material prepared (eg some sort of "Daily Mail" counterpart to the "Daily Telegraph" style of the Departmental memorandum).

I would like to suggest, if you think that it might be a useful way of proceeding, that Ian McDonald, the Deputy Chief of Public Relations here, should come across to talk to Bernard Ingham; for him to do that and for further steps to be taken here to help in setting up suitable PR arrangements, the circle of knowledge within this Department on the nature of, and timetable for, a decision would need to be extended to him, but no further.

*Yours ever,
Brian*

(B M NORBURY)

C A Whitmore Esq



hals
Clive - on return
Defence
R. in
14

Treasury Chambers, Parliament Street, SW1P 3AG
01-233 3000

23 June 1980

B.M. Norbury Esq.
Private Secretary
Ministry of Defence

Dr. Orr,

POLARIS SUCCESSOR: MEMORANDUM

Thank you for your letter of 19th June. I am writing to confirm that the Chancellor is content with the modifications to the memorandum set out in your letter to John Wiggins of 19th June.

I am copying this letter to Clive Whitmore, John Chilcot, George Walden and David Wright.

Yr. wr,

ME

M.A. HALL
Private Secretary



SECRET

AND PERSONAL

13

HOME OFFICE

QUEEN ANNE'S GATE LONDON SW1H 9AT

23 June 1980

(A.
jm
2m

Dear Sir

POLARIS SUCCESSOR

The Home Secretary has considered the points made in your letter of 19 June to John Wiggins (MO 18/1/1). In the light of the points you make in the last substantive paragraph about the length of the memorandum, the Home Secretary is entirely content for the Secretary of State for Defence to proceed as he judges best.

I am sending copies of this letter to Clive Whitmore, John Wiggins, George Walden and David Wright.

Sam,
Steph

(S W BOYS SMITH)

B M Norbury Esq

SECRET

AND PERSONAL

TOP SECRET

APPENDIX TO ANNEX G
TO PMVZ(80) 17.a

PRIME MINISTER'S MEETING WITH PRESIDENT CARTER - JUNE 1980

Brief by the Cabinet Office

*Removed from PM's briefing
Economic Summit Venice
June 1980.*

POINTS TO MAKE

Polaris Replacement

1. Glad our representatives have now reached full agreement on arrangements for formal Exchange of Letters between us in mid-July.
2. Security co-operation at its best. A very special element in Anglo-American relations.

ESSENTIAL FACTS

1. Discussed with President Carter in Washington on 17 December 1979, at restricted meeting with only Lord Carrington, Mr Vance, Dr Brzezinski and Sir Robert Armstrong present. President promised positive response to British request but did not want it made until SALT II ratification complete.
2. Following postponement of SALT II ratification because of Afghanistan, protracted negotiations took place between White House and Cabinet Office. They have just resulted in full agreement on all details in a formal Exchange of Letters. Outline timetable as follows:

Friday 11 July	Prime Minister's formal letter delivered to President Carter by Sir N Henderson
Tuesday 15 July	President Giscard and Chancellor Schmidt informed in confidence
Wednesday 16 July	President Carter's formal reply delivered to the Prime Minister by Special Emissary (possibly Dr Brzezinski)
Thursday 17 July	Publication

TOP SECRET

3. The White House have attached great importance to arrangements for briefing other Allies before the announcement. They are particularly concerned about Chancellor Schmidt's reaction, which they think will be unsympathetic. They are worried that he may see the Anglo-American deal as a reason for going back on his commitment to TNF modernisation.

4. More generally, the White House expect the President to be criticised over the Anglo-American deal on the grounds (a) that it damages detente and (b) that it will divert British defence expenditure away from conventional forces. But they do not anticipate any trouble over Congressional ratification, which will be complete by the end of September.

5. The main American motive for helping us on Polaris replacement is probably the fear that we would otherwise follow the French example of going it alone at much greater expense, which would imply really serious weakening of our conventional effort.

20 June 1980



MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
MAIN BUILDING WHITEHALL LONDON SW1

Telephone 01-~~555 2902~~ 218 2111/3

MO 18/1/1

Prime Minister.

19th June 1980

To see if/then (no need
to read the rest).

Agree that the length
of the memorandum is
a matter to leave to Mr
Pym's judgement in the
end? John 20th

Dear John

POLARIS SUCCESSOR: MEMORANDUM

Clive Whitmore's letter to me of 17th June recorded the Prime Minister's request that detailed points raised on the draft circulated with my Secretary of State's minute of 10th June be pursued direct between the Ministers concerned.

Mr Pym accepts the amendment proposed in paragraph 3 of the Chancellor's minute of 16th June. On the point in the Chancellor's paragraph 4a it remains the professional view of our experts, which we should be happy to explain further if so desired, that two boats at sea rather than one must improve the margin of insurance against Soviet ASW improvements, save in the extreme and improbable case of a technical breakthrough so dramatic that the ocean became effectively transparent over long distances. My Secretary of State thinks that complete deletion of the point would distort the presentation. He is, however, content that, in order to meet the Chancellor's concern, it should be alluded to much more briefly, by condensing the third-last and second-last sentences of paragraph 59 as follows:

"A fifth boat would also offer a margin of insurance against possible risks, such as marked relative improvement in Soviet ASW or losing a boat by accident or major unforeseen defect."

Mr Pym would be grateful to know whether this is acceptable to Sir Geoffrey Howe.

John Wiggins Esq



On the Chancellor's paragraph 4b, my Secretary of State imagines that the Chancellor would agree that the inclusion of the final sentence of paragraph 71 is essentially a matter of taste. Its substance is clearly implicit in the decision the Government would be announcing, and Mr Pym used very similar words in the House on 24th January (Hansard, Column 684). It is addressed to what may well be the main point of attack (the anti-nuclear lobby apart) and Mr Pym would prefer to keep it.

Mr Pym is content to accept Lord Carrington's amendments, although he has noted the Prime Minister's observation, in which he concurs, about French sensitivity.

X

On the general point about the memorandum's length Mr Pym has considered very carefully the point made by the Home Secretary in his minute of 11th June, on which the Chancellor has commented. We shall certainly seek to condense it if the drafting can be tightened. But Mr Pym feels strongly that any substantial thinning-out of the substance would be ill-advised. The Government has a good case to make, and it seems much better to make it early and in a manner of the Government's choosing than have it wrung out piecemeal by the intensive questioning that would certainly follow a less open memorandum. In particular, the House of Commons Defence Committee is already concentrating on the subject, and it should be much easier to stand on a thorough memorandum than on a shorter one which we should be sharply pressed to supplement later. Mr Pym hopes that, in the light of this, his colleagues will accept the present general approach.

Could I please have a very early reply?

I am sending copies of this letter to Clive Whitmore (No 10), John Chilcot (Home Office, George Walden (FCO) and David Wright (Cabinet Office).

*Yours most
Brian Norbury*
(B M NORBURY)



CABINET OFFICE

With the compliments of
The Private Secretary to the
Secretary of the Cabinet

C. A. Whitmore, Esq

70 Whitehall, London SW1A 2AS
Telephone 01-233 3000



Defence

CABINET OFFICE

70 Whitehall, London SW1A 2AS Telephone 01-233 8319

From the Secretary of the Cabinet: Sir Robert Armstrong KCB, CVO

Ref: A02376

18th June 1980

M
WMISC 7(80) 2

Thank you for your letter of 16th June about the above Note by the Secretaries.

We have no objection to the change you propose to sub-paragraph 3 of the draft letter in the Annex to the paper. But I take it that you were referring to the letter from the United States Secretary for Defense (where the reference to Sir Frank Cooper's letter to Ambassador Komer occurs) and not to the letter which Mr. Pym will be writing.

I am sending copies of this letter to Clive Whitmore (No. 10) and to George Walden (FCO).

D. J. WRIGHT

(D. J. Wright)

B. M. Norbury, Esq

TOP SECRET

Defence

10



COPY NO. 6 OF 6 COPIES

NB. Exh. copy sent MOD 5.45pm 18/6/80

10 DOWNING STREET *due to non-receipt of original*

From the Principal Private Secretary

17 June 1980

Dear Dani,

ANGLO-AMERICAN NEGOTIATIONS ON POLARIS REPLACEMENT

The Prime Minister has considered the note by the Secretaries on the Anglo-American Negotiations on Polaris Replacement (MISC 7(80)2) and she is content with the recommendations in paragraph 9a-c.

As regards the recommendation in paragraph 9d., you will have seen from Michael Alexander's letter of today's date to George Walden that the Prime Minister is also content with the result of the discussions with the Americans on Diego Garcia. There is therefore no need to hold the meeting of MISC 7 which had been provisionally arranged for 18 June.

