

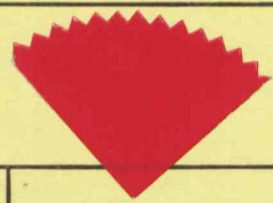
TOP SECRET

# 10 DOWNING STREET

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FILE TITLE: Basing of US Ground Cruise		SERIES
Missiles in the UK		DEFENCE
PART BEGINS: April 1980		PART: 1
PART ENDS: May 1992		CAB ONE:



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*Seen by JSW  
20/5*

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE  
MAIN BUILDING WHITEHALL LONDON SW1A 2HB

Telephone 071-218 2216 (Direct Dialling)  
071-218 9000 (Switchboard)

MINISTER OF STATE FOR  
THE ARMED FORCES  
D/MIN(AF)/AH/2/1/3

20 May 1992

*Dear Aidan,*

The US Embassy has asked for our agreement to a further round of redeployments involving US forces in the UK. The announcement, scheduled for Friday 22 May 1992 at 1pm UK time, will include the decision to close RAF Burtonwood and RAF Caerwent. Burtonwood is expected to close in Summer 1993 and Caerwent in Summer 1995. My Minister has previously written to Sir Wyn Roberts at the Welsh Office with advance notice that US action on Caerwent was likely.

The announcement to close the US Army Storage Depot at Burtonwood, Warrington, Cheshire, follows two previous announcements: the return of their family housing complex and the decision to deactivate the 47th Area Support Group. The US Army directly employs 219 UK civilian personnel at Burtonwood. 22 MOD Police and 1 Civil Servant are also located at the site.

RAF Caerwent, Newport, Gwent is used by the US Army as an ammunition depot. As with Burtonwood, the US Army elected to recruit its own civilian staff directly and currently employs 124 UK personnel. In addition, there are 4 MOD Civil Servants and 37 MOD Police based in Caerwent.

As always, every effort will be made to find alternative MOD employment for the MOD Police and the few Civil Servants employed at the sites. However, we are unable to make such a commitment to the directly employed civilian personnel, thus the workforce will be made redundant progressively and in accordance with US withdrawal plans for the sites.

We are reviewing options for the future of both Burtonwood and Caerwent, including the scope for alternative defence uses, but no decisions on this have yet been taken. I would be grateful if you would treat this information in confidence until the announcement is made.

Copies of this letter go to William Chapman (No 10), Huw Jones (Welsh Office), Tim Sutton (Lord President's Office) and Murdo Maclean (Chief Whips Office).

*Julian Miller*

Julian Miller  
Private Secretary

Aidan Loy Esq  
PS/Mr McLoughlin  
Department of Employment



RESTRICTED



SECRETARY OF STATE

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE  
WHITEHALL LONDON SW1A 2HB  
Telephone 071-21 82111/3

*✓*  
*Pine Maste*

*MO 14/2/5G*

*18* May 1992

*Dear John,*

*attach*

Tom King wrote to you on *28*th April last year about the United States Air Force's (USAF's) intention to consolidate all United States Special Operations Forces in Europe at RAF Alconbury during 1992, following the withdrawal of all A-10 aircraft from the base.

You will want to be aware that the USAF now plan to begin redeploying the Special Operations aircraft into RAF Alconbury towards the end of this month, starting with the move of six HC-130 fixed wing aircraft and six MH-53 helicopters from RAF Woodbridge in Suffolk. They will be joined in the autumn by five MC-130 fixed wing aircraft from a Special Operations Squadron currently based in Germany.

As part of their training the Special Operations aircraft are required to carry out much of their flying at night: the aircraft based at RAF Woodbridge normally conduct a limited number of sorties until 0400 hours (local time) Monday to Friday throughout the year. When their move to RAF Alconbury was first planned the USAF originally asked for permission to fly an unlimited number of sorties 24 hours a day Monday to Friday throughout the year. However, because we recognise we must minimise the disturbance to local people around RAF Alconbury, training operations will be

The Rt Hon John Major MP

RESTRICTED

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SECRETARY OF STATE

restricted as far as possible to the RAF's normal operating hours (0600 hours to 2330 hours Monday to Friday, excluding Bank Holidays). Unfortunately, during the summer months, because of the limited hours of darkness, the Special Operations Wing would not be able to meet their night flying training requirements within these normal operating hours. We have therefore agreed that between 1st May and 30th September the Special Operations aircraft may operate until 0200 hours Tuesday to Friday (excluding Bank Holidays). During these months the number of sorties flown between 2330 hours and 0200 hours will be limited to 60 per month and flying will not begin before 0830 hours.

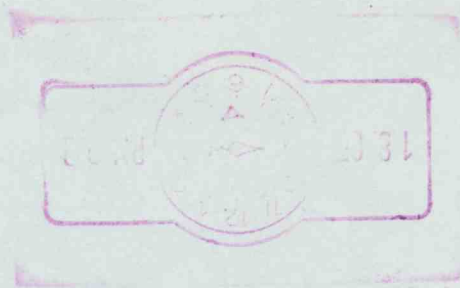
RAF Alconbury plan to tell local residents soon of these plans.

*over,*  
*Malcolm*

Malcolm Rifkind



DEFENCE: TRU's at Alconbum, Apr 80





MINISTRY OF DEFENCE  
MAIN BUILDING WHITEHALL LONDON SW1A 2HB

Telephone 071-21 82216 (Direct Dialling)  
071-21 89000 (Switchboard)

MINISTER OF STATE FOR  
THE ARMED FORCES

D/MIN(AF)/AH/10/4

17 May 1991

Dear Dominic,

USAF BASE CLOSURES

*flap*  
You might be interested in the attached press release. The background was set out in the Defence Secretary's minute to the Prime Minister of 28 April. Mr Hamilton has written separately on constituency aspects.

*Yours,*  
*Jul*  
J A Miller  
Private Secretary

Dominic Morris Esq  
10 Downing Street



# ROYAL AIR FORCE NEWS RELEASE

Issued by: Public Relations (Royal Air Force), Ministry of Defence, Main Building, Whitehall, London SW1A 2HB 01-218 3253/4

13/91

17 May 1991

## USAF BASE CLOSURES IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

The United States Department of Defense has announced the closure of two bases in the United Kingdom. The United States Air Force will begin their withdrawal from RAF Bentwaters and RAF Woodbridge in 1992 and both stations will be returned to the Ministry of Defence by September 1993.

The 81st Tactical Fighter Wing, based with their A-10 aircraft at RAF Bentwaters and RAF Woodbridge in Suffolk, will be returning to the United States. The 21st and 67th Special Operations Squadrons currently based at RAF Woodbridge, together with the headquarters of the 39th Special Operations Wing, now based at Rhein Main, will be relocating to RAF Alconbury in Cambridgeshire.

RAF Bentwaters and RAF Woodbridge are presently manned by 4,100 United States military and 150 United States civilian personal and dependents, together with 150 British civilians locally employed by the USAF.

The Ministry of Defence employs some 320 industrial and non-industrial staff at these bases for whom every effort will be made to find alternative government employment if they so wish. In the event of redundancies, consultation will take place with the trade unions and the normal conditions of service will apply. The future use of RAF Bentwaters and RAF Woodbridge has yet to be determined.



DEFENCE: base of us ground cruise

Missiles

Ap 1980

170

765

1991



MINISTRY OF DEFENCE  
 MAIN BUILDING WHITEHALL LONDON SW1A 2HB

Telephone 071-21 82216 (Direct Dialling)  
 071-21 89000 (Switchboard)

*vice Barbara  
 M. O'Donnell*

*Prime Minister*

MINISTER OF STATE FOR  
 THE ARMED FORCES

D/MIN(AF)/AH/10/4

✓

*15<sup>th</sup>* May 1991

*[Signature]*  
*121*

*Dear Prime Minister*

In Tom King's absence overseas, I am writing to let you know that we expect the United States authorities to announce further base changes on 17 May 1991 and that RAF Alconbury in your constituency will be affected.

The United States Air Force plans to remove all A-10 aircraft from RAF Alconbury and return them to the United States. This operation will possibly begin as early as October 1991, but in any event will begin by October 1992. It is also intended to consolidate all United States Special Operations forces in Europe at Alconbury during 1992. As a result, 5 MC-130 and 6 HC-130 fixed wing aircraft together with 6 MH-53 helicopters will be moved to the base. 7 of the TR1 aircraft currently at RAF Alconbury will remain there. The net result of these changes will be a significant reduction in the number of aircraft at the base.

The role of the Special Operations forces means that some low level and night flying training will be required, but precise flying patterns and operating hours will be the subject of further negotiations.

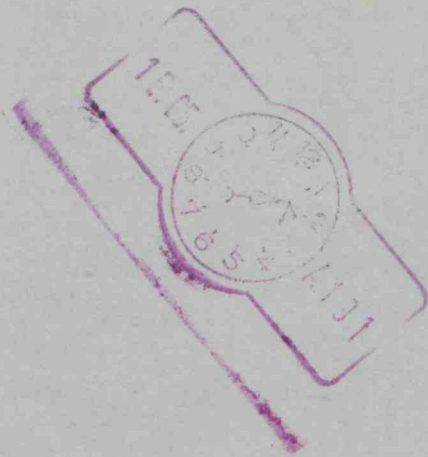
The overall effect of the changes in manpower terms will be a small decrease in the number of US military personnel at the base. The US authorities have confirmed that these plans will have little, if any, effect on the number of UK civilians employed there. Any job losses will be at least offset by the planned developments at RAF Molesworth.

I would be most grateful if you would treat this letter in confidence until the announcement is made.

*Yours ever  
 Archie*

ARCHIE HAMILTON

The Rt Hon John Major MP



SECRET  
MANAGEMENT IN CONFIDENCE



10 DOWNING STREET  
LONDON SW1A 2AA

*From the Private Secretary*

1 May 1991

PROPOSED US BASE REALIGNMENTS IN THE UK

The Prime Minister was grateful to the Defence Secretary for his minute of 28 April about changes in US dispositions at RAF Alconbury. The Prime Minister is content with what is proposed. It would be helpful to know when the announcement is to be made and in what terms.

J S WALL

Simon Webb Esq  
Ministry of Defence

SECRET

TLO  
EA  
C: Foreign Base  
cc PC  
15



SECRETARY OF STATE

14a-c  
cfc  
①

Prime Minister

This affects your constituency.  
Latest word is that the US  
may announce on Wednesday.

MO 14/2/58

Is this ok - a substance?

✓ Content of

PRIME MINISTER

Spall  
- 19/6

PROPOSED US BASE REALIGNMENTS IN THE UK

The United States have recently sent us proposals for base re-alignment in this country in accordance with the standard arrangement that such proposals are reviewed with host Governments.

The list includes proposals for RAF Alconbury in your constituency similar to those we had expected. Following the proposed US withdrawal from RAF Woodbridge, the US authorities plan to move their Special Operations forces currently at RAF Woodbridge, together with a Wing Headquarters and a squadron from Rhein Main Air Base in Germany, to RAF Alconbury during 1992. It is also their intention to remove the 36 A-10 aircraft currently based at RAF Alconbury; this could begin as early as October this year, but in any event will begin by October 1992.

You will be aware that RAF Alconbury is currently the base for 11 TR1 aircraft as well as the A-10s. The US authorities already plan to reduce the number of TR1s to 7. As a result of the Special Operations forces consolidation they would be joined by 5 MC-130 and 6 HC-130 fixed wing aircraft (Hercules variants), together with 6 MH-53 helicopters. The net result would, therefore, be a significant reduction in the number of aircraft at the base.

The role of the Special Operations forces includes clandestine long range operations in hostile territory using precision navigation and night low level terrain avoidance and terrain



b



SECRETARY OF STATE

following radar. These forces also have a subsidiary search and rescue function. Some low level and night flying training will clearly be required and precise flying patterns and operating hours will need to be the subject of further negotiation.

The HC-130 and MC-130 fixed wing aircraft have been classified as "quieter category" by the Civil Aviation Authority. Although the MH-53 helicopters generate more noise, this does tend to be much more localised than that produced by fixed wing aircraft. A noise compensation scheme is already in place at RAF Alconbury, based on Phantoms which are no longer deployed there, and it is unlikely that this will have to be extended as a result of the proposed deployment. A new noise survey will be carried out should this prove to be necessary (any noise generated by the night flying will, of course, be a particularly sensitive issue).

The overall effect in manpower terms of the withdrawal of A-10 aircraft and the redeployment of the Special Operations forces will be a small decrease in the number of US military personnel at the base. The US authorities have confirmed that these plans will have little, if any, effect on the number of UK civilians employed there.

These appear to be sensible proposals, and they represent an efficient and cost-effective arrangement of US assets in this country. There may be some presentational difficulties because of the operational requirements of the Special Operations forces, but I believe that these can be overcome. If you are content, the US propose that an announcement be made sometime within the next few weeks. I will let you know the plans for a public announcement and let you have a letter which you could draw on in public.





SECRETARY OF STATE

I am sending a copy of this minute to the Foreign Secretary and Sir Robin Butler.

I hope these changes are alright for you, but if there are any points you would like me to pursue with the Americans, I should be very happy to do so

Ministry of Defence  
28th April 1991

(T K)

Handwritten signature and initials, possibly 'TK'.



DEFENCE: This at Alconbury, Av80





CONFIDENTIAL



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

4 August 1981

*Def*

*hm  
JW*

*Dear Sir*

Proposed Basing of US EF-111 Aircraft  
at RAF Upper Heyford

Mr Nott minuted Lord Carrington on 24 July about the US proposal to station 13 EF-111 EW aircraft at RAF Upper Heyford from early in 1984. Lord Carrington agrees. I understand that the Americans have already been informed.

I am copying this letter to Clive Whitmore (No. 10) and David Wright (Cabinet Office).

*Yours ever*  
*[Signature]*

(B J P Fall)  
Private Secretary

B M Norbury Esq  
Ministry of Defence

CONFIDENTIAL



Defence (2)  
Prime Minister  
Rush  
mt

MO 11/2/2

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

The US have sought approval through your officials for the permanent stationing at RAF Upper Heyford of 13 EF-111 EW aircraft. They have proposed that deployment should begin early in 1984 and be completed in 1985. The aircraft would be additional to the three squadrons of F-111E Strike/Attack aircraft already based at Upper Heyford.