I am sending copies of this letter to John Chilcot (Home Office), George Walden (FCO), John Wiggins (Treasury) and Brian Norbury (Ministry of Defence).

Yours,

Alan Turing.

David Wright, Esq.,
Cabinet Office.

TOP SECRET

TOP SECRET

9



COPY NO. 6 OF 6 COPIES

10 DOWNING STREET

*NS Extra copy sent HQD 5.45 pm 16/6/80
due to non receipt of original*

From the Principal Private Secretary

17 June 1980

Dear Bossin,

POLARIS SUCCESSOR: MEMORANDUM

The Prime Minister has seen your Secretary of State's minute MO 18/1/1 of 10 June 1980, together with the draft memorandum on the choice of a system to succeed Polaris. She has also seen the Home Secretary's minute of 11 June, the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary's minute of 12 June and the Chancellor of the Exchequer's minute of 16 June.

The Prime Minister agrees in principle with Mr. Pym's wish to publish a reasoned account of the Government's decision, though she thinks that it would be useful if he could consider whether some of the detail could be left out, as the Home Secretary and the Chancellor of the Exchequer have suggested. She would be grateful if the Defence Secretary would settle directly with the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary and the Chancellor of the Exchequer the drafting points which they have both raised.

As regards the feelings of the French, however, she has commented that we need not feel too sensitive about not consulting them, since President Giscard did not respond when the Prime Minister raised with him the subject of Anglo-French nuclear cooperation when he was here at the end of last year.

I am sending copies of this letter to John Chilcot (Home Office), George Walden (FCO), John Wiggins (Treasury) and David Wright (Cabinet Office).

Yours now,

John Wiggins

B.M. Norbury, Esq.,
Ministry of Defence.

TOP SECRET

TOP SECRET

TOP SECRET

Copy No 2 of 5 copies 8

Page 1 of 2 pages



MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

MAIN BUILDING WHITEHALL LONDON SW1

Telephone 01-~~XXXXXX~~ 218 2111/3

MO 18/1/1

r(7)/6
16th June 1980

Dear David,

ML
17m

MISC 7(80)2

I have already advised the Cabinet Office that the Secretary of State is content with the recommendations in the above Note and would not, therefore, wish a meeting of MISC 7 to be arranged.

Mr Pym has, however, one point on the draft at Annex A to the Note which is that he would prefer sub paragraph 3 in the draft for him to write to be abbreviated so as to remove the reference to Sir Frank Cooper's letter to Mr Komer. The sub paragraph would thus read as at Annex to this letter. Unless I am notified to the contrary I will assume that no objection is seen to this.

I am sending copies of this letter to Clive Whitmore (No 10) and George Walden (FCO).

Yours ever,
Brian

(B M NORBURY)

D J Wright Esq

TOP SECRET

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TOP SECRET

Page 2 of 2 pages

TOP SECRET

(3) In addition, the United Kingdom agrees that waiver by the United States of R and D recoupment in excess of that covered by the PSA formula will fully satisfy the requirement that the USG give defense assistance of corresponding value to the UK defense budget in return for the UK manning of Rapier air defence of USAF bases in the UK.

TOP SECRET

TOP SECRET

Prime Minister

7

Seen by the Prime Minister who noted X/ approach.



17vi

Treasury Chambers, Parliament Street
01-233 3000

To see.

You have already agreed that :-
(i) Mr Pym should publish a full memorandum, though with some of the detail cut out, if possible.
(ii) Mr Pym should settle with his colleagues any detailed comments they may wish.

17vi

PRIME MINISTER

POLARIS SUCCESSOR: MEMORANDUM

I have read with interest the draft Memorandum attached to Francis Pym's minute of 10th June.

2. Like Willie Whitelaw, I am inclined to wonder whether it is really wise to say quite so much. We would expose a lot of flank. On the other hand, I recognise that Francis Pym is committed to publishing some account of the basis for our decisions, and to say too little would be counter-productive.

3. The estimate (paragraph 66) of the total capital cost of a four boat force at around £4/4½ billion at today's prices is incorrect. I understand that it is based on the MOD estimates contained in the report submitted with Sir Robert Armstrong's minute of 29th October, but these estimates were at September 1979 prices. I believe that MOD officials accept that the reference in the Memorandum should now be to "£4½/5 billion".

4. I have comments on the following two points of detail:-

(a) In general, I believe that the text fairly reflects how we decided to leave the issue of "four boats or five". But paragraph 59 is not wholly neutral on the issue, and I myself would prefer that the first half of its penultimate sentence be deleted. The argument that the fifth boat would be a useful hedge against improving Soviet anti-submarine warfare capabilities is one with which I have all along had some difficulty.



(b) Impact on conventional capabilities. I suspect that many readers would feel that the concluding passages protest too much. Might it not be as well to omit the last sentence of paragraph 70?

5. I am sending copies of this minute to our colleagues in MISC 7, and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

(G.H.)

16 June, 1980

Ref: B05970

COPY NO / OF 5 COPIES

PRIME MINISTER

c Sir Robert Armstrong

After will S 2 of French Defence's That does not mean

What 2 say under he need ?

Contract with the recommendations paragraph 9 a - c of the paper or page A (MISC 7 (80) 2)?

We shall have to wait until early next year for a submission from Lord Carrington on Diego Garcia (paragraph 9 d).

from: Minister.

Anglo-American Negotiations on Polaris Replacement
(MISC 7(80) 2)

13 vi

This Note reports the essential points which emerged from negotiations at the White House which with the help of the relevant Ministry of Defence and Foreign and Commonwealth Office officials I conducted on 10th and 11th June.

2. Of the four points left outstanding after the 2nd June meeting of MISC 7, R and D had already been settled between Dr Brown and yourself; all we had to do was agree on a form of words and establish that ^{when} the R and D deal becomes public ~~and that~~ the Administration will make equally public their intention to purchase Rapiers (as the Americans pointed out to me, our agreement to man United States Rapiers at our expense would not be worth much to them if they were after all to fail to buy any). Timetable is discussed below. On financial assurances the Americans were pretty forthcoming, as foreshadowed by Mr Aaron in Paris on 4th June; Treasury officials agree that we have now secured everything we could reasonably want under this head in advance of the detailed negotiations which must follow publication of your Exchange of Letters with the President, and they are so advising the Chancellor of the Exchequer. On the double link with the Diego Garcia negotiations, we should know later tonight whether our team in Washington have (as expected) been able to reach satisfactory agreement with the Americans on new rules for usage of the island, on the basis of the revised instructions which you and Lord Carrington approved on your way to Venice. Provided that this agreement is acceptable to Lord Carrington (who is the Minister directly responsible for the Diego Garcia negotiations), to Mr Pym and to you yourself, we shall be in a position to tell the Americans that the Diego Garcia deal is approved - which we shall of course only do if we are also ready to say snap on the Polaris replacement deal.

3. On the latter, the only remaining difficulty is over timetable. As you will see, the suggested publication day is now 17th July. This is tiresomely later than we had hoped. The reasons for it are fortuitous but convincing.



It was pretty clear during my negotiations that the Americans do genuinely want to get this issue settled and are not just stringing us along (although we cannot wholly discount the danger that some major twist in world events could panic them into seeking even further delay - which is of course a good reason for getting them publicly committed as soon as possible). Mr Pym, who was consulted yesterday, agrees that 17th July should be accepted. So do Lord Carrington's officials; and we should know fairly early on 16th June whether he too agrees. There does not in practice seem to be much alternative.

4. Procedure If you are content with the proposals in MISC 7(80) 2, and if agreement on Diego Garcia is also reached and approved, I will arrange for the White House to be so informed. Negotiations will then be complete. We were able to reach satisfactory agreement with the Americans this week on a number of detailed points of procedure; eg the President's letter on Special Nuclear Materials, and a list of Questions and Answers for use in briefing allies and the public. There will of course be other details to attend to over the next month; eg showing them Mr Pym's memorandum when it is agreed, getting a sight of the draft of the President's message to Congress, etc. But we shall not need to agree such texts with each other; it will merely be a matter of comparing notes, to ensure that we do not accidentally create openings for wedge-driving.

13th June 1980

R L WADE-GERY

5

Ref: B05968

Do we really need to give as much detail in our speeches & documents?

Prime Minister.

Agree proposals in paragraph 6?

PRIME MINISTER

If not, we will arrange a meeting of MISC 7 to discuss the key memorandum.

c Sir Robert Armstrong

Polaris Successor: Memorandum

*MW
13vi*

Play 'A'

In accordance with the conclusions reached at the meeting of MISC 7 on Monday, 2nd June, the Defence Secretary sent you a minute on 10th June with which he circulated to MISC 7 members a draft of the memorandum he proposes to publish when the Polaris successor decision is announced.

2. You will recall that at MISC 7 it was agreed, at the Chancellor of the Exchequer's suggestion, that this memorandum should not be shown in draft to the Americans until after negotiations on the broad financial arrangements had taken place. Those negotiations took place during my recent visit to Washington and their satisfactory outcome has been reported in MISC 7(80) 2. But the slightly slower timetable for the Exchange of Letters, which MISC 7(80) 2 also reports, means that we no longer need to show the draft of Mr Pym's paper to the Americans as early as 16th June (when there would have been a convenient opportunity in the margin of the 7 power meeting in Rome on political preparations for Venice). This gives us time to resolve the points raised by the Home Secretary and the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary in their minutes of 11th and 12th June. The Chancellor of the Exchequer may also be commenting, though not before the weekend.

*Play 'B'
Play 'C'*

3. The Defence Secretary has publicly committed himself in the House of Commons to publishing a memorandum in explanation of the Government's decision. He envisages that the memorandum will provide the Government's best answer to the inevitable complaints about the decision being taken without full preliminary public debate. The case for publishing a memorandum of some kind is therefore strong. But Mr Whitelaw questions whether it need go into as much detail as Mr Pym suggests. Sir Geoffrey Howe may make the same point. Mr Pym's view on this is that the Government's case is well based on coherent analysis; and that they will therefore gain politically by exposing it as fully as possible. You will probably wish to support him, since it is he who will carry the main burden of the public debate and since neither Mr Whitelaw nor Sir Geoffrey Howe seem to feel strongly on the point.



4. Sir Geoffrey Howe may wish to comment on one or two points of detail in the costs section (paragraphs 66-71). If so, Mr Pym should have no difficulty in redrafting to meet him. Treasury officials are advising him against commenting at all, either on this section or on the general point raised by Mr Whitelaw.

See Pym 'c'

5. Lord Carrington is content with the memorandum as it stands, subject to two amendments designed to improve its international impact. He suggests a specific reference to the forthcoming Review Conference on the Non-Proliferation Treaty, which would be tactful and should cause Mr Pym no problems. He also wants to use more generalised language to gloss over the presentationally awkward fact that we discarded the French option without consulting the French Government. There is no perfect answer to that one. We had good military and financial reasons for acting as we did. But we will undoubtedly have left the French feeling a little prickly on the subject, not least because we were obliged to be unresponsive to the tentative feelers which President Giscard and his Foreign and Defence Ministers put out last summer (cf in particular the Carrington - Francois Poncet conversation reported in Mr Walden's letter to Mr Alexander of 5th September). Subject to one minor modification Mr Pym is being advised to agree to Lord Carrington's redrafts. I recommend that you should do the same.

Pym 'd'

6. In sum I suggest you

- a. support Mr Pym on the principle of having a full memorandum;
- b. invite him to settle any detailed drafting points bilaterally with the colleague concerned.

Yes
Yes
out
—

No need to feel sensitive about not consulting the French. When Pres. Giscard was last here for holidays, I opened up the subject and for no response at all.
Mr.

R. L. Wade-Gery

R L WADE-GERY
R 13/6/80



PM/80/45

PRIME MINISTER

Polaris Successor: Memorandum

1. I am content with the memorandum enclosed with Francis Pym's minute of 10 June subject to two particular points.
2. I could not agree to the reference to the French option in paragraph 51. The French know full well that we have not seriously consulted them or even gone as far as suggesting preliminary discussions about their nuclear deterrent programme. Any implication therefore that serious consideration was given to the possibility of acquiring M-4 missiles is not only inaccurate but is bound to annoy the French. I think we should place this option in the broader European rather than in the narrower French context. This approach is not without its drawbacks. It risks giving rise to questions about European defence collaboration and European nuclear forces which we have no particular interest in stimulating. On the other hand it has, in my view, the over-riding advantage of not dealing specifically with the French and certainly not in terms which would only annoy them without any particular advantage to British interests.
3. I would therefore suggest a revised paragraph 51 to read:

'Another possibility, which was considered at an early stage, was a European solution. Collaboration in the European context could have been of considerable political significance. But it was soon apparent that this option would have a number of disadvantages, in particular related to cost. There is no likelihood that the United Kingdom could have acquired by this route an effective deterrent force at a cost, either in initial investment or in subsequent support, which

/could



could compare with that for the already proven Trident system, especially when account is taken of the economic advantages of our long-established arrangements for collaboration with the United States in nuclear forces. The Government therefore sees no adequate basis on which this option could have been pursued at this juncture.'

To be consistent, the reference to 'or collaboration with France' in paragraph 25 might read 'or some European solution'.

4. Secondly, we need to remain sensitive in referring to the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in paragraph 64 to the forthcoming NPT Review Conference this year. I suggest that we should add the following after the existing first sentence: 'The Review Conference of the Treaty will be held in August 1980 in which the United Kingdom intend to play a full part. The Government remains committed to pursue negotiations of effective measures of nuclear disarmament in accordance with Article VI of the Treaty. But nothing in the agreement requires the existing nuclear powers ... ' then as in the existing second sentence.

5. I am sending copies of this minute to our colleagues in MISC 7, and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

C
/

(CARRINGTON)

Foreign and Commonwealth Office
12 June 1980



CABINET OFFICE
 A 4203
 - 3 SEP 1979
 FILING INSTRUCTIONS
 FILE No. _____

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

1. Copy for me
 2. The Hastie Seal
 3. Enter

5 September 1979

2 Mr Walden - Geny
 1/9
 [Handwritten initials]

Dear Michael,

UK/FRENCH NUCLEAR COOPERATION

This subject arose during the Prime Minister's bilateral discussions with President Giscard d'Estaing in Paris on 5 June. Mrs Thatcher may therefore like to see the attached summary record of an informal discussion between Lord Carrington and the French Foreign Minister during the latter's brief visit to the UK on 3 September.

Our general impression from this conversation is that, while the French are still interested in examining any ideas for cooperation in this field, they are anxious not to appear to be demandeurs.

I am copying this letter to the private secretaries to the Secretary of State for Defence and the Secretary of the Cabinet.

[Handwritten signature]

(G G H Walden)

M O'D B Alexander Esq
 10 Downing Street

SECRET

UK/French Nuclear Co-operation

M. Francois-Poncet began the brief discussion of defence and disarmament over lunch yesterday by asking the Secretary of State about British intentions over the next generation of our strategic deterrent. Lord Carrington said that the Government were determined to replace our present deterrent, but that he did not think that any final decision on what successor system would be procured would be taken until next year. He also made it clear that, as he had explained to M. Debré on numerous occasions, our nuclear deterrent was entirely independent.

Following discussion of Dr Kissinger's latest statement about the unreliability of the American nuclear umbrella, which M. Francois-Poncet regarded as very serious, M. Francois-Poncet referred obliquely to the possibility of ideas being developed on Anglo-French nuclear co-operation. Prompted by Lord Carrington, he later explained that he wondered whether the UK was contemplating a "national solution" to the problem of a Polaris replacement. The UK had once had an independent launcher capacity. What had become of this? Could it be used for the next generation of missiles or would this be too expensive? Lord Carrington said that the Nassau deal by which we had secured Polaris had been the best bargain we had ever struck: and that we would not be averse to repeating this bargain if it were available. M. Francois-Poncet said that he quite understood this: and then sought to make it clear that the French Government were in no way pressing the idea of UK/French nuclear collaboration. The Lord Privy Seal interjected at this point that he did not think that Lord Carrington had meant to exclude such a possibility by stressing the advantages of the Nassau Agreement. The Secretary of State confirmed this and said that although co-operation on nuclear warheads might be difficult, there may be other possibilities, eg in the joint construction of submarines or other forms of launcher. It was noted that the possibility of nuclear co-operation had been discussed between Mr Pym and M. Bourges and that they might revert to the subject in the future.

At one point in the conversation, Lord Carrington explained that we were satisfied that the Salt II Agreement would not preclude transfer of American technology to the UK, although of course there was no guarantee that the Americans would be prepared to make such transfers when the time came. The French seemed surprised at the Secretary of State's certainty that Salt II would not inhibit transfers. Lord Carrington explained that we had received firm assurances from the Americans.

M. Francois-Poncet asked about Salt III. The Secretary of State said that Britain would try to stay out of this, so far as the British nuclear deterrent was concerned.

M. Francois-Poncet stressed the French determination to press ahead with the next generation of the French nuclear deterrent.