2. The E F-111 aircraft would be NATO assigned and available to meet the requirements for support of both US and Allied Tactical Forces. They are designed to provide stand-off electronic jamming, penetration escort and jamming in support of close air support and battlefield interdiction. In peacetime they would be able to participate in ECCM exercises, and in particular to take part in local exercises with other UK based aircraft against the UK Air Defence Ground Environment (UKADGE) and at the Spadeadam EW Range.
3. Operationally the aircraft would represent a significant enhancement of NATO's "in theatre" capability and their participation in UKADGE exercises, at no cost, would help ease our problems following the reduction in the number of Canberras in meeting EW training requirements. The local economy would benefit from necessary work services costing about £7M.
4. There would be a requirement for MOD to purchase an additional 30 or so acres of land adjacent to the station for the construction of necessary support facilities. A few years ago we were near to



finalising negotiations to acquire this land for a similar purpose when the requirement was shelved. It is therefore not anticipated that there should be any insuperable problems in purchasing it now. Outline planning permission was obtained for the buildings envisaged under this earlier scheme and, although a new approach is now necessary, we have no reason to think that clearing the present, slightly different, scheme will cause any difficulties. Unlike the situation at RAF Fairford, we have made no public statements concerning Upper Heyford that should inhibit our approving the basing of EF 111s there. Making public news of this basing decision should not in my view create local political difficulties in relation to an announcement of our agreement to the wartime basing of B52s at Fairford, an announcement which, as you know, we would in any case plan to delay until the spring of 1982 at the earliest.

5. Against this background, and despite the possible local problems caused by an approximately ten per cent increase in flying from Upper Heyford, I believe that it is in our overall military and political interest to agree to the US request.

6. If you agree, and time permits, I would propose to announce this in a Written Parliamentary Answer before the Recess.

7. I am sending a copy of this minute to the Prime Minister; and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

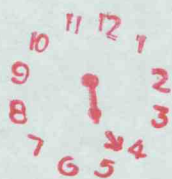
JS

Ministry of Defence

24th July 1981



24 JUL 1981



Deference



10 DOWNING STREET

~~MODBA~~

Paul

The PM did not see this Questions briefing today, but you will see from the file that she approved the decision last August.

These pp should be added to this CF file for safe keeping.

MS

2/4

BACKGROUND NOTE

TR1 DEPLOYMENT AT RAF ALCONBURY

1. The TR1 is basically a U2 airframe with updated avionics which include ASARS (Advanced Synthetic Aperture Radar System) a notable step forward in radar technology enabling the operator to select from a wide scan a particular area for high resolution coverage. In time of tension and war this system has great value for cross-border reconnaissance as a means of detecting both warlike preparations and actual operational deployments. The USAF concept of operations at such times is to mount a continuous 2 aircraft patrol to give wide coverage of the Warsaw Pact side of the border in the Central Region; the TR1s will operate at high altitude on the Western side of the border, or over the Western side of the battle area once hostilities had commenced.
  
2. We have accepted the US view that an in-place force of 20 aircraft is the minimum required to sustain this concept of operations from the early stages of tension or war taking account of battle losses and aircraft serviceability. The force might in war be augmented by up to a further 8 aircraft.
  
3. The deployment to the UK was agreed because we recognise the desirability of having such an important asset readily available in Europe and once there to base the aircraft as far as possible to the rear. It also gives us guaranteed access to the US strategic intelligence programme. RAF Alconbury was chosen because, although in due course it will be housing personnel from the 4 GLCM flights at nearby Molesworth, it still has a greater capacity than any other USAF base in the UK to absorb the TR1 force, its hardened aircraft

**TOP SECRET**

shelters and accompanying personnel. However, some additional land acquisition will be necessary. It also has other facilities which are used by the reconnaissance aircraft already based there which would need to be expensively duplicated if the TR1 were to be based elsewhere.

4. The TR1 force will begin to arrive in 1983 and build up to its full strength in 1985/6. The USAF estimate that the force would generate up to 40 sorties a week, mainly training but eventually including two or three sorties a week as part of the US strategic intelligence programme utilising the aircraft's SIGINT equipment. In the latter context the TR1s would supplant the U2 now based at Mildenhall and operate in much the same areas. These flights would of course have to be governed by the same requirements for UK political approval as apply to the U2 and other UK-mounted radio proving flights.

5. The TR1 force will be assigned to NATO and will constitute a major improvement to NATO's tactical reconnaissance capabilities.

6. The decision to accept the TR1 force in the UK was agreed jointly by the Prime Minister, Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs and Secretary of State for Defence.

**TOP SECRET**

LINE TO TAKE

I have nothing to add to the answer given by my honourable Friend, the Under Secretary of State for Defence for the Royal Air Force, on Tuesday last.



SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION AND ANSWER BRIEF

U2 spy plane under another name?

No. Although the TR1 uses a modified version of the U2 airframe it is an all weather reconnaissance aircraft which will perform high altitude reconnaissance from behind our own lines of the battle area and the areas behind it. It is similar to other USAF reconnaissance aircraft already deployed in Europe but has a much greater capability. The TR1 aircraft will be committed to NATO in exactly the same way as other aircraft of the United States and other nations in Europe. It will provide essential information for commanders and political leaders in crisis or war.

Role in peacetime?

Like all air force units, primary role in peacetime is to train extensively to maintain operational readiness and effectiveness of both air and ground crews.

Why additional capability needed?

Increasing mobility and readiness of soviet forces makes tactical reconnaissance information provided by TR1 essential for defensive planning.

Build-up of US forces escalatory?

By enhancing NATO's conventional capabilities and reducing WP's ability to mount a surprise attack this force will contribute to deterrence and stability.

UK access to TR1 reconnaissance?

Yes.

UK control over the use of TR1?

These aircraft will operate with the full agreement of Her Majesty's Government.

No of aircraft?

There will be one squadron of TR1s assigned to RAF Alconbury in Cambridgeshire with the first aircraft arriving in 1983. It is not our usual practice to reveal exact numbers of aircraft.

Why Alconbury?

RAF Alconbury already accommodates one squadron of RF-4C tactical reconnaissance aircraft and, until 1976 accommodated three squadrons of Phantom RF-4Cs. Thus, Alconbury offers the advantage of being an existing reconnaissance station, with the associated support and specialist facilities.

Large scale expansion of Alconbury? Land acquisition?

The TR1 will add an estimated 1,450 personnel, plus dependents, to the Alconbury population. Alconbury will also in due course accommodate US personnel associated with the GLCM base at Molesworth. Some new construction will be required to facilitate the aircraft basing (to include new hardened shelters for the TR1 aircraft) and to accommodate the additional personnel. Over a five year period the total construction cost is estimated to be about £40m which will benefit the local economy. It is anticipated that nearly all new construction can be placed on existing Ministry of Defence property but some additional land may also be required. Any proposals for land

acquisition would, of course, be kept to the minimum and be subject to the usual planning procedures.

Details of aircraft capabilities and operations planned?

You would not expect us to disclose details of any information which might be helpful to a potential enemy.

What about U2 at RAF Mildenhall?

There is no direct connection between the TR1s and the U2 aircraft which have operated from RAF Mildenhall for a number of years.

Is there any link between the proposed TR1 deployment to RAF Alconbury and that of GLCMs to Molesworth?

No.

# US 'spy-plane' squadron to come to Britain

By David Fairhall

Britain's role as an "unsinkable aircraft carrier" for US forces in Europe is to be extended to the basing of a new squadron of tactical U2 reconnaissance aircraft at Alconbury, near Huntingdon. The new deployment was announced yesterday by the Defence Under-Secretary, Mr Geoffrey Pattie, in a written answer to a parliamentary question.

The American aircraft, he said, "would provide timely tactical reconnaissance information in all weathers about the deployment and movement of enemy forces in time of crisis or war." They would reduce the likelihood of surprise attack and enable NATO commanders to deploy their own forces in the best way to resist aggression.

The U2 is a specialised unarmed reconnaissance aircraft which looks rather like a jet-powered glider, capable of operating at heights of up to 90,000 feet. In its original form it was used for secret strategic reconnaissance over the Soviet Union — a real "spy plane."

Nowadays, much of its work has been taken over by space satellites, although U2s still occasionally operate from the USAF base at Mildenhall in Suffolk, and from RAF Akrotiri in Cyprus. A new tactical reconnaissance version known as the TRI is now being built by Lockheed for shorter-range battlefield surveillance in Europe.

This aircraft, equipped with cameras angled sideways to observe enemy territory from the security of its own side's border, will be based at Alconbury. It will join the USAF's 10th Tactical Reconnaissance Wing and the squadron of F3E fighters, which play the role of Soviet MiG 21s in dog-fight training for the American pilots.

The TRI's arrival in Britain will increase the number of American servicemen and their families at Alconbury from 2,400 to 3,800. Mr Pattie was careful to point out in his written answer that the construction work at the airfield will inject about £40 million into the local economy over the next five years.

HANSARD 31 MARCH 1981

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*Written Answers*

62

**United States Air Force (Alconbury)**

**Mr. Major** asked the Secretary of State for Defence whether there are any proposed changes in the deployment of the United States Air Force aircraft to RAF Alconbury.

**Mr. Pattie:** Yes. Her Majesty's Government have agreed to a request from the United States Government to station TR1 reconnaissance aircraft at RAF Alconbury. The role of the aircraft will be to provide timely tactical reconnaissance information in all weathers about the deployment and movement of enemy forces in a time of crisis or war. This will reduce the likelihood of surprise attack and enable NATO commanders to deploy their own forces in the best way to resist aggression. Basing a TR1 force in Europe will enable it to be readily available for use in a time of crisis or war. The deployment of these aircraft will involve additional construction work, at an estimated cost of about £40 million over a five-year period, which will benefit the local economy.

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Defence 12  
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10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Private Secretary*

SIR ROBERT ARMSTRONG

CONTROL OF GLCM BASES

The Prime Minister has seen your minute to me of 26 March about the reference in the forthcoming Defence White Paper to the control of American GLCMs to be stationed in this country. The Prime Minister agrees with you that the short formula in paragraph 3 of your minute is sufficient for our purposes. She believes that, if necessary, we can use the longer formula in the debate on the White Paper.

M. O'D. B. ALEXANDER

27 March 1981

SECRET

Ref. A04552

MR ALEXANDER

The American formula is preferred for our purpose. We can use the word 'control' in the White Paper. The choice is between the formulation in para 2 (preferred by the Notts) & that in para 3 (preferred by the Americans & recommended by Sir R. Armstrong.) I should have thought we could live with that in para 3: it means the same as that in para 2. Agree? 11

Control of GLCM Bases

You will remember that the United States Government asked us last week to delete in the forthcoming Defence White Paper the whole of the proposed paragraph on control of American GLCMs to be stationed in Britain. The Prime Minister's initial inclination was to concur. In the light of strong representations from Mr Nott, however, she agreed (Mr Sanders's letter to Mr Norbury of 23 March) that we should try on the Americans, as a compromise, a shortened version of the disputed passage; but that, if they did not accept this, we should delete the passage altogether.

2. The shortened version reads as follows:

"As has been made clear in Parliament, under very long standing arrangements the use of the bases concerned in an emergency would be a matter for joint decision by Her Majesty's Government and the Government of the United States in the light of the circumstances prevailing at the time".

3. The Americans have now replied. They are still very concerned, no doubt primarily because of the effect the White Paper may have on the Italians, who are currently negotiating about United States GLCMs to be stationed in Italy but do not have the same privileged position that we do as regards nuclear use depending on joint decision. In response to our strong representations, the Americans now accept that the White Paper must address the subject. But they would much prefer us to use an even shorter formula, to the effect that the United States GLCMs

"will be stationed in the United Kingdom on the same basis as other United States nuclear weapons since 1948".

If we cannot accept that, however, they are prepared to live with our formula as in paragraph 2 above.

✓  
ms





4. We therefore have to choose. The essential difference between the two formulas is that theirs does not mention "joint decision" and ours does. On behalf of the Ministry of Defence Mr Pattie and Sir Frank Cooper, in Mr Nott's absence, strongly advise that we stick to our formula. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office would be content either way. My own preference would be to accept the American formula. I recognise the force of the Ministry of Defence argument, as put by Mr Nott, that if we say too little on this domestically sensitive subject we may arouse suspicions and Parliamentary Questions, which we should have to allay by reverting to the "joint decision" formula. But the Americans would be much less disturbed by that than by having the formula in high profile in the White Paper. They are clearly trying to be as helpful as they can, bearing in mind the sensitivities of other members of the Alliance; and it is obviously in our interest that their difficulties with other allies about the acceptance of GLCMs should not be exacerbated. Our relations with the new Administration on this very important subject were got off to a good start when the Prime Minister was in Washington; but these are still early days. I therefore think that we should be content to adopt the American formula in paragraph 3 above.

5. We need to settle the matter by tomorrow morning, when the White Paper finally goes to press. If you can let me know the Prime Minister's decision, I will pass it to the Ministry of Defence (and Foreign and Commonwealth Office) and also tell the Americans.

REA

ROBERT ARMSTRONG

26 March 1981

10

Defence

26

SECRET



10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Private Secretary*

23 March 1981

Control of GLCM Bases

The Prime Minister has seen your letter to Clive Whitmore of 19 March. She has commented that she has sympathy with your Secretary of State's arguments; she would therefore be happy for the revised draft sentence at the top of page 2 of your letter to be offered to the Americans. She hopes that they will approve it. If not, the sentence should be deleted in its entirety.

I am copying this letter to George Walden (Foreign and Commonwealth Office), David Heyhoe (Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster's Office) and David Wright (Cabinet Office).

B.M. Norbury Esq  
Ministry of Defence.

N. I. SANDERS

SECRET

✓

PRIME MINISTER

DEFENCE WHITE PAPER : CONTROL OF GLCM BASES

You will remember that after Cabinet yesterday Sir Robert Armstrong had a word with you about American misgivings about the last sentence of paragraph 218 of the Defence White Paper, and you decided that the simplest course was to delete the sentence altogether. Just to remind you the sentence reads as follows:-

*Temporarily retained, Wayland, 28/11/17*

THIS IS A COPY. THE ORIGINAL IS  
RETAINED UNDER SECTION 3 (4)  
OF THE PUBLIC RECORDS ACT

Mr Nott did not take part in your conversation with Sir Robert Armstrong, and he was told about your decision later yesterday. He is not, however, persuaded that the sentence needs to be deleted completely, and in the attached letter from his Private Secretary he has proposed an alternative form of words which he thinks we should put to the Americans. Sir Robert Armstrong thinks that you should stand by your earlier decision that the sentence should be removed completely. There is no means of discussing the problem now with Mr Nott for he leaves for the Middle East over the weekend.