SECRET

*i.e. over 12 1/2 %
of the total budget*

He made light of the difficulties, saying that this would be well within France's economic means; and that, paradoxically, nuclear weapons were much cheaper than, eg paying large numbers of soldiers. 50% of the French defence budget was devoted to personnel, and only "a good quarter" of the other 50% to nuclear weapons. He claimed that by 1985 the French would have a new generation of submarine-launched missiles. Lord Carrington asked "mirved"? and M. Francois-Poncet replied "Yes". The development of this technology had been difficult, but the French had managed it. They were also developing a new generation of land-based missiles.

[Note: It was not absolutely clear that M. Francois-Poncet meant that the new French missiles would be mirved in the full sense, or merely that they would carry multiple warheads.]

SECRET



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SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DEFENCEPOLARIS SUCCESSOR

I have considered your memorandum of 10 June on the Polaris successor.

I am naturally not in a position to question any of the details. They seem to me to be set out very cogently. My only question is whether in these circumstances we are wise to expose as many of the details as you do. You may feel it is essential. I do, however, have the feeling that in this field it is wise to give as little information as is possible.

I am sending copies of this minute to the Prime Minister, the Foreign & Commonwealth Secretary, the Chancellor of the Exchequer and Sir Robert Armstrong.

11 June 1980



Waxens Box.

MO 18/1/1

Pink

PRIME MINISTERPOLARIS SUCCESSOR: MEMORANDUM

I propose that, as we earlier agreed, a Departmental memorandum should be published on the day of the announcement of a Polaris successor, giving a full account of the options considered for replacement, and the reasons for our choice.

/ 2. I now attach a draft of this memorandum which aims to present the arguments, and tackle likely criticisms, as fully and frankly as possible. I should be glad to know whether you, and our MISC 7 colleagues, are content with it, preferably by the end of this week so that it can (subject to a report from the British officials currently in Washington) be shown in confidence to the appropriate American authorities in reasonable time for them to have a look at it.

3. I suggest that in addition to this Departmental memorandum a White Paper should be published giving the exchange of letters you plan to have with the US President.

4. I am sending copies of the draft, with this minute, to the Home Secretary, the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary and the Chancellor of the Exchequer; and to Sir Robert Armstrong. I hope that they will forgive me for adding a rider about the extreme sensitivity of the draft.

Ministry of Defence

10th June 1980

DRAFTBRITAIN'S STRATEGIC NUCLEAR FORCE:
THE CHOICE OF A SYSTEM TO SUCCEED POLARIS

1. On 1980 the Government published the texts of letters exchanged between the Prime Minister and President Carter providing for the United Kingdom to buy from the United States the Trident weapon system, comprising Trident I ballistic missiles and supporting components for a force of British missile-launching submarines to replace the present Polaris-equipped force.

2. The new agreement is broadly similar to the 1962 Nassau Agreement (Cmnd 1915). Following that Agreement and the 1963 Polaris Sales Agreement the United States sold to the United Kingdom Polaris A.3 missiles and related equipment, together with continuing spares supply and maintenance support. The four nuclear-propelled submarines and the nuclear warheads for the missiles were designed and built in Britain. The Polaris force as a whole is entirely owned by the United Kingdom, and final decisions on its operational use rest with Her Majesty's Government alone; but it is committed to NATO and targetted in accordance with Alliance policy and strategic concepts under plans made by the Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR), save where Britain's supreme national interests otherwise require. The new Trident force will be acquired, committed and operated on the same basis.

3. The Government has already shown that it attaches much importance to helping wider understanding and more informed public discussion of major defence issues. The present issue is certainly a major one, one

of the biggest that can face any British Government in the defence field. I undertook to Parliament on 28 April 1980 that when the Government's decision was taken I would publish as full an account as security would allow of the reasons for the choice of system. This memorandum makes good that undertaking. A few of the relevant factors cannot be published, and certain detailed information is not ours to disclose. Most of the factors can however be given, and the Government believes they show clearly that the Trident system is the right choice for Britain.

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DEFENCE

I - THE POLICY BACKGROUND

4. The basic policy case for Britain's continuing to contribute to NATO an independent strategic nuclear force was explained by the Secretary of State for Defence on 24 January 1980 to the House of Commons, which after debate backed the Government's policy by 308 votes to 52. A further account was given in paragraphs 201-204 of the Statement on the Defence Estimates 1980 (Cmnd 7826-I). The principal features are set out below.

5. NATO's strategy is above all one of deterrence, in which the possession of nuclear weapons plays a key part. If we ever have to face using them, the strategy will have failed in its prime purpose. That purpose is to influence the calculations of a potential aggressor decisively before he embarks at all - even with non-nuclear weapons - on aggression against any NATO country. The prime test of defence measures, above all in the nuclear field, is whether they help to make it less likely that aggressive war might be launched. How they might affect the course of such a war if it once started is essentially secondary. In the world of modern technology nothing can make major war anything other than appallingly destructive, whether or not nuclear weapons are used. The overriding objective must be to continue to prevent its outbreak. The best way to ensure this is to put plainly before any possible aggressor a clear chain of immense risk, outweighing any advantage he could hope to gain. The possession of nuclear weapons is cardinal to this. They cannot be disinvented; the only realistic course now available is to harness their existence to the service of peace in freedom, as NATO has done successfully for over thirty years.

6. Britain was a wartime partner with the United States in the development of nuclear weapons. We conducted our first independent test in 1952, and have had a full operational capability with our own delivery systems since the first V-bombers entered service in 1955. Since the late 1960s the main capability has been provided by the Polaris force, the effectiveness of which for the second half of its life is about to be heightened by the improvement known as Chevaline, which was described to the House of Commons by the Secretary of State for Defence on 24 January 1980. The long term policy issue therefore is not whether to acquire a strategic nuclear deterrent capability, but whether to give it up in the 1990s after having possessed it, through the decisions of both Conservative and Labour Governments, for nearly forty years. This issue falls to be settled in circumstances much less favourable for Western security than when the V-force and Nassau decisions were taken - there is for example strategic nuclear parity between the superpowers and much stronger and more versatile Soviet non-nuclear capability than before, wielded moreover with the growing adventurism highlighted in Afghanistan. It would be strange to regard the curtailment of our deterrent insurance as timely and appropriate now.

7. Britain commits all its nuclear capability to NATO in conformity with concepts of collective deterrence worked out in the joint forum of the Nuclear Planning Group. The decisive consideration in favour of a British capability that is ultimately independent is the contribution it makes to NATO's strategy of deterrence and thus to our own national security.

8. The United States has massive nuclear striking power. It has repeatedly made clear its total commitment to help defend the integrity of its European Allies by whatever means are necessary, without exception. The Government has great confidence in the depth of resolve underlying the United States commitment. But deterrence is a matter of perception, and perception by a potential adversary. The central consideration is what that adversary may believe, not what we or our Allies believe; our deterrence has to influence possible calculations made by leaders whose attitudes and values may differ sharply from those of the West. The decision to use United States nuclear weapons in defence of Europe, with all the risk to the United States homeland this would entail, would be enormously grave. Particularly now that there is inter-continental nuclear parity, a Soviet leadership - perhaps much changed in character from today's, perhaps also operating amid the pressures of turbulent internal or external circumstances - might believe that at some point as a conflict developed the determination of the United States could waver. The presence of enormous destructive power in independent European hands is an important insurance against any such misconception. A nuclear decision would of course be no less agonising for the United Kingdom than for the United States. But it would be the decision of a separate and independent power, and a power whose survival in freedom might be more directly and immediately threatened than that of the United States by aggression in Europe. The nuclear strengths of Britain or France may seem modest by comparison with the superpower armouries, but the damage they could inflict is in absolute terms immense. (A single Polaris submarine carries more explosive power than all the munitions used in World War II). An adversary assessing the consequences of possible aggression in Europe would have to regard a NATO defence containing these powerful independent elements as a harder one to predict, and a more dangerous one to assail,

than one in which nuclear retaliatory power rested in United States hands alone.

9. Our contribution to the Alliance in this field is unique. France, like Britain, has powerful nuclear forces under independent national control; but her distinctive policy - well understood, long established and firmly held - debars her from undertaking the clear commitment to collective Alliance deterrence concepts, planning and strategy which we have made. No other European member of NATO is even remotely a potential candidate to contribute independent nuclear forces. The Government regards this distinctive British contribution to NATO as of great importance. Our Allies recognise its significance, as they made clear for example in the 1974 Ottawa Declaration of the North Atlantic Council.

10. British nuclear forces include both strategic and lower-level components. If we had only the latter they could not serve the key deterrent purpose, since the threat of their use would not be credible. An aggressor faced with an armoury comprising only non-strategic nuclear weapons would know that he could if necessary use strategic nuclear weapons to overbear it without risking strategic retaliation upon himself; and since he would know that his opponent too must realise this, he could be confident that the non-strategic weapons were most unlikely to be used. The harsh logic of deterrence requires that the nuclear decision-maker should have evident power to take his resistance all the way to the strategic level if the aggressor will not desist. If Britain's distinctive nuclear contribution to NATO is to have meaning, it must include an effective strategic element.

II - GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS ON SYSTEM CHOICE

11. The particular features and comparative merits of individual candidate systems need to be seen against the background of various general considerations which bear upon any choice of system for this task.

The "Second-Centre" Role

12. As paragraphs 8-10 have shown, the particular importance of the British strategic force lies less in its value as a quantitative addition to the Alliance's armoury than in its independent national control, providing a second centre of nuclear decision-making committed to NATO. Paradoxically, if it is to meet this Alliance purpose effectively the British force has to be visibly capable of posing a massive deterrent threat on its own. A force which could strike tellingly only if the United States also did so - which plainly relied, for example, on US assent to its use, or on attenuation or distraction of Soviet defences by United States forces - would not achieve the purpose. We need to convince Soviet leaders that even if they thought that at some critical point as a conflict developed the US would hold back, the British force could still inflict a blow, so destructive that the penalty for aggression would have proved too high.

13. There is no way of calculating exactly how much destruction in prospect would suffice to deter. Clearly Britain need not have as much power as the United States. Overwhelming Britain would be a much smaller prize to an aggressor than overwhelming the United States, and a smaller prospective penalty could therefore suffice to tilt his assessment against starting aggression that would risk incurring the penalty. Indeed, one practical approach to judging how much deterrent

power Britain needs is to consider what type and scale of damage Soviet leaders might think likely to leave them critically handicapped afterwards in continuing confrontation with a relatively unscathed United States.

14. The Soviet Union is a very large and powerful state, which has in the past demonstrated great national resilience and resolve. Its history, outlook, political doctrines and planning all suggest that its view of what level of destruction would constitute intolerable disaster might differ widely from that of most NATO countries. Appalling though any nuclear strike would be, the Government does not believe that our deterrent aim would be adequately met by a capability which offered only a low likelihood of striking home to key targets; or which posed the prospect of only a very small number of strikes; or which Soviet leaders could expect to ward off successfully from large areas of key importance to them. They might even be tempted to judge that if an opponent equipped himself with a force which had only a modest chance of inflicting intolerable damage there might be only a modest chance that he would have the resolve to use it at all.

15. Successive United Kingdom Governments have always declined to make public their nuclear targetting policy and plans, or to define precisely what minimum level of destructive capability they judged necessary for deterrence. The Government think it right now to make clear that their concept of deterrence does not rest upon threatening maximum loss of life among the population at large; it is concerned essentially with posing a potential threat to key aspects of Soviet state power. There might with changing conditions be more than one way of doing this, and some flexibility in contingency planning is appropriate. It would not be helpful to deterrence to define particular

options further. The Government however regards the considerations noted in paragraphs 13 and 14 above as important factors in deciding the scale of capability we need.

Readiness and Invulnerability

16. Since 1969 there has never been a moment when our Polaris force did not have at least one submarine on patrol, effectively invulnerable to pre-emptive attack and at high readiness to launch its missiles if required.

17. Most of our own and our Allies' non-strategic forces are not maintained permanently in this special combination of readiness and invulnerability; they are not generally deployed so as to survive "bolt-from-the-blue" attack - that is, attack without any political or military warning. NATO regards such attack as a remote hypothesis, and even such elements as the planned long-range theatre nuclear force of cruise missiles and Pershing IIs announced by NATO last December are not designed to cater for it. It may be asked therefore why strategic forces should meet so demanding a standard.

18. The answer is twofold. First, the potential consequences of any East/West war in the nuclear age are so immense that some deterrent insurance against even remote possibilities for its outbreak is warranted; and exceptional readiness in the strategic nuclear forces is the most effective and least costly form of insurance against massive surprise attack. Second, it is in part precisely because this insurance is maintained that we can frame most of our force plans on the assumption that "bolt-from-the-blue" is very unlikely; it might not remain so if changed NATO dispositions seemed to offer an adversary a real chance of disarming us by a sudden strike. The

Government believes therefore that we must maintain in a new force the standards of immunity to surprise and pre-emptive attack which the Polaris force has achieved, so successfully since the 1960s.

Timescales

19. No-one can define now exactly when the Polaris force will have to be phased out. There are complex operational and technical factors, some of them hard to predict, and the likely prospect in several respects is of gradually declining effectiveness and mounting cost and risk rather than abrupt cut-off points or failures, though the possibility of these cannot always be ruled out.

20. Though the Chevaline programme will keep our Polaris missiles able to penetrate anti-ballistic-missile (ABM) defences into the 1990s, continuing Soviet effort in research and development, allowed by the 1972 ABM Treaty, might in time reduce our assurance of this, and growing Soviet competence in anti-submarine warfare (ASW), backed by a huge investment of resources, must tend in time to erode our current advantage and eventually make our submarines - built to designs now twenty years old, and not capable of being further modernised - less immune from detection and attack. It is clear from our own and US experience that hull life can last beyond the twenty years originally envisaged; but it is not extensible indefinitely, and in any event the on-board equipment - propulsion machinery, missile support systems and the like - is ageing and must at best pose a heavier maintenance load, with a growing risk that refit periods may be so prolonged or unexpected defects at other times so serious that continuous patrol would be lost. In addition, the age of the systems, and the prospect that the phasing-out of Polaris from United States service in 1981 will leave the costs of maintaining support capability for it to be

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borne entirely by the United Kingdom, will make the force increasingly expensive to keep going.

21. Amid these uncertainties and risks the setting of a particular date for retiring the Polaris force must be a matter for judgement. This judgement must take into account the fact that the British force, unlike its United States counterpart, is not part of a powerful triad of complementary strategic forces (land-based ballistic missiles in silos; long-range bombers, soon to carry cruise missiles; and submarine-launched ballistic missiles) and that it is moreover of modest size with little insurance margin to spare - for example, the premature withdrawal of a single boat from service would eventually make it impossible to guarantee continuous patrol. We must consider how long the force would last not only if matters went well but also if they did not. Against all this background, the Government has concluded that responsible planning must look to progressive replacement of the present force beginning in the early 1990s.

22. In the 1960s, special efforts made it possible to have the first Polaris boat operational less than six years after the Nassau Agreement was signed. Systems are now more complex, and several critical lead-times are now much longer. If we are to bring a new missile submarine force into service on time, design work for the boats themselves and other key force components must begin soon. This has set the timetable for studying all the system options.

23. Paragraphs 18-21 have discussed when a new force should enter service. But we have to consider also how long it should last. Re-equipment is very costly, and we cannot afford to undertake it as often as the super-powers. Ideally, we should like any new force to remain effective, as the Polaris force will have done, for at least twenty-five years - well into the second decade of the next century.

To give high probability of this we need to choose a system which represents a big enough advance in capability to provide some margin to meet the greater operational demands which continuing efforts on the Soviet side must be expected to impose. Re-equipment providing only a small advance in capability could before long prove a false economy, and our experience with Chevaline - costing about a billion pounds to modernise one aspect of the total force - shows that mid-life improvement can be a heavy task.

Cooperation with the United States in Procurement

24. For all its operational and technical merits, our successful Chevaline programme underlines a further consideration for the future - that in the immensely demanding technology of strategic missile systems the provision of features unique to Britain is very costly, even where access to United States information and industry can be acquired. This applies both to initial research, development and production and to subsequent support (which includes not just repair and spares supply but also such needs as testing, quality assurance, reliability data and trial firings). Given that, as with Polaris, our operational independence can remain unimpaired, there is great advantage to economy in the maximum possible commonality with the United States, especially in view of their high technology, their wide industrial base, the massive scale of their own Service purchases and our long experience of working efficiently together. In addition, adopting a United States system already developed and tested makes it easier to assess likely cost than with systems requiring much further work. The cost of the original Polaris programme, based on a proven missile, turned out very close to the estimate made at the time of the Sales Agreement. Finally, choice of a proven system reduces the risk of unexpected delay.

III - SYSTEM OPTIONSThe Field of Study

25. The work leading up to the Government's decision has looked at a wide variety of system options which might at least in theory be available. It considered different launch platforms - seaborne (by various types of submarines or by surface vessels), airborne and ground-based - and the possibilities of using ships or aircraft for both strategic and other roles. Among delivery vehicles both ballistic and cruise missiles were examined, including several different ballistic missile options such as retaining Chevaline-improved Polaris, varying degrees of further improvements to it, Poseidon, the Trident system and its possible development. A number of approaches to procurement were considered - entirely national development and production, continued collaboration with the United States, or collaboration with France. Different force sizes, and the possibilities of mixed forces of more than one system type, were also considered.