/I suggest ....

SECRET

- 2 -

I suggest that we try out Mr Nott's new sentence on the Americans early next week. If they are happy with it, fine. But if they are not, then we revert to the deletion of the sentence in its entirety; and Mr Nott would at least have had the satisfaction of knowing that we had had another go at the Americans.

Agree that we should proceed in this way ?

I agree - I hope our  
American friends will <sup>KW.</sup>  
approve the revised version  
because I have sympathy with  
J.N.'s arguments.

ms

20 March 1981

SECRET



MINISTRY OF DEFENCE  
MAIN BUILDING WHITEHALL LONDON SW1  
Telephone 01-~~920 7022~~ 218 2111/3

MO 21/2/26

19th March 1981

Dear Clin,

CONTROL OF GLCM BASES

As I understand the Prime Minister knows, and as my Secretary of State was advised yesterday evening, a problem has arisen over the text of the Defence White Paper relating to the control of GLCM bases in this country. Following the Prime Minister's visit to Washington, Sir Robert Armstrong, with the agreement of MOD and FCO officials, notified the proposed text on this point (one of known sensitivity to the Americans) to the State Department in Washington, in order that they could be made aware of the way in which we were proposing to deal with it. The Americans have now replied raising objections.

The objections are of two kinds. On the one hand the Americans argue that our proposed language links the formula originating from the Truman-Churchill agreement which the Prime Minister used in reply to a Parliamentary Question on 21st December 1979 (with the specific consent of the Americans) and which has been subsequently repeated in the House on several occasions, with some other material that has not been used previously. They fear that the result could be read as drawing too clear a distinction between the arrangements the Americans have with us and those they have with other countries, and also that it makes the exact nature of the Prime Minister's highly classified agreement with the President too explicit. Their second objection is more generally that they do not wish to see this issue highlighted at all by inclusion in a document with as high a profile as our Defence White Paper.

C A Whitmore Esq



Mr Nott thinks that we should be prepared to meet the Americans on the first of their points, and could accept a considerable shortening of the sentence in question so that it would read as follows:

"As has been made clear in Parliament, under very longstanding arrangements the use of the bases concerned in an emergency would be a matter for joint decision by Her Majesty's Government and the Government of the United States in the light of the circumstances prevailing at the time."

This would effectively be a simple repetition of the agreed Truman-Churchill formula.

But Mr Nott is very much more concerned about the second objection which the Americans have raised. It seems to him that in a document which so fully explains our general nuclear posture and the particular implications of our acceptance of GLCMs in the United Kingdom, the omission of these standard words would be pounced upon, and that this could very well lead to speculation that we have in some way retreated from the line reiterated in the House of Commons. This could well provoke a debate which would cause more publicity and drama, which would be unwelcome to the Americans as well as ourselves.

My Secretary of State therefore believes that Sir Robert Armstrong should be authorized to go back to the Americans on the foregoing lines, explaining that we are willing to modify the language in the White Paper, but making it clear that we do not believe we can totally avoid the issue. He should also make it clear that we are about to go to print and that the revised text will have to be finalised by 27th March at the very latest.

I am sending copies of this letter to George Walden(FCO), David Heyhoe (Office of the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster) and David Wright (Cabinet Office);

*Yours and  
Brian*

(B M NORBURY)



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

PRIME MINISTER

15 August 1980

To see. You  
approved this,  
subject to Lord  
Carrington's agreement,  
earlier.

MS

Dear Jonathan,

Basing of US TR-1 Aircraft at Alconbury

The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary has seen the Defence Secretary's minute MO 11/2/2/2 of 5 August about the proposed deployment of these US aircraft to the UK.

Like Mr Pym, Lord Carrington would have preferred not to have been faced with another major US deployment decision affecting Alconbury so soon after the announcement that GLCMs will be based at nearby Molesworth. But he realises that this subject came up during our discussions with the Americans about GLCMs and that, in view of the problems over securing NATO financial support, we cannot delay a decision.

Lord Carrington is also struck by the significant number of TR-1 aircraft involved compared to the one U2 aircraft now stationed here. Twenty seems a lot to sustain a continuous patrol by two. But on the basis that the Defence Secretary is satisfied that this is the minimum number of aircraft necessary to carry out the important roles envisaged for the TR-1 and that the full twenty are needed here permanently in peacetime, Lord Carrington would be content to accept the proposal.

When the time comes, Lord Carrington considers that it will be important that any announcement should concentrate on the fact that these aircraft will be assigned to NATO in a tactical reconnaissance role. The details could be agreed with the American nearer the time. Even so, Lord Carrington thinks that the decision may arouse a good deal of domestic criticism, not least in the Alconbury area: it is one thing to have GLCM in the vicinity and quite another to have a further twenty noisy aircraft, particularly with their U2 connotation. Adverse comment can also be expected from the Soviet Union and its Warsaw Pact allies, but Lord Carrington does not consider we need worry about this aspect.

I am sending copies of this letter to Nick Sanders (No 10), and David Wright (Cabinet Office).

Yours etc  
Paul

(P Lever)  
Private Secretary

Jonathon Dawson Esq  
Private Secretary  
Ministry of Defence

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15 AUG 1980



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COPY NO 4 OF 4 COPIES

15 August 1980

Basing of US TR-1 Aircraft at Alconbury

The Prime Minister has seen your Secretary of State's minute No. 11/2/2/2 of 5 August. She is content with the proposal set out in that minute, subject to the points made by the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary, set out in Paul Lever's letter to Jonathan Dawson of 15 August, about the number of aircraft and the terms of any announcement.

I am copying this letter to Paul Lever (Foreign and Commonwealth Office) and David Wright (Cabinet Office).

N J SANDERS

Brian Norbury, Esq.,  
Ministry of Defence.

TOP SECRET

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Prime Minister 5

Sir Robert Armstrong  
endorses Mr Pym's proposal,  
which you saw earlier  
in the week-in

Ref. A02859

Copy No. 1 of 3 Copies

MR. WHITMORE

*mm*

*MD 21/8*

American Spy Planes

The Prime Minister will have seen the Secretary of State for Defence's minute of 5th August to the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary (MO 11/2/2/2) proposing agreement to the peacetime deployment of 20 TR1s at the United States base at Alconbury, near Molesworth.

2.

3. Alconbury is one of seven United States Air Force operating bases in this country. It is at present one of the least heavily used, but there are two squadrons of Phantoms at present deployed there (18 aircraft) and also 18 F5s (primarily in a training role). There would be some additional local job opportunities created by the proposed additional deployment of aircraft.

4. One important point not mentioned by Mr. Pym is that when the Americans were calculating the costs of deploying Ground Launched Cruise Missiles at Molesworth they assumed that we would agree to this additional aircraft deployment at Alconbury. If we do not, the result is likely to be an increase in the overhead costs of the GLCM deployment, on which the Americans would look to the United Kingdom for some assistance. We would not be bound to agree to this, but the resulting argument would be unhelpful to Anglo-American relations.

5. The local attitude towards the American base at Alconbury is less harshly critical than it is for example at Greenham Common, but there have been some complaints about noise there in the past.

*Temporarily retained, (Wayland, 28/11/17)*

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TOP SECRET

TOP SECRET



6. The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary is expected to agree to Mr. Pym's proposal. But he may at the same time emphasise that there will be some political cost both in terms of East-West relations and in terms of anti-American sentiment in Britain; and he may therefore urge that the Americans' intentions, and specifically the need for so large a force, be further probed in Washington, where the proposal may well not have been fully cleared with all the agencies concerned.

7. Such worries are reasonable. But the arguments for saying Yes, both on military and on general Alliance grounds, are clearly strong. It is true that the case for so large a force in peacetime is not well made out (and that there is an implausible ring about the claim that most of the peacetime flying would only be for training purposes). But such political cost as there is would not be much less if the force were smaller; and the important thing is that flights would be subject to existing arrangements for Ministerial approval. The JIC Secretariat confirm the high value of the intelligence likely to be involved.

8. Subject to the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary's views, therefore, I think the Prime Minister can concur in Mr. Pym's proposal.

REA

ROBERT ARMSTRONG

8th August, 1980

TOP SECRET

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TOP SECRET



8 AUG 1980

The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary is asked to refer to Mr. Ryan's proposal. But he must be aware that the same implications will be felt in terms of East-West relations and in terms of anti-American sentiment in Britain, and he may therefore wish to discuss intentions, and especially the need for a large force, before he proceeds in Washington, and the proposal may well not have been fully cleared with all the agencies concerned.

Each writer is responsible. But the arguments for saying Yes, both on military and on general Alliance grounds, are clearly strong. It is true that the case for a large force in particular is not well made out (and that there is an impracticable ring about the claim that most of the necessary living would only be for training purposes). But each writer's case is strong and it would not be fair to the force weakly, and the first order of business is that it should be subject to existing arrangements for financial approval. The JIC should confirm the value of the facilities likely to be involved.

Subject to the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary's views, I think the Foreign Secretary should endorse Mr. Ryan's proposal.

ROBERT ARTHUR

18 August 1980

TOP SECRET

MO 11/2/2/2

I agree.  
mt

Prime Minister  
Content to agree basing of  
TR1's at Alconbury, subject  
to had Cunningham's comments  
on his return?

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH SECRETARY

BASING OF US TR1'S AT ALCONBURY

MAF 6/8

When we earlier discussed with the Americans the basing in the United Kingdom of their cruise missiles we undertook to them that we would deal urgently with their request to base TR1's at Alconbury.

2. The TR1 is basically an updated U2 with the addition of a new and advanced radar system which in the Tactical Reconnaissance (hence TR) role enables the aircraft while operating west of the East/West border to obtain high-resolution radar coverage of large areas of the eastern side. I am advised that the system is an important improvement to NATO's capabilities in the Central Region to detect warlike preparations in a time of tension and to provide in war timely and comprehensive battlefield intelligence to the NATO Commanders to whom the aircraft would be assigned. The Americans assure us that a permanently-based force of 20 such aircraft (augmented in war by up to a further 8) is the minimum required to sustain a continuous 2 aircraft patrol in the early stages of tension or war. This is a large force but its size is dictated by forecast aircraft serviceability (it is a complex system) and likely battle losses. Such a valuable military asset should, the Americans believe, be stationed as far to the rear as is practicable. Hence their choice of the UK, and of Alconbury which, of their active bases here, is the only one capable of accommodating the force. I see no practical alternative to this choice. The first aircraft would arrive in 1982 and the whole force would be in position in 1985. It would generate about 40 sorties a week, a significant but, I believe, a not unacceptable increase in aircraft activity at Alconbury.

3. Although most of the peacetime flying would be purely for training purposes, the US envisage that some TR1s would participate in the US national strategic intelligence gathering operations already undertaken by USAF aircraft permanently deployed here (the U2 at Mildenhall) or temporarily detached here for the purpose.

Naturally such operations would be of value, and of advantage to the US/UK intelligence relationship, though they would have to be subject to the same processes of Ministerial approval as now apply to existing flights. This aspect of the TR1 force's operations would, of course, necessitate a very careful public line on the force's presence - emphasising its NATO role - the substance and timing of which we would have to agree jointly with the US. I foresee considerable public interest but I believe it should be possible to satisfy it.

4. I would much have preferred not to contemplate another major US deployment decision affecting Alconbury (which is, of course, not very far from Molesworth) so hard on the heels of the GLCM announcement. So I expect would you; I consider, however, that the domestic political problems are manageable. Alconbury is already an active USAF station. It figures in the GLCM deployment plan only as an airfield and a place to house personnel, and local reaction on this score has been muted. There is no necessity for an immediate announcement. On the US side the earliest date on which Congress might have to be told is January 1981; and this could slip if funding is delayed until the FY 83 budget. As far as we are concerned no visible steps will be needed until we have to consult the local planning authority about the associated works programme: I am advised that this need not be until late 1981 or early 1982. There is therefore time to prepare a carefully worded line, and for the GLCM basing decision to have become accepted locally.

5. The US authorities are pressing for an early decision because they want NATO infrastructure funding for the works programme and had already missed the NATO deadline before they wrote to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in May (an infrastructure bid requires host nation agreement to basing). We should try, therefore, to give them a quick response and I believe that it should be favourable, subject to a number of detailed points of which your officials are aware on which



we will need to safeguard our position (eg control of peacetime intelligence flights, land acquisition and so on). I should be glad to know that you agree.

6. I am sending copies of this minute to the Prime Minister; and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

*Handwritten initials: J.P.*

Ministry of Defence

5th August 1980



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*[Faint, illegible red text]*



SPEAKING NOTE ON GROUND-LAUNCHED CRUISE MISSILES  
(GLOM) AND THEIR BASING IN THE UK

✓  
MS

Over the last few years there has been a very alarming increase in Soviet military power at sea, in the air, on land; in conventional and in nuclear forces. This increase is continuing. For example, the Russians deploy a new SS20 missile at a rate of more than one a week. Each of these long-range theatre nuclear weapons has three warheads. The position now is that the Warsaw Pact countries have about four times as many land-based long-range theatre nuclear systems - missiles and aircraft - as all the NATO countries put together. And their advantage is still increasing.

We with our NATO allies have to be strong enough to deter the Russians from risking a war. We don't have to match them soldier for soldier, weapon for weapon. But we do have to have enough military capability to ensure that the Russians know that if they start a war we can defend ourselves, and if they continue with the war we can continue to respond at whatever level of weapons is necessary. This is the way to deter war. This is our policy of deterrence which has kept the peace in Europe over the last 30 years.

But to continue with this policy of deterrence we need to modernise our weapons to ensure that however strong the Russians may become we continue to have the capability to deter them. At present our long-range theatre nuclear forces comprise the American Fllls and our own Vulcan aircraft. These are becoming increasingly vulnerable to attack by the increased Soviet systems. NATO therefore agreed to deploy ground-launched cruise missiles throughout Europe. The plan is to have 572 US cruise and Pershing ballistic missiles in a number of European countries. 160 of the cruise missiles will be based in the UK.