26. The terms of SALT I and SALT II, and the possibility of a comprehensive treaty ban on nuclear explosive tests, were taken into account. In practice they do not significantly narrow Britain's main system options. Arms control implications are discussed further in paragraphs 62-65.

27. Not all the possible combinations of system features (launch platform, missile type, procurement approach, force size) were studied to an equal degree of detail. Many clearly had to be ruled out on basic considerations, including some of those reviewed in Part II. The rest of this memorandum outlines so far as is possible the key factors bearing on the main options.

Launch Platforms

28. Britain abandoned the idea of launch platforms on the ground for strategic purposes (the position on theatre systems is different, for the reasons noted in paragraphs 17-18) as long ago as 1960, when the technically-promising Blue Streak silo-based ballistic missile was cancelled as likely to be too vulnerable to surprise attack. Soviet developments since then, including the SS20 missile systems, greatly reinforce this conclusion, and the use of mobile launchers would not change it in Britain's circumstances of a small territory within a very short flight time of Soviet land-based and sea-based missiles. No ground-launched force based in Britain could achieve the special standard of invulnerability to surprise attack appropriate for our ultimate strategic capability.

29. Missile launch from aircraft was clearly a possibility. We have successful experience of aircraft as a strategic deterrence force, and airborne systems offer much flexibility and ease of command and control. But vulnerability considerations like those in paragraph 28 still apply. Aircraft capable of launching strategic missiles need major airfields. The number of such airfields in Britain is limited, their positions are known and Soviet missiles could rapidly destroy them. To survive full-scale nuclear missile attack aircraft would need to be airborne and well clear of their airfields within a very few minutes. Our V-bomber force was able to maintain a substantial strike capability on runway alert for limited periods, but developments in Soviet capability would make reliance on this even more precarious in the future than when we decided in the 1960s to move to the surer system of Polaris submarines.

30. Maintaining launch aircraft permanently airborne might seem to solve the problem of airfield vulnerability. But this is very expensive. In addition, it cannot be sustained long if the support airfields are destroyed; and we would not wish to have no alternative but to regard strikes on such airfields as compelling the final launch of our ultimate capability, with all that this would imply. Moreover, no British Government would want to have numerous nuclear-weapon carriers constantly airborne, year in and year out, in crowded airspace over and around our small country.

31. We considered fitting long-range missiles to aircraft already planned for other roles - such as our substantial Tornado force now in production - so that they could also provide a strategic force. But reliance on this for our main strategic capability had to be ruled out. The problem of airfield vulnerability would remain; moreover, the appearance of a low-cost bonus to an existing investment is illusory. Quite aside from the burdens of equipment modification, support and training for a very different additional role, an aircraft cannot be held in reserve for last-resort strategic strike and at the same time used (and hazarded) on other tasks. The clash of priorities could be very acute: it is precisely at the dangerous stages when we would most want to pose a clear and formidable strategic threat that our limited air power might need to be most fully committed in order to give the maximum chance of holding aggression at lower levels of conflict.

32. There is another limitation if aircraft are chosen as launch platforms. No air-launched ballistic missile has been developed since the United States abandoned Skybolt in 1962, and though they continue to give some thought to the possibilities there is no likelihood that such a missile could be available to us in the early 1990s, whether by purchase from the United States or by our own developments. A

British decision in favour of an air-launched system would therefore be also a decision in favour of a cruise missile system. The implications of that are reviewed in paragraphs 38-46 below.

33. Among options for sea launch, surface ships compare poorly with submarines. They are not markedly cheaper for a given missile-carrying capacity, speed or endurance, they are much easier for an enemy to find and track; and any attempt to combine the strategic task with others in present or planned ships would pose the problem of conflicting operational demands on much the lines already noted in paragraphs 31.

34. This leaves submarines as clearly the best platforms for Britain's future strategic force. We have much expertise and highly satisfactory experience in operating them. Soviet investment in anti-submarine warfare is massive and their skills will continue to grow; but the Western technical and operational advantage remains substantial, and much effort is given to maintaining it. The sea is vast and opaque, and only a dramatic breakthrough on a large scale could give the Soviet Union realistic hope of being able to count on destroying our submarines on patrol at a time of Soviet choosing. The likelihood of this is remote.

35. Our studies did not take for granted that we should continue to use large nuclear-propelled submarines. We looked at the possibilities of diesel propulsion, of small size (like the two-missile submersibles suggested by some non-official studies in the United States) and of in-shore patterns of operation. But though diesel submarines can be quieter than nuclear-propelled ones and so harder to detect when fully submerged, they must periodically expose themselves

to recharge batteries; it may not be easy to build diesel submarines big enough, or with enough electrical power, to carry a substantial number of missiles; a large number of relatively small submarines would demand much scarce manpower; and diesel submarines have not the sustained speed and endurance to exploit so fully the wide ocean areas and long patrol times away from base which nuclear propulsion provides. As to small submersibles (which would still have to be big enough to house complex fire control, navigation and communications equipment) it is far from clear that these would cost us less than nuclear-propelled submarines for a given degree of assurance of a given level of striking power; they would require much system development work unique to Britain, since the United States shows no sign of adopting them; and it would be at best hazardous for Britain, which cannot afford several kinds of strategic force, to rely on pioneering so untried a concept. Operation around our own shores could make direct protection by our own forces against air or submarine attack easier, but it would also be more vulnerable to mining. Britain's coastal waters are moreover heavily used for a wide variety of purposes.

36. For all these reasons, nuclear-propelled ocean-going submarines remain the best launch platforms for a British missile force.

DELIVERY VEHICLES

37. Candidate delivery vehicles to equip new submarines fall into two categories - cruise missiles (CMs) and ballistic missiles (BMs).

Cruise Missiles

38. The CM concept goes back to the wartime V.1, and several types were produced by both the United States and the Soviet Union in the 1950s and 1960s. In recent years, however, the convergence of several advanced technologies - new fuels; highly efficient small jet engines; microelectronics, including miniaturised digital computers for control and for navigation by terrain contour mapping using data derived from satellites; and smaller nuclear warheads - has enabled the United States to develop CMs representing a step change in capability. These can fly for long distances - typically over 1500 miles - at very low altitudes (around one hundred feet) and navigate accurately to an aim point, while presenting an exceptionally small target for enemy air defences to detect, locate and attack. The systems now in prospect are the Boeing air-launched CM and the General Dynamics Tomahawk for ground and sea launch. They do not travel at very high speed - around 400-500 knots - but rely for protection mainly on low altitude, small radar cross-section, and evasive routing to avoid known defence concentrations. The initial cost of the Tomahawk missile - excluding warhead, support, spares and overheads - is estimated at around one million dollars each.

39. The United States intend to deploy some 3,000 Boeing air-launched CMs on B52s in their strategic force, and 464 ground-launched Tomahawks as part of the programme to modernise their NATO-committed long-range theatre nuclear capability in Europe. The ALCMs are likely to enter service in 1982 and the GLCMs in 1983. In addition, Tomahawk is also to

be deployed from surface ships or submarines, for attacking either enemy ships or land targets. No production programme for these maritime applications have been settled.

40. Our studies gave much attention to the possibility of using CMs as our strategic nuclear delivery vehicles. This attention concentrated mainly upon a possible purchase of Tomahawk from the United States. Satellite mapping apart, none of the technology is inherently beyond the capability of British industry; but to embark upon a duplication of the United States research and development effort, especially for the relatively small numbers which we would want, would inescapably take longer and cost more per missile.

41. CMs have many attractions. They cost much less each than Trident missiles; they are even more accurate; they are a good deal smaller and easier to store. The fact that they would take hours rather than minutes to reach targets in the Soviet Union is not important for our strategic purposes, since these do not include any concept of catching Soviet missiles in their silos.

42. There are however important factors on the other side. Though the United States judges that present Soviet air defences have little chance against their CMs, the defence problem is not insuperable given time and effort. Moreover, Soviet defences against CMs, unlike their ABM defences, are not limited by Treaty. It is impossible to put precise figures on what proportion of CMs Soviet air defences in the two decades from the early 1990s - roughly the timeframe we want for our new strategic system - might succeed in shooting down; but we must reckon with the possibility that it could progressively become very substantial, especially since we probably could not afford to re-equip

with new and better CMs as often as the United States may well do to keep pace with defences. We have to take into account also that whereas the United States ALCM force can plan to saturate the defences of key strategic targets, we could not operate on the same scale. In addition, the apparent advantage of CMs over BMs in cost per missile is misleading. Trident can carry up to eight separately-targettable warheads; current CMs carry only one (and SALT II would prohibit CMs carrying more).