Greenham Common in Berkshire and Molesworth in Cambridgeshire have been chosen as the bases for these cruise missiles in the UK. These sites were chosen after a detailed examination of many other possible sites. They have sufficient space for the missiles, adequate road communications, are near Ministry of Defence land for training purposes, and have the necessary base support facilities.

Although the missiles will be based in peacetime at Greenham Common and Molesworth their whole concept is one of mobility. In times of tension they would be deployed far from these sites.

I notice that the Russians have reacted to our decision by stating that these missiles will put this country in a position of a primary target. This is the kind of reaction we could have expected. They do not refer to the fact that we have offered to negotiate arms control with them in the field of long-range theatre nuclear weapons. Their response to that was that they would be prepared to speak but only if NATO stopped its arrangements for cruise missiles. No word of their stopping their current build-up of SS20s and other weapons. As to Britain being a target in a war, I am afraid that with the kind of warfare which Russia threatens there is no country which is not a possible target. We can only project ourselves by remaining vigilant and strong enough to deter any aggressor.

Paymaster General's Office  
Privy Council Office  
68 Whitehall  
SW1

20 June 1980

[Mr. Hamilton.]

Are you aware, Mr. Speaker, that a statement about Hampden Park was made by the Government. They have now reneged on that statement and, consequently, we are being denied the right to ask the Government why they have taken a different decision.

**Mr. Speaker:** I have to confess that I have received no request for a statement and that I can go no further.

*Defence*

## CRUISE MISSILE SITES

3.33 pm

**The Secretary of State for Defence (Mr. Francis Pym):** With permission, Mr Speaker, I should like to make a statement about ground-launched cruise missiles.

I announced on 13 December last year the NATO Foreign and Defence Minister's decision to modernise the Alliance's long-range theatre nuclear forces. I am now able to advise the House where the 160 cruise missiles to be deployed in the United Kingdom will be stationed.

The missiles will be stationed at two existing military establishments. They are the United States Air Force standby base at RAF Greenham Common, in Berkshire, and RAF Molesworth, a disused airfield in Cambridgeshire, currently used by the United States Air Force for storage purposes. Greenham Common will be the main operating base and will house six flights of cruise missiles. Molesworth will house four flights. It is planned that the first units will deploy at Greenham Common in 1983.

The factors affecting the decision stemmed from the prime operational need to bring the first missiles into service as soon as possible. The choice had therefore to concentrate on establishments already in defence occupation which had sufficient space available and as many as possible of the basic facilities, in particular, adequate accommodation, road communications, and access to training areas and suitable dispersal areas. Many different locations for stationing have been very carefully studied but the two bases chosen proved to be the most suitable in the light of the considerations to which I have just referred.

The deployment of the ground-launched cruise missile force will generate very little aircraft movement at either of the bases—probably no more than a few a month. As to ground movements, it will be necessary from time to time to practise the deployment of the launcher and its support vehicles to dispersed sites away from the base. These exercises will be along preplanned routes and will take place after consultation with the local authorities concerned.

the Manpower Services Commission has had to abandon the examination that it is making, that a special temporary employment programme providing temporary work has been halved and that other cuts in expenditure for the unemployment and training budget have been made? It is no use her expressing concern or trying to say what happened under the last Labour Government. The right hon. Lady has the responsibility now. I want to know what she proposes to do.

**The Prime Minister:** My right hon. hon. Friend the Secretary of State—[HON. MEMBERS: "Answer".]

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. This is very unfair. The Leader of the Opposition was heard. [Interruption.] Order. The Leader of the Opposition was not shouted down. He was heard, and the Prime Minister is also entitled to be heard.

**The Prime Minister:** My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Employment has a programme, which the right hon. Gentleman knows well. It concentrates on the youth opportunities programme. I have one figure ready with regard to Scotland. For example, places for an additional 6,500 entrants to the youth opportunities programme will be provided in Scotland this year. That is 6,500 more than last year. That is good news. With regard to the right hon. Gentleman's comment about printing money, doubtless he will find some of the following phrases familiar.

"We used to think that you could just spend your way out of a recession and increase employment by cutting taxes and boosting Government spending. I tell you, in all candour, that that option no longer exists and that, in so far as it did exist, it worked only by injecting a bigger dose of inflation into the economy on each occasion, followed by a higher level of unemployment as the next step."

That is true today as well.

**Mr. Callaghan:** I quite realise that the right hon. Lady is in a difficult position when she is reduced to quoting that sort of thing. We can debate those issues at any time. The point I wish to put to the right hon. Lady, and she knows it, is that she is slashing into programmes. School leavers will not get training, neither will they get jobs. We can debate what should be done about it but she is coming

forward with no proposals at all. That is the charge that I lay at her door. It is time that she did something.

**The Prime Minister:** As the right hon. Gentleman knows, extensive proposals are already in operation. What he is asking us to do is print more money, and, as he knows, that would only produce higher inflation followed by higher unemployment which, he will recall, has been the history of the last 20 years.

## HAMPDEN PARK STADIUM

**Mr. Robert Hughes:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. Have you received an application from the Secretary of State for Scotland to make a statement on the Government's decision not to proceed with the Hampden Park reconstruction? I ask you, Mr. Speaker, because I understand that the announcement was made just after noon today, which was too late to allow hon. Members to table private notice questions. I seek your guidance on what protection exists for Back Benchers in the face of this procedural chicanery, which attempts to stifle questions by hon. Members.

**Mr. Speaker:** I have received no request about the matter raised by the hon. Member.

**Mr. Harry Ewing:** Further to that point of order Mr. Speaker, you will have noticed that from time to time we have had occasion to raise with you the matter of the treatment of Scottish Members on both sides of the House. The Government should pay attention to how the Scottish Office is treating the House. This has happened on numerous occasions. I ask you, Mr. Speaker, to refer to the Leader of the House for his consideration of the question of the way in which Scottish Members of Parliament have been treated by the Secretary of State and the Under-Secretaries of State for Scotland on various important matters involving major policy changes.

**Mr. Speaker:** The Leader of the House is present and he will have heard what the hon. Member for Stirling, Falkirk and Grangemouth (Mr. Ewing) said.

**Mr. James Hamilton:** Further to the points of order made by my hon. Friends.

No live missiles, or warheads, will be carried on exercises at any time, and no missile test-flying will take place in this country. The missiles will be stored in purpose-built shelters in conditions that fully meet the United Kingdom's very stringent safety standards—standards that have proved themselves effective since the inception of a nuclear capability in Britain. As part of the security arrangements we shall be contributing 220 British personnel towards the guard forces for the bases and dispersal deployments.

I am having an information folder prepared covering all aspects of the basing of cruise missiles in the United Kingdom. Copies will be placed in the Library and will also be sent to the local authorities in the areas concerned. The information folder will also be available to those members of the public living in the areas of the sites who wish to know more about the reasons underlying these decisions.

I am not notifying the local authorities concerned about the deployment, and their views on the environmental and social aspects of the arrival of the units will be taken into account to the fullest possible extent. They will of course be consulted in due course on the detailed building plans.

The total cost to the United Kingdom of the whole modernisation programme throughout the Alliance will be about £16 million. As I made clear in the House on 13 December, the 160 missiles to be based in the United Kingdom are an integral part of a programme to deploy 572 United States missiles in a number of European countries. The Alliance-wide support for the new system and its widely spread deployment throughout Europe is a clear expression of the determination of NATO as a whole to preserve its security.

The Soviet Union has developed a large and expanding capability in long-range theatre nuclear forces which directly threatens the whole of Western Europe. In view of the markedly increasing threat that we face, the Alliance has decided that it is essential to modernise its own theatre nuclear forces, which are ageing and becoming increasingly vulnerable. At the same time, the Government and the Alliance remain fully

committed to the parallel arms control approach, which was agreed in December as part of the modernisation decision.

As the House will be aware, the Soviet Union has rejected repeated offers by the United States to negotiate and has maintained its obviously unacceptable demand that NATO should abandon its modernisation programme as a precondition for negotiation. However, we shall continue to try to persuade the Russians to come to the table and play their part in a genuine negotiation.

The instability in the world today and the growing military strength of the Warsaw Pact countries require us to be exceptionally vigilant. NATO's unanimous decision on theatre nuclear modernisation was taken for the continuing security of the whole Alliance, and the United Kingdom is determined to play her full part.

**Mr. Rodgers:** The whole House will welcome the fact that the right hon. Gentleman has made an oral statement today and not passed the matter off in the way that some of his right hon. Friends do in a written answer.

I know that the right hon. Gentleman will understand that even amongst those who accept the inevitable necessity for nuclear weapons and believe that Britain should be properly defended, these decisions and locations are bound to provoke strong feelings and natural anxieties. Although it is principally a matter for hon. Members who are directly concerned, it is right that the Government should accept an obligation to explain why these decisions have been taken and to deal fully with the genuine anxieties of the many people who will be affected by them.

The right hon. Gentleman referred to the arrangements for the security of the missiles and the fact that British troops will be available to help. Will he make clear that there is a single responsibility for security and say where it lies? Whereas the arrangements that he has described are in some ways satisfactory, any divided responsibility would clearly be very dangerous.

Secondly, will the right hon. Gentleman again confirm that there is no question of the use of these bases except by a joint decision—I repeat, decision—between the

[Mr. Rodger.]  
United States and Her Majesty's Government?

Finally, the right hon. Gentleman said that the first missiles would not be deployed until 1983. He will know that we attach the greatest importance to using this breathing space to negotiate an agreement that will make it unnecessary for the missiles to be deployed. Clearly the greatest step to such an agreement would be a plain decision by the Soviet Union to abandon its SS20 missile. Despite its present unwillingness to move, will the right hon. Gentleman say that even if it is impossible, in the coming year, to get round the table in further SALT discussions, he will look for ways, perhaps amongst the European members of NATO, to begin genuine negotiations as soon as possible, so that this breathing space is not wasted?

**Mr. Pym:** I certainly understand that a number of people will have anxieties about this decision. I recognised that from the outset. It is partly for that reason that I have agreed—indeed, volunteered in a positive way—to explain nationally and to individuals, if necessary, what is involved in this deployment. I certainly accept that responsibility.

The protection is a United States capability and the responsibility lies with that country, but we shall contribute to it as we believe to be appropriate and valuable in this context. On the question of use, I confirm absolutely and have no hesitation in saying that the political decision requires a joint decision by the two Governments.

As to the use of the interval between now and the deployment of the first cruise missiles for further arms control negotiations, if there were a change of heart on the other side of the Iron Curtain, certainly we would talk. But I must point out the facts to the House. In terms of the long-range land-based theatre nuclear forces, NATO has 226 systems altogether whereas the Soviet Union has 920, which is more than four times as many. That is a major imbalance. What is more, one new SS20 with three new warheads is coming into service at a faster rate than one a week.

I say to the House in all seriousness that arms control negotiations could be prejudiced by too great a gap between the

one side and the other. Weakness puts us in a bad negotiating position. It is for this reason that the decision by NATO is so important. None the less, there is an unremitting effort on our part, and we shall take any opportunity that comes along should there be a change of heart on the other side of the Iron Curtain. Unfortunately, there is no sign of it, but, were it to come—were a new situation to be created—of course we would look at it. However, we must be realistic about the facts of the situation today.

**Mr. David Steel:** Is the Secretary of State aware that although the statement is unlikely to be welcomed it is bound to be accepted generally in the country as one of sombre and sad necessity, and part of our general commitment to the NATO Alliance? Will he explain why we do not get a forward statement about the Government's intentions on the Trident missile programme, which is not part of our NATO commitment? We believe that the two should be considered together. Does he accept that we, for our part, will oppose the expenditure involved in the attempt to maintain an independent nuclear deterrent when we are already undertaking the programme that he has announced?

**Mr. Pym:** I note what the right hon. Gentleman said. Both these weapons systems—the long-range theatre nuclear and the strategic systems—are part of a comprehensive pattern of defence capability and they must be looked at in that light. There is no decision on what is to succeed Polaris, and Polaris, as the right hon. Gentleman knows, is assigned to NATO. Undoubtedly the allies are of the view, as are the United Kingdom Government and as were all our predecessors in the past 25 or 30 years, that the strength of the Alliance and the effectiveness of the deterrent is enhanced by this capability. We must come to that other decision when we are ready to take it. This one applies to the whole Alliance, affects other countries in Europe, and is a widely based deployment. We intend to play our full part in fulfilling our obligations to our allies under this arrangement.

**Mr. Michael McNair-Wilson:** Is my right hon. Friend aware that, in my view, the vast majority of my constituents recognised the threat posed by the build-up

of Soviet arms in the West and by the aggression in Afghanistan, and that Greenham must play its part in NATO's defence posture?

Having said that, I should like to ask my right hon. Friend three questions. First, will he reassure my constituents about the storage of nuclear warheads? Can he say that, as far as humanly possible, the danger of a radioactive leak or accident can be ruled out?

Secondly, how much of the £16 million modernisation programme is likely to be spent locally? Will it provide possible job opportunities, and are local construction companies likely to be involved?

Lastly, does my right hon. Friend's announcement this afternoon essentially resolve the future of Greenham, and will it spare the people of West Berkshire from the threat of noisy aircraft for the future?

**Mr. Pym:** I am grateful to my hon. Friend for what he said at the beginning of his questions. I feel sure that the whole House and the country appreciate what the leader of the Liberal Party indicated—that it is a sad necessity, but that for our protection we have to go along with this programme.

I think that I can give a strong reassurance on storage and the extreme unlikelihood of an accident or a leak. The United Kingdom's safety regulations are the most stringent in the world. It is a fact that since we have had nuclear weapons in this country we have been able to preserve ourselves from either an accident or a leak. That is a reassuring fact. The same most stringent regulations will continue in future.

Substantially more than £16 million will be spent in this country in connection with this programme. The £16 million is the United Kingdom's contribution to the whole programme, and that is shared throughout NATO. Quite a lot of work will be generated by this decision and it will be available to local contractors, but because it is arranged and organised under the NATO infrastructure scheme we must follow the rules and regulations. That means that it must be done by tender. However, I am sure that contractors in or near my hon. Friend's constituency will put in competitive tenders, so it is to be hoped that they will get the job.

I have no plans to alter the present status of Greenham Common as a stand-by base, but I think that this decision finally resolves the status of that airfield.