43. There are also considerations affecting the submarine. We, like the United States, have always judged it important that a strategic missile submarine should be able to fire its weapons within a short space of time, to avoid the risk that enemy action - by ASW forces or by "counter-battery" fire from ICBMs, after the launch of our own missiles had perhaps revealed the submarine's position - might be brought to bear before all the missiles had been fired. Our Polaris boats accordingly can fire their full complement within a very few minutes. But this is much more difficult with CMs. With torpedo tubes - the only submarine-launch mode so far developed - repeated re-load would be necessary to launch a number of CMs anywhere near equivalent in striking power to the boatload of Trident BMs. The process would take hours, during which the submarine would be at increasingly severe risk, and it might well not survive to complete the task. Alternative launch modes, such as vertical launch on the SLBM pattern, would require extensive new system development and submarine design. There is no sign that the United States contemplates such work, and the burden of it would therefore be likely to fall entirely on us if we wanted such a solution.

44. There is a further operational point. Current CMs have much less range than BMs; moreover, at least with systems now in prospect there is a limit on how far off-shore a land-attack CM can be launched, since beyond a certain distance cumulative inertial-navigation errors may mean too high a risk that the missile will fail to make its landfall accurately enough to initiate the over-land navigation phase successfully. The effective range of a CM launched from the North Atlantic would be significantly less than that of Polaris. The sea-room available to the submarines, and their scope for evading improved Soviet ASW forces, would be restricted accordingly. Further technical development might well ease this restriction, but since it is not important to the major United States applications of CMs we cannot tell when or at what cost.

45. The factors in paragraph 43 relate essentially to a CM-launching submarine devoted entirely to the strategic role. We also considered the possibility of equipping each of our hunter-killer submarines with a small number of CMs, for launch through the torpedo tubes. But there are two difficulties about this. Firstly there is the problem of conflicting tasks, of the general kind already noted in paragraphs 31 and 33. Our non-strategic submarine force is already smaller than would be desirable for its existing tasks, and the patterns of deployment and operation for the last-resort strategic role are very different from those for seeking out and attacking other submarines and surface ships. Secondly, it would not be possible to build up enough strike capability for strategic deterrence in "penny-packet" numbers of CMs on non-strategic submarines.

46. All this means that CMs are not in fact a cheaper option than BMs. For a given weight of striking power and a given level of probability of delivering it successfully, CM-based forces are in fact much more expensive. For example, eleven boats each with eighty CMs would give less assured deterrent capability than a force of five boats each with sixteen Trident BMs; and it would cost at least a third as much again to acquire and about twice as much to run. One of the major reasons for this, important to bear in mind in all evaluation of delivery system options, is that for almost any submarine force the boats are a much more costly element than the missiles.

Ballistic Missiles

47. It would not be impossible for Britain industry to develop and build ballistic missiles for strategic use. We have however had no major capability in this field since the 1960s, and to re-acquire it now would be very expensive, take a long time and involve much uncertainty. This cannot be an attractive option.

48. The present Polaris missiles could be kept and fitted into new submarines. They would need new motors, produced from restarted production lines; this may be necessary anyway to match present force life, but not so certainly or on so large a scale as would be needed if the missiles were kept beyond the early 1990s. Much of the missile support equipment would need to be replaced at the outset, and this would be costly and difficult, particularly as much of it would have been long out of production. Removing equipment from the present boats and fitting it into the new ones might not be cheap or easy, and would entail major problems in maintaining continuous operational capability during the transition; the alternative of new manufacture for all the equipment would be very costly, especially as most of it is already long out of production. The missiles and the related equipment, afloat and

ashore, would be costly to maintain, both because of age and because spares and replacements would increasingly have to be specially manufactured to technological standards long since abandoned in industry. It would be necessary to buy extra missiles - long out of production - and extra Chevaline elements to support the force for longer. Moreover, unless we were to make the very bold assumption that Polaris missiles would remain satisfactory until beyond 2010, we should have to build submarines capable at some point in their life of accommodating a different missile of a type which (since Trident production will not continue indefinitely) we could not easily predict now.

49. For all these reasons, a force based on the existing missiles in new submarines would not be cheap and perhaps not highly reliable. Nevertheless, it would be cheaper initially than an entirely new force in capital cost - in very broad terms, possibly by around forty per cent - though subsequent running costs would tend to be higher. Such a saving would in itself be highly valuable. The difficulty is that the resulting force would be of uncertain value and short life. For operational reasons a force based on Polaris - even with the Chevaline improvement, designed essentially for the forecast environment of the 1980s and early 1990s - would be able to maintain a high deterrent assurance in the later 1990s, let alone beyond that, only if the advances in Soviet ability to counter it proved unexpectedly modest. If such a hope were disappointed we should be faced with a choice between keeping a force of much reduced deterrent credibility and effectiveness, and changing our plans at short notice. Such a change would certainly have to be made at high cost and probably in haste, wastefully and with difficulty. It would be seriously irresponsible to undertake on such a basis what would still be, by any standards, a major investment.

50. We considered also various possibilities for acquiring new versions of the basic Polaris missile, improved mainly by the use of more modern and powerful rocket fuels to give more range and payload (though short of Trident standards) as an insurance against improved Soviet capabilities. Any of these possibilities would entail a substantial R&D programme covering the missiles themselves, the altered interface with Chevaline, and related equipment. The procurement costs - which cannot be assessed as firmly as those for the already operational Trident system, and carry greater risk of escalating - would have fallen entirely on Britain, as would all the costs of setting up and sustaining support arrangements for a system that had never been in United States service. The amount would depend on how big an improvement over the present Polaris capability was sought, but missile system costs could well be twice those of Trident, for a smaller and less assured capability. Moreover, concerns like those in paragraph 49 would arise about effective operational life, though perhaps less quickly.

51. Another possibility might have been the projected M.4 missile being developed by France and due to come into service in 1985. Collaboration with the only other European power could have been of considerable political significance. France has developed an impressive capability in the ballistic missile field, and the M.4 will undoubtedly be a formidable system. Even however if it were the equal of Trident in operational capability, considerations of cost tell decisively against our seeking to base our own force upon it. There is no likelihood that it would have been available to us at a cost, either in initial investment or in subsequent support, which could compare with that for the already-proven Trident system, especially

when account is taken of the economic advantages of our long-established arrangements for collaboration with the United States in nuclear forces. To adopt M.4, even if the French Government had proved willing, would therefore have meant cutting deeper into defence resources at the expense of our effort elsewhere.

52. We considered also the adoption of the Poseidon system, which the US would have been willing to make available when it phases out of US service by about 1990. Poseidon entered service in 1971, is of the same size as the present Trident missile, and is a MIRVed* system capable of carrying up to fourteen warheads of substantially smaller size and yield than Trident or our own Polaris. Range varies with payload, but with a reduced number of warheads it is about 300 nautical miles more than that of Polaris A.3.

53. Poseidon would be an effective system, but particularly because of its shorter range it would offer less long-term insurance than Trident against improved Soviet capabilities. The initial purchase price would be lower, but several other factors offset this. The age of the missiles and related equipment would mean higher maintenance costs, and almost certainly a major re-motoring programme before long. We should have to bear all the continuing support costs for a system no longer in United States service. We should also have to undertake a very extensive British warhead development and testing programme and perhaps further work to adapt the missile system to our warheads. In all, it is unlikely that the cost would be lower, and the system would be less good.

*MIRV: multiple independently-targettable re-entry vehicles.

54. Trident I is a three-stage ballistic rocket designed to carry up to eight independently-targettable warheads. The maximum range is from about 4,000 to 6,000 nm, depending on the number of warheads. The first missiles went to sea on operational service with the United States Navy in 1979. They are initially replacing Poseidon missiles in some existing submarines and they will later be fitted in the new OHIO-class submarines. MIRV capability and long-range give excellent margins of long-term insurance against further advances in Soviet anti-missile and anti-submarine capability; and improved guidance techniques give better accuracy than earlier systems have offered. The Trident system is likely to remain in United States service for many years to come, and the economies of commonality will therefore be available to us.

55. We considered whether there would be any advantages in a "non-MIRV" Trident. MIRV capability is however integral to the system design, and deliberately to remove it and substitute MRV capability would entail a major re-design and re-testing programme, leading to a missile degraded in performance and unique to Britain. Missile System costs would probably be at least double those of Trident, for a greatly reduced capability.

56. We also considered the larger SLBM concept known as Trident II, which is in preliminary development in the United States. It would give still greater range and payload than the present Trident system, at higher cost. The OHIO-class submarines will be big enough to take such a missile if it is proceeded with. It is however undecided, and likely to remain so for another two or three years, whether the US Government's preferred course for the next long-term step in SLBMs will be to bring Trident II into operational service or perhaps adopt

instead some further improvement of the present Trident system. Our own choice now could not be made dependent on uncertain possibilities of this kind, especially as additional range and payload beyond present Trident standards are not of crucial importance for Britain.

Force Size

57. There are two main variables to force size: the number of missiles per submarines, and the number of submarines. They interact in some degree.

58. The optimum number of missiles per submarine involves a compromise between conflicting factors. For a given total complement of missiles, the fewer the boats the lower the cost but also the greater the risk of too many eggs in one basket - this last being a particularly important consideration for a relatively small force like ours. We considered eight, twelve, sixteen and twenty-four missiles per boat. Of these options twenty-four, as in the very large United States OHIO submarines is more than we need (given that we have to have at least four boats anyway, as paragraph 59 explains). At the other extreme, eight missiles would lead to a much larger number of boats for a given total capability, and this drives up costs and manpower demands. The choice between twelve and sixteen is less clear cut, but on balance we believe it best to plan for sixteen - the number used in our present force, the French SLBM force, and the United States Polaris and Poseidon forces.

59. Deciding the number of boats is more difficult. Four is the minimum needed to sustain without fail at least one always on patrol. System improvements may improve the ratio of operational to non-operational time, but there is no likelihood of reaching the point

at which a force of three submarines could sustain continuous patrol for more than a few years. A force of five can maintain two on continuous patrol, yet because force overheads do not rise proportionately with numbers the extra cost is only about fifteen per cent. The operational advantage of five goes further, in two ways. Even if relative Soviet ASW capabilities improved to the point where they might hope occasionally to locate one submarine on patrol the prospect of their being able to locate and track two simultaneously is negligible; and a fifth boat also offers a margin of insurance against other risks which though very low are not wholly non-existent, such as losing a boat by accident or having one out of action for a long time through unforeseen defect. But the skill and dedication of our personnel have enabled us to manage successfully with four boats for over a decade, and the extra capital cost of a fifth in the Trident era, though modest in proportionate terms, is still very large in absolute terms - perhaps in the order of six hundred million pounds.

60. No immediate decision is needed on the choice between four and five since major expenditure related only to a fifth boat would not arise for two or three years from now. The Government intends therefore to keep the option open and to take a final decision in 1982 or 1983 in the light of the latest information and judgements on relevant operational, international and resource factors, including the defence budget situation.

Arms Control

61. Throughout its consideration of Polaris replacement the Government has kept in mind the relationship between its prospective decision and arms control considerations. Strong support for practical and balanced collective arms control measures remains a key element in our approach to ensuring peace and security. The Government, like all its allies in NATO, much prefers arms control to arms expenditure whenever the circumstances, and the will on both sides of a potential agreement, make this an effective alternative.

62. The Government believes that the implementation of the bilateral US/Soviet SALT II agreements signed last year in Vienna is in the interest of international security, and keenly hopes that conditions in which ratification can go ahead will soon be restored. The decision to modernise our own strategic forces in the 1990s is entirely compatible with this view. The continued Anglo-American cooperation provided for in the exchange of letters on Trident is fully consistent with the terms of the SALT II Treaty, and the scale of our new capability will in no way disturb existing and prospective East/West relativities. For example, even if we eventually choose to go to the higher figure of five boats, this represents a smaller proportion of Soviet strategic forces now than four or even the originally planned five Polaris boats represented of Soviet strategic forces at the time of the Nassau Agreement; and a five-boat Trident capability in the mid-1990s would represent in relation to Soviet forces at that time (assuming these to be developed to but not beyond SALT II levels) about the same proportion of delivery systems as - and a rather lower proportion of warheads than - the Polaris force did in relation to Soviet forces when it was completed in 1970.

63. The Government continues to support the conclusion of a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, and we are participating fully in the Geneva negotiations with the United States and the Soviet Union. Nothing in our requirements for the new force need or will lead us to modify, in relation to either substance or timing, our support for a successful outcome to these negotiations as soon as practicable.

64. Similarly, the Government strongly supports the regime established by the Non-Proliferation Treaty of 1967, and hopes to see it extended by the accession of more countries and the wider establishment of matching international control arrangements. Nothing in the Treaty requires the existing nuclear powers to abandon or let decay their main capability, which is inescapably a key part of the established structure of global and particularly East/West security, whose collapse would bring grave dangers for all nations. Moreover, the Government sees no realistic ground for supposing that unilateral gestures of renunciation by Britain - gestures which there is not the slightest likelihood that any other nuclear power would emulate - would make any marked or lasting difference to the prospects of accession to the Treaty by those comparatively few nations which might be capable within a reasonable time of acquiring some nuclear weapons capability, but whose assessment of their own national interest has so far led them to decide against accession.

65. Finally, Britain's strategic SLBM force lies clearly outside the category of long-range land-based theatre nuclear forces about whose limitation NATO countries last December invited the Soviet Union to negotiate. The Government notes with continued regret the repeated Soviet refusal so far to enter into such negotiations save on pre-conditions which would require the United States to cancel its deployment programme before it had even begun while the USSR maintained unchecked its own far-advanced build up.

Costs

66. The costs of the proposed Trident force cannot be estimated in close detail at this stage - further discussions are needed with the United States authorities, and in several respects such as submarine design and numbers the costs will depend upon decisions which have yet to be taken. In broad terms, however, we assess the likely order of capital cost, at today's prices, to be around four to four-and-a-half billion pounds for a four-boat force. This would cover submarines, missiles, warheads and support equipment and facilities, including new construction required at the Coulport armament depot, the Faslane operating base and elsewhere.

67. Of the total capital cost over seventy per cent will be spent with British establishments and industry. The Government will seek to bring this already high proportion to the maximum that is operationally and economically sensible, but to increase it markedly would be likely to mean substantial extra cost.

68. There has rightly been widespread public interest in the effect which the replacement of the Polaris force will have upon other aspects of the defence programme. As ^{with any project, small or large, money} / spent on this is money not spent on other things. Given an assumption that future total allocations to defence would be no lower without Polaris replacement than with it, foregoing Polaris replacement would obviously make it possible to fund additional or earlier force improvements somewhere else.

69. It is however important to keep in view the scale and significance of this, from several standpoints. The capital cost of the Trident force will be spread over about fifteen years. The Government's expenditure plans provide for defence spending to rise by 3% a year in

real terms over each of the next three years. By 1985/84 the budget is planned to be some 13% higher in real terms than in 1979/80.

No-one can be sure exactly what the size of the budget will be in the ten years thereafter, but the capital cost of the Trident force is unlikely to absorb on average more than 3% of the total budget, or around 7% of the equipment component, between 1980 and 1995. It will probably absorb some 1½% of the total during the build-up in the first half of the 1980s, some 5% (or 12% of the equipment component) in the main spending period from 1985 to 1990, and then 1-2% between 1990 and 1995. Even after spending on the Trident force, the Government is still planning to spend more on conventional forces than it does now.

The accommodation of large re-equipment programmes is a normal part of defence planning and budgetting. As to size, Tornado procurement costs more than the Trident force is estimated to, and is currently absorbing some 7% of the defence budget without distorting the rest of the defence programme. Once capital investment is past, the Trident force should be notably inexpensive - probably well below 2% of the defence budget from the mid-1990s. In terms of manpower, which may increasingly become a key constraint upon our defence effort, the Trident force should be broadly as economical as Polaris, which requires only 2500 servicemen - under 1% of Service manpower.

70. There are accordingly no easy comparisons to be made with other defence capabilities. There would be little point, for example, in diverting the full capital sum to buying more ships, tanks or aircraft which in the long term we could not afford to run and could not hope to man. The rising real cost of defence equipment is a general cause for concern, but this problem is not specific to the Polaris successor. For all these reasons, impressions that we could sustain much larger conventional forces without Polaris replacement than with it are well wide of the mark.

71. The Government is convinced and determined that the provision of the new Trident force should not prevent or emasculate continued improvement in other areas of our contribution to NATO. It believes moreover that the modernisation of the independent British element in NATO's strategic nuclear forces is a central element of that contribution, not a luxury or a diversion. No alternative use of British resources would provide a comparable strengthening of collaborative Alliance deterrence to aggression.

PART

2

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MODBA to Wade Army 9/6/80

PART

3

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Sts Defence to Par 10/6/80