**Mr. Ioan Evans:** When the Secretary of State is making his decisions about nuclear arms, will he read the speech made by the late Earl Mountbatten of Burma, in which he said that it was nuclear nonsense to believe that by increasing the total uncertainty one increases one's own certainty? Is the Secretary of State aware that if a 100-megaton nuclear bomb dropped on London, steel would melt in Watford and Slough and rayon would melt in Birmingham and Bristol? Surely we should try to return to talks about nuclear disarmament rather than join the arms race.

**Mr. Pym:** I had the privilege of conversations on that subject with the late Lord Mountbatten before his death. I recall his speech accurately. He was strongly against any unilateralism. Defence must be carried out on a multilateral basis if it is to be carried out at all.

The whole object of the decisions is to preserve peace and to prevent war. I do not think that anyone who thought deeply about the subject would have anything good to say about unilateralism.

**Mr. Major:** Is my right hon. Friend aware that I fully support the Government's decision to install cruise missiles in Britain, notwithstanding the fact that many of them will be sited in my constituency? Will he specifically reassure my constituents in Molesworth that no live missiles will be transported to and from that site, that no live warheads will be used on local exercises, that there will be no local test flying of cruise missiles, and that he will use his best endeavours to ensure that there is the minimum possible impact on the local environment?

**Mr. Pym:** I am grateful for my hon. Friend's support for the Government's decisions. I assure him that no live missiles will be used on exercises and that there will be no test flying of those missiles in the United Kingdom. It has never been the practice to indicate where the missiles will be stored, but they are being stored under conditions of the greatest safety, as I said in reply to an earlier question.

**Mr. Jay :** Would it not greatly improve the chance of nuclear disarmament and the early ratification of SALT II if the Soviet Union withdrew from Afghanistan?

**Mr. Pym :** That would create an entirely new position in the world. It would be a great relief to everyone. My right hon. and noble Friend the Foreign Secretary has taken initiatives to try to achieve that end. Unfortunately, there appears to be not the slightest sign that that will happen. If it did, it would create a totally different position.

**Mr. Farr :** I congratulate my right hon. Friend on all that he is doing to strengthen the NATO partnership. Is he aware that his American counterpart said that the firing of the missiles will be an American responsibility alone? Under those circumstances, will he make arrangements to ensure that firing will be impossible without the use of a British-held master key?

**Mr. Pym :** I adhere to what I told the House earlier. The decision to fire will be a joint political decision. That is the arrangement that exists between ourselves and the United States.

**Mr. Frank Allaun :** Does it matter where the missiles are stationed? In a time of military tension they would be widely dispersed. Would not the enemy destroy virtually the whole of Britain as a launching pad for the American missiles if we were suicidal enough to oppose it? Is the Secretary of State aware that next Sunday the Labour Party will demonstrate the country's opposition to the missiles?

**Mr. Pym :** I think that I heard the hon. Gentleman correctly when he said "If we were suicidal enough to oppose it"—meaning the Soviet Union. That is abject surrender. There are thousands of potential targets throughout Western Europe on which the Soviet Union could pick if it so wished, and if it wanted to launch a nuclear attack out of the blue—which everyone thinks is extremely unlikely. It has the capability. It will soon have a comprehensive capability to hit almost all targets with the SS20s that it is churning out at a rate of more than one a week, including three new warheads each.

If the Soviet Union would give some indication that it would stop doing that, it might give us some hope to think that

it would be prepared to negotiate downwards. However, it has refused to negotiate at all, and is steadily and remorselessly increasing its nuclear capability. We should be concerned about that.

**Mr. Eldon Griffiths :** Because of the difficulties faced by the United States Air Force in building shelters for the F111's, will my right hon. Friend lend all his assistance to ensure that the underground shelters are built expeditiously, so that the weapon can be rapidly deployed? Will he say something about the point defence, and whether there is a role for Rapiet? In his publication of information for the general public, will he not only give the devastating figures that he has given to the House but rebut the arguments of those who wish to shelter under the American nuclear umbrella while quite unwilling to help them carry it?

**Mr. Pym :** We shall do everything possible to ensure that the shelters are completed on time and that we do not become embroiled in the difficulties that have existed in some cases in East Anglia. On the question of point defence and the possibility of Rapiet, only in the circumstances of a bolt-from-the-blue attack would those stations be vulnerable. As my hon. Friend knows, the design of the weapons system is such that in a time of tension, or if it is thought that the position is deteriorating, the weapons are sent from the bases to other areas, and no one knows where they will be. Therefore, the stations themselves are reasonably safe from the possibility of a direct attack.

On the question of public presentation, I do all that I can to make those points. It is crucial to appreciate that neither we nor any other member of NATO can defend ourselves by ourselves. We can do so only by co-operating with our Allies. As a Government, we are dedicating ourselves to ensuring that that occurs.

**Mr. Cook :** Does the Secretary of State recall that the December communiqué saw the arms control negotiations taking place within the SALT process? If so, did he seriously imagine that those negotiations could commence while SALT II remained unratified?

**Mr. Pym :** There is no reason why the negotiations should not commence if



there was a complete change of heart on the other side of the Iron Curtain. If the Russians were prepared to talk in a realistic and genuine manner we would be prepared—indeed, we would desire—to sit down and talk to them.

**Mr. Cormack:** Will my right hon. Friend take a little time to write personally to the hon. Member for Salford, East (Mr. Allaun), the chairman of the Labour Party, and all those who think like him, to explain three matters? Will he explain first, precisely the events that are taking place in Afghanistan; secondly, the nature of the SS20 and details of its deployment; and, thirdly, the details of the free exchanges that do not take place in the Supreme Soviet and the Praesidium of the Soviet Union?

**Mr. Pym:** I would not single out the hon. Member for Salford, East (Mr. Allaun). I wish to present to the public all those aspects, and others, of our decisions. I have done my best to do so already at every available opportunity.

**Mr. Cryer:** Do not the cruise missiles represent a distinct escalation of the arms race? Is it not true that they are difficult to verify and that that is regarded as an asset by the Secretary of State? Are there not graver dangers in the vicinity through the road movement of the missiles? Does the Secretary of State agree that there will be widespread local and national opposition to an escalation of the arms race? Does he accept that already NATO and United States nuclear missiles outnumber Warsaw Pact and Soviet missiles by two to one? Is that not a step towards a graver danger?

**Mr. Pym:** As I explained to the House earlier, the number of long-range and land-based systems is greater in the Soviet Union by more than four to one when compared to the Alliance. Even if all 572 cruise missiles and Pershing IIs were in existence now, and deployed tomorrow, we should still be outnumbered in that area by the Soviet Union.

**Mr. Churchill:** Will my right hon. Friend confirm that the ground-launched cruise missiles have little to do with the defence of the United States but are evidence of the strong, vital and ongoing commitment of the United States to the

defence of Western Europe, and should be welcomed as such?

**Mr. Pym:** I agree that they are part of a comprehensive defensive capability.

**Miss Joan Lestor:** Bearing in mind the block on any questions about the base about which I am not allowed to speak, and the widespread concern in many parts of the country that will follow the announcement that has just been made, will the right hon. Gentleman give an assurance that there will be no such block on any questions surrounding the activities around these bases and all questions emanating from them?

**Mr. Pym:** I am thankful to say that the question of blocking questions, Mr. Speaker, is a matter not for me but for you. [HON. MEMBERS: "Oh."] What I want to block is any aggressive activity by a potential enemy, and I want to preserve the peace and the security not only of the United Kingdom but of any allies and friends. That is my objective. So far as possible, as I think I have indicated, I wish to do all that I can positively to explain everything relating to this decision, why it is necessary, how it will work, and so on. I think that that is the most forthright way in which I can try to help explain, not only to the House but principally to the public, the importance of the decision.

**Mr. Tapsell:** I fully support my right hon. Friend in his statement and congratulate him on the leading and constructive role that he has played in the NATO discussions that have led to it. If one of the reasons why it is necessary for us to have these missiles is the growing and formidable capacity of the Soviet Union to make a first strike against the NATO countries, why is it wise to have only two of these bases? Is it really wise to assume that we can ignore the possibility of the bolt out of the blue?

**Mr. Pym:** We cannot ignore the possibility of the bolt out of the blue, but it is the one that really introduces a holocaust that we have dedicated ourselves to try to prevent. The point about the cruise missiles is that they will not be on just two bases. There are 10 flights altogether, and at a time of tension, or in war, they will not all be deployed in the same place. They will be deployed in many different places. Therefore, the number of targets

[Mr. Pym.]

is enormous. That is why it is not necessary to have more than two bases.

**Mr. Dalyell:** Will the Secretary of State forgive us for our somewhat sour and hollow laugh when he emphasises the words "joint decision"? What joint decision took place in relation to Diego Garcia and the exchange of letters? If the emphasis is on joint decision, and if the Americans had meant it, why the reluctance to give us a dual key system? Will the right hon. Gentleman answer the question that was put to him by his hon. Friend the Member for Harborough (Mr. Farr)?

**Mr. Pym:** We could have a dual key if we shared in the cost and the ownership of the weapon, but we do not; it is a United States weapon. The dual key is appropriate in the circumstances of joint ownership, which applies in some cases. It is not appropriate in this case. We have taken the view that it is neither necessary nor a very sensible use of our very limited resources to have joint ownership, because the United States is willing to meet the cost of it. That is why there is no dual key but there is a joint decision.

For all his assiduousness, I think that the hon. Gentleman is in danger of doing a disservice by creating a wrong impression. What matters for the defence of the West, the maintenance of peace and the continuation of freedom is that the allies and all those countries in the rest of the world combine together and rely upon each other and make their own contribution to the mutual defence of the West. By continually going on about one particular matter, the hon. Gentleman is, I think, trying to create a wrong impression.

There is, as there has been for years, a very close alliance between ourselves and our European and American allies. We are entirely confident and content with the present arrangements. They are working mutually to our advantage and the advantage of the preservation of peace. Whereas, of course, the hon. Gentleman can ask any questions he likes, the crucial point is to realise that if the free world co-ordinates its efforts there is no reason whatsoever why, be-

tween us, we should not continue to preserve the peace.

**Mr. Gummer:** Is my right hon. Friend aware that my constituents and others in Suffolk have willingly supported a high proportion of the present nuclear deterrent, and were willing and would be willing to continue, if that were necessary? In those circumstances, though, can he say whether a number of the warheads at present deployed in the United Kingdom, some of which are in my constituency, will not now need to be deployed, because of the decisions mentioned in his announcement today?

**Mr. Pym:** I am grateful to my hon. Friend for what he says. I hope that there will not be too much disappointment in Suffolk about what I announced earlier this afternoon.

As to the warhead position, at the time that the modernisation decision was taken in NATO a parallel arms control proposal was made by the United States unilaterally to withdraw 1,000 warheads. That process has actually begun. I am not able to say—and it would not be right to say—where any of the warheads were or are, but the process has already begun, so we are going to fulfil that whether or not there is a response from the other side. I think that that is the best and most positive answer that I can give to my hon. Friend.

**Several Hon. Members rose—**

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. I propose to call those hon. Members who have been rising in their places from the beginning of questions.

**Mr. Bidwell:** Will the right hon. Gentleman explain that in spite of his detailed explanation today, this decision will greatly stimulate millions of his fellow countrymen who are patriots and who believe in the defence of Britain to support the campaign for unilateral nuclear disarmament, on ground of this country's then being able more intelligently to play a role on the world scene?

**Mr. Pym:** It ought not to do so. I hope that it will not do so. Indeed, I think that the great majority of people in this country are very supportive of the defence efforts being made by this country, and appreciate the need for them. After all,

some of us have been involved in war before, and we remember what happened when we became too weak. Whereas there is no desire on our part, or the Alliance's part, to match the Soviet Union weapon for weapon, we must nevertheless be sure that between us all we have an adequate guard, so that peace and freedom can continue.

**Mr. Kilfedder:** Does the right hon. Gentleman appreciate that at some time some country—some Government—must take the first historic step to end the nuclear stampede before a nuclear holocaust is unleashed on the world either through mistake or through fear? Surely this Government and this country should lead the way, since we pride ourselves on justice rather than that Britain should be treated as the first line in the defence of the United States.

**Mr. Pym:** I do not think that it is at all right to look upon this country in that light. All I can say is that I do not support unilateralism. I think that almost everyone who has thought deeply about this matter realises that that is an unsound path down which to go. Everyone dislikes nuclear weapons, but we cannot disinvent them. We have managed to keep the peace for the last 30 years, and we are dedicating ourselves to continue that process for the rest of time.

**Mr. Faulds:** Does the right hon. Gentleman understand that many of us on the Opposition Benches who are not prepared to kiss the ring of Marx are nevertheless deeply concerned about the deployment in Britain of cruise missiles that are not under our immediate control—whatever the right hon. Gentleman says—because of the dangers of going along with American policy, either in foreign affairs or in defence matters, in America's present political hysteria, which some of us have, sadly, come to know in conversations in the last few months, both with the State Department and with members of the National Security Council?

**Mr. Pym:** I appreciate what the hon. Gentleman says, but I would point out that this was a unanimous decision of NATO. It was not just a United States decision, with support from us. We have been in that situation before now, but this decision was taken unanimously by all the members of NATO.

**Mr. Delwyn Williams:** Does my right hon. Friend agree that Britain should have an independent power of operating the cruise missile, on the grounds, first, that we face retaliation; secondly, the genuine fear of many British people that America would not respond at all, or perhaps slowly, in the event of a Russian thrust into Europe; and, thirdly, the added strategic attraction of a dual control centre?

**Mr. Pym:** As the United States will be stationing these missiles in various countries in Europe, including the United Kingdom, we have taken the view that it is not necessary, nor is it a very sensible use of our limited resources, also to have our own completely separate cruise missiles.

**Mr. James Lamond:** Since the unanimous decision was taken by NATO to deploy these missiles in Western Europe at least two weeks before the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, how can the Secretary of State pretend that that intervention played any part in the decision making?

Does the right hon. Gentleman realise that one of the reasons given today by himself, that he was very anxious to press on with the preparations for stationing these missiles in Britain, is effectively destroying any hope that we have of multi-lateral negotiations with the Soviet Union, which has, despite what the Secretary of State said, changed its position, slightly at least, in the last few weeks, by saying that it no longer demands the abandonment of this decision but is prepared to negotiate provided that the decision is suspended to allow the negotiations to go ahead?

**Mr. Pym:** In answer to the first part of the hon. Gentleman's question, I have never suggested that the invasion of Afghanistan had anything to do with this decision. The decision was taken before that. In answer to the second part of the question, I do not think that the representation of the Soviet position is as the hon. Gentleman describes. I have already indicated to the House the massive superiority of the Soviet Union over the rest of the Alliance in this type of weapon, and I have also indicated the rate at which new weapons of that type are being created in the Soviet Union. That is not happening in the NATO Alliance at present. If

[Mr. Pym.]

there is a change of heart in the Soviet Union we shall review the decision.

**Mr. Ernie Ross :** Does the Secretary of State accept that in a week when the House debated the Brandt report, which clearly outlined the disparities between North and South and showed that hundreds of millions of people exist in poverty, his statement today that Britain will spend £16 million on a weapon that will never be fired will be found particularly offensive?

**Mr. Pym :** If we do not protect ourselves adequately, and if we do not have an adequate shield, freedom and democracy will not be continued into the future. I also point out to the hon. Gentleman the remarkable fact that the Soviet Union pays scant regard to the needs of other countries. It makes a very small contribution in terms of foreign aid. It will supply weapons if necessary, but practically no foreign aid. We should also take that point into account. It is all the more reason to make sure that we are adequately defended. If we are not, the whole world may be taken over by the Soviet Union, and we can imagine the fantastic mess that would result.

**Mr. Ron Brown :** The Government are great supporters of secret ballots. May I take it that the Minister will also organise a ballot of the people who live in areas surrounding these missile sites, or is that stretching democracy too far?

**Mr. Pym :** As the hon. Gentleman knows, that has never been the practice, nor would it be sensible to take decisions on major matters of national and Alliance security on the basis of local polls. People can express opinions, but decisions on national security—a concern that everyone shares—must be taken by national Governments, and the House understands that.

**Mr. Frank Allaun :** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. It is a long-established custom in the House that if a question has been asked previously hon. Members cannot table the same question again. The Table Office forbids it. But this afternoon my hon. Friend the Member for Eton and Slough (Miss Lestor) asked a supplementary question. I have been a Member of the House for a fairly long time, and I have never known a supplementary

question to be barred because it had been asked previously. May I ask for your guidance on this point, Mr. Speaker?

**Mr. Speaker :** It is quite simple. I am willing to make another statement tomorrow when I have looked at the matter again, but if a question is not permissible at the Table Office it is not permissible as a supplementary question. It is as simple as that. I shall look at the matter further in case I need to correct myself.

**Mr. Dalyell :** Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. When you look at the matter further tomorrow, will you take into account that question No. 32 on the Order Paper on Diego Garcia implied considerations of troop movements?

**Mr. Speaker :** That point has not escaped me.

#### AIR SERVICES (LONDON-HONG KONG)

**The Secretary of State for Trade (Mr. John Nott) :** With permission, Mr. Speaker, in view of the widespread interest in the matter, I should like to make a statement about the decision that I have taken concerning air services between London and Hong King.

Last year three airlines, British Caledonian, Laker and Cathay Pacific, a Hong Kong-based airline, applied to the Hong Kong Air Transport Licensing Authority and the Civil Aviation Authority for licences to operate on the London-Hong Kong route in addition to British Airways. At present, British Airways provides the only direct service, although there are, of course, already a large number of services between Hong Kong and other European cities.

Both authorities heard evidence separately on these applications. In December the Hong Kong authority licensed British Caledonian and Cathay Pacific, but restricted their frequency of service to four and three flights a week respectively. In March this year, the Civil Aviation Authority announced its decision to license only British Caledonian.

The two applicants who were unsuccessful before the Civil Aviation Authority submitted appeals to me under the provisions of regulation 16 of the Civil Aviation



MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

MAIN BUILDING WHITEHALL LONDON SW1A 2HB

Telephone 01-218 <sup>6312</sup> ..... (Direct Dialling)

01-218 9000 (Switchboard)

PA

17th June 1980

MJS

Dear Nick,

CRUISE MISSILE BASING IN THE UK -  
STATEMENT TUESDAY 17th JUNE

/ I attach for your information the final version of the Statement which Secretary of State will be making this afternoon.

/ The Statement also has been copied to the list of addressees attached.

Yours sincerely,  
Jill Ferguson

JILL FERGUSON  
Parliamentary Clerk

N J Sanders  
10 Downing Street



Copies to:

PS/Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary  
PS/Lord Privy Seal  
PS/Secretary of State for the Environment  
PS/Paymaster General  
PS/Leader of the House  
PS/Chief Whip (House of Commons)  
PS/Chief Whip (House of Lords)  
PS/Secretary to the Cabinet  
Speaker's Secretary  
Chief Press Secretary to No 10

DRAFT PARLIAMENTARY STATEMENT

With permission, Mr Speaker, I should like to make a statement about Ground Launched Cruise Missiles.

2. I announced on 13th December last year the NATO Foreign and Defence Ministers' decision to modernise the Alliance's long range theatre nuclear forces; I am now able to advise the House where the 160 Ground Launched Cruise Missiles to be deployed in the UK will be stationed.

3. The missiles will be stationed at two existing military establishments, the United States Air Force standby base at RAF Greenham Common in Berkshire, and RAF Molesworth, a disused airfield in Cambridgeshire, currently used by the United States Air Force for storage purposes. Greenham Common will be the Main Operating Base for the cruise missile units in the United Kingdom and will house six flights of cruise missiles. Molesworth will house four flights. It is planned that the first units will deploy at Greenham Common by about the end of 1983.

4. The factors affecting the decision stemmed from the prime operational need to bring the first missiles into service as soon as possible. The choice had therefore to concentrate on establishments already in defence occupation which had sufficient space available and as many as possible of the basic facilities, in particular adequate accommodation, road communications, and access to training areas and suitable dispersal areas during operations.

5. Many different locations for stationing have been very carefully studied, but the two bases chosen proved to be the most suitable in the light of the considerations to which I have just referred.

6. The deployment of the GLCM force will generate very little aircraft movement at either of the bases, probably no more than a few a month. As to ground movements, it will be necessary from time to time to practise the deployment of the launcher and its support vehicles to dispersed sites away from the base. These exercises will be along pre-planned routes and will take place after consultation with the local authorities concerned. No live missiles or warheads will be carried on exercises at any time and no missile test-flying will take place in this country. The missiles will be stored in purpose-built shelters in conditions that fully meet the United Kingdom's very stringent safety standards - standards that have proved themselves effective since the inception of a nuclear capability in Britain. As part of the security arrangements, we shall be contributing 220 British personnel towards the guard forces for the bases and dispersal deployments.

7. I am having an Information Folder prepared, covering all aspects of the basing of cruise missiles in the United Kingdom. Copies will be placed in the Library and will also be sent to the local authorities in the areas concerned. The Information Folder will also be available to those members of the public living in the areas of these sites who wish to know more about the reasons underlying these decisions.



8. I am notifying the local authorities concerned about the deployment, and their views on the environmental and social aspects of the arrival of the cruise missile units will be taken into account to the fullest possible extent.

They will of course be consulted in due course on the detailed building plans.

9. The total cost to the UK of the whole modernisation programme throughout the Alliance will be of the order of £16 million.

10. As I made clear in the House on 13th December, the 160 cruise missiles to be based in the United Kingdom are an integral part of a programme to deploy 572 US missiles in a number of European countries. The Alliance-wide support for the new system and its widely spread deployment throughout

Europe is a clear expression of the determination of NATO as a whole to preserve its security. The Soviet Union has developed a large and expanding capability in long-range theatre nuclear forces which directly threatens the whole of Western Europe. In view of the markedly increasing threat we face, the Alliance has decided that it is essential to modernise its own theatre nuclear forces which are ageing and becoming increasingly vulnerable.

11. At the same time, the Government, and the Alliance, remain fully committed to the parallel arms control approach which was agreed in December as part of the modernisation

decision. As the House will be aware, the Soviet Union has rejected repeated offers by the United States to negotiate, and has maintained its obviously unacceptable demand that NATO should abandon its modernisation programme as a precondition for negotiation. However, we shall continue to try and persuade the Russians to come to the table and play their part in a genuine negotiation.

12. The instability in the world today and the growing military strength of the Warsaw Pact countries require us to be exceptionally vigilant. NATO's unanimous decision on theatre nuclear modernisation was taken for the continuing security of the whole Alliance, and the UK is determined to play her full part.

Defence 2 pps



MINISTRY OF DEFENCE  
 MAIN BUILDING WHITEHALL LONDON SW1

Telephone 01-~~936 7000~~ 218 2111/3

MO 11/2/2

16th June 1980

for  
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Dear Michael,

GLCM BASING

The Prime Minister will recall, from her meeting with Dr Harold Brown on 2 June, that we were in dispute with the US over the splitting of the proposed GLCM deployment in the United Kingdom, and over the related extra costs.

The matter was further discussed in Washington last week, and my Secretary of State had a telephone conversation with Dr Brown on Saturday. We still differ on the principle, but a bargain has now been struck as follows:-

- a. The deployment will be split on the basis of six flights at Greenham Common and four at Molesworth (supported from Alconbury).
- b. The UK will contribute 220 security personnel to help in guarding tasks at the bases and during any field dispersal. The details will be worked out between staffs.
- c. The UK will bear the maintenance costs (estimated at about £1M) of existing installations, such as married quarters, pending their handover to the US. We will make a further contribution, in cash or kind, of £4M at today's prices towards other costs of the GLCM deployment. We shall find these sums within the agreed Defence Budget.

M O'D B Alexander Esq



d. Remaining costs, aside from any which may be recoverable from NATO infrastructure funds, will fall to the US.

My Secretary of State regards this, all in all, as a reasonable bargain. Item b. was substantially implicit in NATO's December decisions, and the US are still left to bear the greater part of the extra capital and running costs of the second base.

Mr Pym will be announcing the deployment decisions in the House tomorrow. Derek Piper sent Nick Sanders earlier today a copy of the draft statement.

I am sending copies of this letter to the Private Secretaries to the other members of OD, David Edmonds (DOE) and David Wright (Cabinet Office).

*Your and  
Brian*

(B M NORBURY)



cc MODBA

I think that this is generally all right. I have asked the MOD to send a copy to the Foreign Secretary.

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE  
MAIN BUILDING WHITEHALL LONDON SW1  
Telephone 01-~~930 7022~~ 218 6169

PA  
MS

① Mr Whitmore

② Prime Minister

D/S of S/PQ1676C

The text of the  
cruise missile statement  
for tomorrow. Contact?

16th June 1980

MS  
16/6

Dear Nick,

I am writing further to Brian Norbury's letter of 2nd June to Petra Laidlaw (not to all or needed) to send you the attached copy of the draft statement which my Secretary of State will be making in the House tomorrow announcing where in the UK the US ground-launched cruise missiles will be based.

I am sending copies of this letter and the draft statement to the Private Secretaries to the Secretary of State for the Environment, the Leader of the House, the Paymaster General, Chief Whip and the Secretary to the Cabinet.

Yours ever,  
Alec Lister

(D T PIPER)

N J Sanders Esq  
10 Downing Street

DRAFT PARLIAMENTARY STATEMENT

With permission, Mr Speaker, I should like to make a statement about Ground Launched Cruise Missiles.

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3. The missiles will be stationed at two existing military establishments, the United States Air Force standby base at RAF Greenham Common in Berkshire, and RAF Molesworth, a disused airfield in Cambridgeshire, currently used by the United States Air Force for storage purposes. Greenham Common will be the Main Operating Base for the cruise missile units in the United Kingdom and will house six flights of GLCMs. Molesworth will house the remaining four flights. It is planned that the first units will deploy at Greenham Common by about the end of 1983.

4. The factors affecting the decision stemmed from the prime operational need to bring the first GLCMs into service as soon as possible. The choice had therefore to concentrate on establishments already in defence occupation which had sufficient space available and as many as possible of the basic facilities, in particular adequate road communications and access to training areas and suitable dispersal areas during operations.

5. Many different locations for stationing have been very carefully studied, but the two bases chosen proved to be the most suitable in the light of the considerations to which I have just referred.

6. The deployment of the GLCM force will generate very little aircraft movement at either of the bases, probably no more than a few flights a month. As to ground movements, it will be necessary from time to time to practice the deployment of the launcher and its support vehicles to dispersed sites away from the base. The exercises will, however, be along pre-planned routes and will take place only after consultation with the local authorities concerned. No live missiles or warheads will be carried on exercises at any time and no missile test-flying will take place in this country. The missiles will be stored in purpose-built shelters in conditions that fully meet the United Kingdom's very stringent safety standards. As part of the security arrangements, we shall be contributing 220 British personnel towards the guard forces for the bases and dispersal deployments.

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8. I am notifying the local authorities concerned about the deployment, and their views on the environmental and social aspects of the arrival of the cruise missile units will be taken into account to the fullest possible extent. They will of course be consulted in due course on the detailed building plans.

9. The total cost to the UK of the modernisation programme will be of the order of £16 million.

10. As I made clear in the House on 13th December, the 160 ground launched cruise missiles to be based in the United Kingdom are an integral part of a programme to deploy 572 new US cruise missiles and Pershing ballistic missiles in a number of European countries. The Alliance-wide support for the new system and its widely spread deployment throughout Europe is a clear expression of the determination of NATO as a whole to preserve its security. The Soviet Union has developed a large and expanding capability in long-range theatre nuclear forces which directly threatens the whole of Western Europe. In view of the markedly increasing threat we face, the Alliance has decided that it is essential to modernise its own long-range theatre nuclear forces which are ageing and becoming increasingly vulnerable.

11. At the same time, the Government, and the Alliance, remain fully committed to the parallel arms control approach which was agreed in December as part of the modernisation decision. ~~The Alliance decided to seek to negotiate limitations on US and land-based Long Range Theatre Nuclear Forces.~~



As the House will be aware, the Soviet Union has rejected repeated offers by the United States to negotiate, and has maintained its obviously unacceptable demand that NATO should abandon its modernisation programme as a precondition for negotiation. However, we shall continue to try and persuade the Russians to come to the negotiating table and play their part in a genuine negotiation.

12. The instability in the world today and the growing military strength of the Warsaw Pact countries require us to be exceptionally vigilant. NATO's unanimous decision on theatre nuclear modernisation was taken for the continuing security of the whole Alliance, and the UK is determined to play her full part.

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Defence

PA  
MS

10 DOWNING STREET

Prime Minister

Nick Sanders thinks you  
will wish to see his note  
on Mr Pym's statement on  
Cruise Missiles in conjunction  
with a report on Labour's  
PPB. tonight.

They are attached.

Tals Weston  
Duty Clerk.

11 June 1980

PRIME MINISTER

Labour Party Political Broadcast  
on Nuclear Weapons

Tonight's Labour PPB was conducted by Robin Cook and Mary Kaldor. It was a full-blooded attack on nuclear weapons and ended by saying that it was Labour policy not to replace Polaris and not to deploy cruise missiles in this country.

I think that you have already heard something of the rows between Mr. Callaghan and Mr. Rodgers on the one side and the NEC on the other about the terms of this broadcast. In the event, it came out as a commitment against nuclear weapons.

There is also to be a Labour "Rally for Peace" in Hyde Park on Sunday week.

pp NJS  
K. Cronin  
Duty Clerk.

N J Sanders  
11 June 1980

PRIME MINISTER

Statement on GLCMS

Mr Pym would now like to make his statement on Cruise Missiles next Tuesday. You would be free to be there on that day, and I take it that you would want to hear the exchanges.

Content, subject to final agreement with the Americans, that Mr Pym should make his statement next Tuesday?

*Yes not.* | *told*  
*retra*  
*ms*

You will be making your statement on the European Council on Monday. Mr Walker will be making a statement on the Agriculture and Fisheries Councils on Wednesday.

11 June, 1980



Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster

*Defence*

PRIVY COUNCIL OFFICE  
WHITEHALL, LONDON SW1A 2AT

3 June 1980

*Phm*

*Dear Brian*

GLCM BASING: PROPOSED STATEMENT

*Not copied  
to No 10 (?)*

Thank you for your letter of 2 June. This is just to confirm that the Leader of the House of Commons is content in principle with the proposed statement and with its timing (subject always, of course, to any unforeseen developments that could alter this).

We should be grateful to see a draft of the statement as far as possible in advance.

Copies of this letter go to Nick Sanders, Murdo Maclean, Richard Prescott, Michael Pownall and Bernard Ingham.

*Yours sincerely*

*Petra Laidlaw*

MISS PETRA LAIDLAW  
Private Secretary

Brian Norbury Esq  
Private Secretary to the  
Secretary of State for Defence  
Ministry of Defence  
Whitehall

- 4 JUN 1980



SECRET

Original: Dr Brown  
USA: May 1980

Extract from PM / Defense Secretary Brown  
2 June at 1630 NO 10

next year when a better Soviet harvest was expected. As regards the Olympic Games, the boycott had clearly had some success. The United States Government understood that the British Government had done everything in their power to discourage British participation.

GLCM Basing

Answering a question from Dr. Brown the Prime Minister said that it would be politically impossible in Britain to have all the United States GLCMs based at Greenham Common. Hence the proposal for a second base, at Molesworth. The Defence Secretary said that the distribution between the two bases would probably need to be in the proportion of 6:4 rather than 7:3 as the Americans had proposed. The distribution should in any case not be made public. Dr. Brown said that the extra cost of having two bases rather than one would be \$17 million non-recurrent and \$3 million annually recurrent; or rather more if the distribution was 6:4 rather than 7:3. Since the argument for two bases was political rather than military, it would be very difficult to persuade Congress to approve this extra money. The Prime Minister said that the British Government welcomed the basing of United States GLCMs in Britain, which would be an important part of the defences of the free world, but they did not feel they could contribute to the cost of basing. Two bases would surely have military as well as political advantages over one base. It was in any case in American interests that political criticism in Britain should be minimised. The members of Congress, who were themselves politicians, could surely be persuaded to recognise a domestic political imperative. They should also be urged to bear in mind the rapidity with which, at a crucial moment, Britain had agreed to accept an extra flight of GLCMs and, more generally, the very large amounts of United States military equipment which Britain purchased.

Polaris Replacement (This part of the discussion has been recorded separately; the record has been retained by the Secretary of the Cabinet.)

3 June 1980

SECRET



CONFIDENTIAL

*Henry*



MINISTRY OF DEFENCE  
MAIN BUILDING WHITEHALL LONDON SW1  
Telephone 01-~~222 7022~~ 218 2111/3

MO 11/2/2

2nd June 1980

*Raised by P.M. with Dr Brown.*

*Dear George,*

*Print 2/6*

GLCM BASING

I enclose a copy of a letter my Secretary of State has today written to Dr Harold Brown, the US Defense Secretary and which has been delivered to Dr Brown in London.

I should be grateful if the text could be telegraphed to HM Embassy in Washington and if they could be instructed to let the Pentagon know that it has been delivered to Dr Brown. I will let you know the outcome of any discussions on it between my Secretary of State and Dr Brown.

In view of the Prime Minister's meeting with Dr Brown this afternoon I am sending a copy of this letter, and the enclosure to Michael Alexander at No 10.

*Yours and  
Brian Norbury*

(B M NORBURY)

G G H Walden Esq  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office  
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MINISTRY OF DEFENCE WHITEHALL LONDON SW1A 2HB

TELEPHONE 01-218 9000  
DIRECT DIALING 01-218 2111/3

MO 11/2/2

2nd June 1980

*Dear Harold,*

BASING OF US GROUND LAUNCHED CRUISE MISSILES  
(GLCMs) IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

As foreshadowed when we met in Brussels on 12th May, I have now been able to consult my colleagues about where in the United Kingdom should be based the Cruise Missiles it is agreed should be stationed here under the NATO modernisation programme.

I would now like to propose that the missiles be located at two sites, at Greenham Common and Molesworth; and I should be most grateful for your early agreement to this in order to enable me to make a Statement in Parliament in the week beginning 9th June.

I was glad to receive advice from you earlier that you accept that there are no objections in principle to the multiple basing we are suggesting. I am, as I have explained to you, convinced that multiple basing is absolutely essential in terms of domestic politics in this country. My colleagues and I have given very careful consideration to your suggestion that HMG should absorb the incremental costs arising from the multiple basing of US GLCMs in the UK, but we have concluded that we would find it very difficult to justify an additional direct burden of expenditure in respect of the GLCM programme, bearing in mind what we shall already be paying through

The Honorable Dr Harold Brown



infrastructure funding and, in one case, by foregoing the considerable disposal value of the site. As you know my budget is under severe pressure at present. Having previously made public that our financial contribution would be limited to our normal share of NATO infrastructure, it would be next to impossible to explain to Parliament why we were now paying much more.

I note your concern about possible Allied reactions to a multi-basing decision, but I do not think that our partners should balk at our having more than one base in the UK given that our meeting last December did not specify that all the GLCM flights would be sited at a single base and, indeed, discussions between officials prior to our decision implied that there would be two. It could also be pointed out to them that this will simply reduce the size of the largest UK base to roughly that of the Italian and German base. Our approach does not therefore set a precedent, nor should the provision of any additional infrastructure funds which multi-basing would entail be jeopardised by it.

In view of the additional costs which multiple basing will involve I would, notwithstanding the above, be prepared, as a compromise, to limit our requirement to two bases instead of three. As you will appreciate, by coming down to two bases we shall be paying a significant price in terms of domestic political difficulty. But we are prepared to pay that price as a clear indication of the importance which we attach to this project, as a further contribution to the success of the NATO programme and to allow the project to get ahead quickly. In these circumstances, I trust that you will accept that it would be reasonable to expect the US to pay the extra resource costs that multiple basing will entail which, given the overall cost of the LRTNF modernisation programme, are relatively small for you but significant for us. Your two preferred sites - Greenham Common and Molesworth - are broadly acceptable to us on military, environmental and safety grounds.

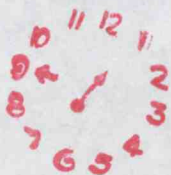
If you find any difficulty about the above, perhaps we could have a word. I am anxious, as I have said, to make a public announcement as soon as possible given particularly the increasing domestic interest in the subject.

*Francis Pym*

CONFIDENTIAL

Francis Pym

2- JUN 1980



*It is the draft  
I expected,  
MO 11/2/2  
A. Pym*

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*Prime Minister*

*Mr Pym seems to have carried out his remit from OD with suitable thoroughness. Do you agree, subject to the views of your OD colleagues, that he should take the time at X1 to meet with Mr Harold Brown next week? If you have reservations, you could discuss them with Mr Pym on Monday when you will be seeing him twice on other matters.*

PRIME MINISTER

*A. Pym's office informed by 'phone. per A. Pym*

BASING OF US GROUND LAUNCHED CRUISE MISSILES (GLCM) IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

*them with Mr Pym on Monday when you will be seeing him twice on other matters.*

*AKH  
29.v.*

At OD on 15th May we agreed that I should discuss with the US Government the location of US GLCM at two locations in the UK, but some disquiet was expressed about my recommendation that, of the two sites, one should be at Greenham Common.

2. As I explained at the meeting I understand, and to some extent share, anxiety about the lobbying with which we could be faced at Greenham Common (and indeed in other localities). It was because of this that I made my recommendation only after the most careful consideration. I have, however, looked again at whether there is any possible alternative site. The primary considerations dictating the choice of bases are that the first GLCMs should be brought into service as soon as possible and that costs should be kept to a minimum; these factors have meant that the choice has had to concentrate on establishments already in defence occupation - not green field sites - with sufficient space to house the missiles within safety limits and with at least some of the accommodation which will be needed for technical facilities and personnel. Further considerations include the quality of road access and availability of suitable operational dispersal sites, the availability of runways to take the aircraft carrying the missiles and the proximity of the bases to MOD training areas so that exercises may be mounted in peace-time. My examination of bases has been made in the light of these factors, and they severely restrict our freedom of choice.

3. At a very early stage the Americans surveyed all existing USAF bases in this country. In a subsequent reconnaissance, they surveyed at our request the RAF stations at Waddington, West Raynham and Watton. The arguments for and against these particular bases, together with Sculthorpe and Bicester, are set out at Annex A to this minute. In essence, the argument against Waddington, Watton, Bicester and Sculthorpe is the lack of accommodation, particularly domestic, which would involve the Americans in a very large construction programme. At West Raynham, accommodation would only be available if it were possible for the RAF to move out completely but this would effectively deprive the RAF of its only reserve airfield. The other USAF bases, except Wethersfield (which is the



Americans' third choice) were discarded either because of lack of space or lack of accommodation.

4. I have also considered a range of other sites (details at Annex B) and I looked earlier at a wide range of existing RAF bases - including those in Lincolnshire, the North and in Scotland - but have discarded them because of either their technical shortcomings or their existing or planned future commitments.

5. A major determinant in the American position throughout has been the need to reduce financial and personnel costs to the minimum. The US forces are under heavy pressure from Congress to cut the cost of facilities abroad. The major attraction of Greenham Common (and to a lesser extent of Molesworth/Alconbury and Wethersfield) was precisely that it has adequate existing domestic accommodation, together with an airfield in working order.

6. If the Americans are not allowed to use Greenham Common I assume that they would wish to use Molesworth/Alconbury and Wethersfield, their second and third choices. The combination of Molesworth/Alconbury and Wethersfield would be likely, so far as I am able to estimate, to cost about £18M more in capital costs and marginally more in personnel running costs than Greenham Common and Molesworth/Alconbury. Bearing in mind that the non-availability of Greenham Common would be entirely due to domestic political factors, this would stiffen the US attitude on costs and thus make it increasingly unlikely that we would be able to avoid a direct contribution to the additional costs involved in having a 2-base deployment. It would also make it virtually impossible to avoid contributing security personnel.

X | 7. In the light of the above I consider that there is no compromise solution I could reasonably hope to agree with the Americans other than that recommended in my minute to you of 18th April, of two site basing at Greenham Common and Molesworth (even this, of course, will not be entirely welcome to Harold Brown). I also consider, having made a further examination of the local politics involved, that given careful presentation, this decision of bases should be acceptable to domestic public opinion.



8. Harold Brown will be here at the end of this week, on his way to the NATO Nuclear Planning Group meeting in Norway on 4th and 5th June (and I understand that you yourself are to see him on Monday 2nd June) and I would propose, subject to any further comment you may have, to put firm proposals to him then with a view to making a statement in Parliament accordingly in the week beginning Monday 9th June. I do not consider that it would be wise further to defer an announcement of our decision on basing.

9. I am sending copies of this minute to our OD colleagues and the Chief Whip; and to the Secretary of the Cabinet.

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Ministry of Defence

28th May 1980

SHORT LIST OF SITES SPECIFICALLY CONSIDERED AND DISCARDED BY THE AMERICANS

Serial (a)	Locations Considered (b)	Arguments For: (c)	Arguments Against: (d)
1	Watton (Norfolk)	(1) Space (2) Available now	(1) Buildings inadequate in size and general condition (2) Runway not operational
2	Waddington (Lincs)	(1) Good runway (2) Good condition	(1) Limited dispersal options (2) Limited land available (3) Insufficient accommodation after allowing for RAF AEW base.
3	West Raynham (Norfolk)	(1) Good condition (2) Good runway (3) Adequate accommodation	(1) Poor road access (2) Somewhat limited dispersal (3) Need to share with RAF and therefore shortage of accommodation
4	Sculthorpe (Norfolk)	(1) Good runway (2) Good roads	(1) Very limited accommodation (2) Poor dispersal areas - rejected by US for this reason



Serial (1)	Locations Considered (b)	Arguments For (c)	Arguments Against: (d)
5	Bicester (Oxon)	(1) Space	(1) Poor support facilities (2) Dispersal limited in US view
6 7 8 9 10	Alconbury (Norfolk) Mildenhall (Suffolk) Lakenheath (Suffolk) Bentwaters (Suffolk) Upper Heyford (Oxon)	US operational bases with all major facilities	Rejected by US on the grounds that the bases were needed in connection with their existing operations, which could not be deployed elsewhere

POSSIBLE FURTHER SITES

Serial (a)	Location (b)	Arguments For: (c)	Arguments Against: (d)
1	Little Rissington (Glos)	(1) Space (2) Available now (3) Runway (4) Good accommodation	(1) Very poor road communications
2	Spadeadam (Cumbria)	(1) Large area (2) Remote area	(1) No accommodation (2) Very poor road communications (3) Very poor dispersal areas (4) Nearest airport is Carlisle Civil Airport 20 miles away
3	Leconfield <sup>(1)</sup> (Yorks)	(1) Good runway (2) Space (3) Adequate accommodation	(1) Poor dispersal areas (2) Army motor training base would have to be relocated
4	Scampton (Lincs)	(1) Good runway	(1) Existing facilities required by RAF for main tanker base (2) Limited dispersal areas (proximity of Lincoln) (3) Probably extra land required

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Serial (1)	Location (b)	Arguments For: (c)	Arguments Against: (d)
5	Burtonwood (Lancs)	(1) Space	(1) Technical facilities would have to be built from scratch (2) Very limited domestic accommodation (3) No runway

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29 MAY 1980





SECRET

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Ref. A02094

PRIME MINISTER

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OD: Basing of United States Ground Launched Cruise  
Missiles (GLCMs) in the United Kingdom

BACKGROUND

The Secretary of State for Defence sent you a minute on this subject on 18th April which you have decided to consider at OD. He has now circulated a further minute dated 2nd May to OD colleagues to provide a basis for that discussion. I sent you a minute on this on 23rd April. The central issue for decision is whether, for domestic political reasons, the United States-owned Ground Launched Cruise Missiles (GLCMs) should be based at more than one location and if so, whether the Americans should be pressed to pay the extra costs involved.

2. Following the NATO decision on theatre nuclear forces (TNF), the Government now needs to decide on the peacetime location of those to be stationed in the United Kingdom. Whatever decision is announced seems likely to be the cue for noisy and sustained protest, from some and possibly many quarters.

3. The Secretary of State for Defence's minute of 18th April explains that the American preference for a single base in the United Kingdom - as in other European host countries - is operationally sound. A single base could only be at Greenham Common, Berkshire. But he believes that three (or perhaps two) bases would be preferable from a domestic political point of view; in this he is supported by the Chief Whip. The Americans would accept this, provided that we paid the extra costs, put conservatively at up to £20 million in capital costs and £3 million a year in running costs. He proposes to resist this, and to suggest that we compromise with the Americans on two bases, at Greenham Common and at Molesworth, Cambridgeshire (in his own constituency). Wethersfield, Essex, would be the choice for a third base, if one is needed.



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4. The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary, in his minute of 30th April, argues that, in view of the fragile state of the NATO TNF agreement and the state of transatlantic relations generally, we should not stir up an argument with the Americans on the costs of any decision - taken for domestic political reasons - to go for more than one base. Lord Carrington also questions whether it is realistic to expect that deployment at more than one base will damp down the opposition to the project. The Chancellor's minute of 29th April makes clear his view that whatever decision is taken, the Defence Budget and cash limit ceilings should stand.

#### HANDLING

5. You will wish to invite the Secretary of State for Defence to say whether he has anything to add to his minute. The discussion could then focus on the following questions -

- (a) Does one base make sense in operational terms?

It seems clear from Mr. Pym's minute that the answer is 'yes'.

- (b) Will dual or multi-base deployment make the Government's decision more acceptable politically?

The first choice for a single base would be Greenham Common, where there is a strong local tradition of protest against defence activity, mainly due to aircraft noise. The local residents might be marginally appeased if they shared the nuisance (from heavy road vehicle movements) and the risk (of being a target for Soviet pre-emptive strike action). On the other hand, two or three bases means two or three protest movements in two or three different parts of the country.

- (c) If there is to be more than one base, should we or the Americans meet the extra costs?

There do seem to be reasons for pressing the Americans to meet the costs. Perhaps this could be used as one element in a wider financial negotiation with the Americans in the defence field. But their resistance is bound to be very strong.



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- (d) If now or later we accept that we should meet the extra costs of additional bases, what about the Defence Budget?

It seems clear that no special allowance can be made in Defence Budget targets. How strongly does the Secretary of State for Defence rate the case on domestic political grounds for more than one base, if the Defence Budget, with no extra provision will have to bear the cost?

- (e) If there is to be one base only, should it be at Greenham Common?

There is a lot of vacant accommodation at Greenham Common. The alternative is Molesworth (in Mr. Pym's constituency). Costs would be higher.

#### CONCLUSION

6. Subject to the discussion particularly on the domestic political issues, you may care to guide the Committee to the conclusion that the risks of souring relations with the Americans or, alternatively, the extra costs to the Defence Budget, point towards a single GLCM base in the United Kingdom, at Greenham Common.

(Robert Armstrong)

6th May, 1980

CONFIDENTIAL



QUEEN ANNE'S GATE LONDON SW1H 9AT

6 May 1980

Dear Francis

BASING OF US GROUND LAUNCHED CRUISE MISSILES (GLCMs) IN THE UK

Thank you for sending me a copy of your minute of 18 April to the Prime Minister about the choice of base sites for the GLCMs. I have no strong views on the question of the number of sites (though I incline to think two would be right) or on the arrangements for carrying the cost (though here again I tend to share your view). However, there is one point I should like to make about the possible choice of Greenham Common as one of the bases.

I know that you already appreciate from previous experience that local opposition at this site may be particularly vigorous. Its relative proximity to London and to other centres would make it an especially easy target for possible demonstrations mounted by anti-nuclear campaigners. And the fact that it is less than 10 miles as the crow flies from Aldermaston and some 15 from Harwell would be additional factors.

I appreciate that the potential public order implications of the choice of sites cannot be an overriding consideration. But it is something we ought, I think, to keep in mind, and initial consideration here suggests that Greenham Common might pose particular problems from that point of view. Moreover, whatever the sites chosen, the proposed public meetings you mention could well become targets for disruption by CND-type activists, especially perhaps if Ministers are involved in them. It would therefore be helpful if your officials could keep in touch with mine about the development of your thoughts.

Yours  
Walter

The Rt Hon Francis Pym MC MP

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1-6 MAY 1961

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MO 11/2/2

PRIME MINISTER

BASING OF US GROUND LAUNCHED CRUISE MISSILES  
(GLCMs) IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

I understand that you would like to have a brief discussion at OD on 7th May of the proposals in my minute of 18th April. I am accordingly, with this minute, circulating copies to those members of OD who have not already received it.

2. In my earlier minute I tried to set out the military and political considerations affecting what UK basing arrangements we should accept. As I explained, on purely military grounds I consider that it would be acceptable to have only one base but on grounds of domestic politics I think that we should have more - ideally three, but, at any rate, a minimum of two.

3. Specific basing arrangements were not, of course, discussed within the Alliance when the December decision on LRTNF modernisation was taken so that we start with a clean slate on this and we also start in the light of the fact that we are taking the largest number of missiles - 160, compared with the Germans' 96 and the Italians' 112 and the projected deployment to Belgium of 48. Even with a two base deployment, one of our bases would, with seven flights, be as large as the single Italian base (also seven flights) and it would be larger than the German base (six flights). Even although other countries will base their missiles on one base, therefore, I think it would be quite reasonable for us to have more than one.

4. There is also the negative consideration that, if we were to have only one base, the best practical choice - and the one the Americans would press for - would be Greenham Common and while it might be possible to overcome local opposition to having a base there if there were also another elsewhere, I do not believe, given recent history, that it could otherwise be managed. As what was said in the Defence Debate this week made clear, we are in any case

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going to face real difficulties on basing. We must start from a position from which we have a reasonable chance of succeeding.

5. The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary, in his minute of 30th April, has referred to the risks of a confrontation with the Americans on this issue. I appreciate that they have, as he says, made an important and generous commitment on TNF modernisation but I would suggest that we should not under-estimate the part on this we ourselves have played within the Alliance. I do not think that reasoned discussion on the subject between myself and Harold Brown should cause undue strains to develop. The US/UK defence relationship in any case goes two ways. The Americans require a number of things from us - particularly facilities for basing or staging US forces in peace and war - just as we require a number of things from them. The American objection to multi-basing is not so much one of principle as of cost, both here and in the other NATO countries; the extra cost to them of one base, as opposed to two, would, in terms of the US Defense Budget, be marginal, and I think this should be pursued with them.

6. I am sending copies of this minute with, where appropriate, copies of my minute of 18th April, to the members of OD, and the Chief Whip; and a copy also goes to the Secretary of the Cabinet.

Ministry of Defence

2nd May 1980

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COMPTON



PM/80/36

PRIME MINISTER

Basing of US Ground Launched Cruise Missiles (GLCMS) in the  
United Kingdom

1. I have seen a copy of the Defence Secretary's minute to you of 18 April suggesting that we should press the Americans to pay some of the additional costs of a second GLCM base.
2. Francis Pym mentions the risks of a confrontation with the Americans on this issue. In the present state of transatlantic relations I think we must weigh these risks carefully with the financial and domestic considerations.
3. For the Americans the December decisions on TNF represented an important and generous commitment by them to the defence of Europe, meeting a problem which they see as one of particular European concern. They have agreed to find a very large proportion of the costs which are militarily unavoidable, but are unwilling to pay as well for extra costs arising from essentially local considerations. They are also concerned that agreement to funding two bases in the United Kingdom would lead to similar difficulties elsewhere.
4. We have seen recent signs that NATO's decision on TNF may be at risk, with Chancellor Schmidt's remarks on TNF arms control and growing evidence that the Belgians will be unable to agree to GLCM basing in Belgium by their June deadline. I believe that the Americans, particularly Congress, will find it hard to understand our proposed line in view of the fragile state of the TNF agreement particularly since our reasons, as we are all agreed, would not be military but domestic.
5. Moreover, in my view, the domestic political judgement is finely balanced. I note that Michael Joplin and the Whips support Francis Pym's views. But I wonder whether the degree of opposition to GLCMs will be lessened by basing them in two areas rather than one. The effect of this could be to increase

/ substantially



substantially the number of voices raised against the whole project. It is not clear to me that the overall level of opposition would be reduced by diffusing it more widely.

6. In short, I suggest that it would be preferable neither to meet the cost of dual basing ourselves nor to press the Americans further but that we should revert to the idea of a single base.

7. I am copying this letter to the Defence Secretary, the Home Secretary, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Chief Whip and the Secretary of the Cabinet.

A handwritten signature in red ink, appearing to be 'C' with a horizontal line underneath.

(CARRINGTON)

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

30 April 1980



130 WEST 1500

CONFIDENTIAL



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

29 April 1980

The Rt Hon Francis Pym MP  
Secretary of State for Defence

*Mr Francis*

BASING OF US GROUND LAUNCHED CRUISE MISSILES (GLCMs) IN  
THE UNITED KINGDOM

I have read with interest your minute of 18 April to the Prime Minister reporting the difficulties of agreeing with the Americans on the number of bases in the UK for US GLCMs.

I ought perhaps to make clear that the full costs to the UK of the NATO long range theatre nuclear force modernisation programme, including any previously unforeseen direct basing costs, must in my view be contained within your agreed Defence Budget and cash limit ceilings. I fear that my view would not change even if you were unable to secure agreement that the Americans should meet all costs additional to those of their preferred single-base solution, but were nevertheless to opt for two bases.

I am copying this to the Prime Minister, the Home Secretary, the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary and the Chief Whip; and to the Secretary of the Cabinet.

GEOFFREY HOWE

*[Handwritten signature]*

CONFIDENTIAL



29 APR 1960

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CONFIDENTIAL



10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Private Secretary*

SIR ROBERT ARMSTRONG

Basing of United States Ground Launched Cruise  
Missiles (GLCMs) in the United Kingdom

The Prime Minister has seen your minute of 23 April on this subject. She would like to have a brief discussion in OD of the problems raised in the Defence Secretary's minute of 18 April.

*Paul*

26 April 1980

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*Prime Minister*

①

Ref. A02013

PRIME MINISTER

*Yes please  
not. I imagine you will wish to discuss  
this with colleagues.*

*Pr*

Basing of United States Ground Launched Cruise Missiles  
(GLCMs) in the United Kingdom

The Secretary of State for Defence sent you and OD colleagues a minute on this subject on 18th April.

2. His main purpose is to seek your agreement that, despite the United States wish to locate all 10 GLCM flights in a single base, we should, for domestic political reasons, press for them to be spread over at least two. He himself would prefer three. He also proposes that the Americans should be pressed to meet the extra costs involved in such a deployment amounting to about £20 million in capital and £3 million a year in running costs.

3. The annex attached to the Secretary of State for Defence's minute makes it clear that there is no operational advantage in deploying this GLCM force over more than one base. If the force is caught unawares by a Soviet bolt from the blue, it will be destroyed whether it is located in one or more bases. But if the force is dispersed, as it would be given anything like the anticipated NATO warning period, it would enjoy a high degree of protection, whether the flights were located in a single base or in several bases. In other words, there is no operational reason to spread the missiles over more than one base: the argument for doing so depends entirely on an assessment of domestic political factors.

4. The first choice for a United States GLCM base - whether as a single base or as one of several bases - would probably be Greenham Common. That already has a strong local tradition of protest against defence activity, mainly due to aircraft noise. The environmental nuisance produced by the GLCMs would be movements of heavy vehicles; and there would be more such movements at Greenham Common if it was the only base than if it was one of three. If it was the only GLCM base, local residents would presumably feel themselves uniquely vulnerable to Soviet pre-emptive strike action. They



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might be marginally appeased if they were one of two or three places exposed to the nuisance and the risk; on the other hand there would then be two or three local protest movements instead of only one.

5. To the Americans an insistence on the need for several GLCM bases may seem inconsistent with our readiness to base our own entire Polaris force at Faslane, particularly as that base is adjacent to the United States SSBN base in the Holy Loch. The Scots may also find this point puzzling.

6. Some of the political difficulty of a single base arises from the choice of Greenham Common as the choice for that base. I wondered whether the political difficulties of a single base would be easier to accommodate if that base was Molesworth, which is in Mr. Pym's constituency. I am told, however, that Molesworth as it is could accommodate only three of the ten GLCM flights: a good deal of money would have to be spent there if it were to be able to take all ten, and we should be failing to get the best possible use out of facilities available at Greenham Common. So using Molesworth as the single base would cost more than using Greenham Common as the single base.

7. If in the end you are convinced that the case for several GLCM bases is well founded, there certainly seem to be good reasons for pressing the Americans to meet the costs, though you would need to consider whether we should be prepared to allow this to be used as one element in a wider financial negotiation with the United States in the defence field. If on the other hand you thought that we might after all be able to accept that the United States GLCM force should be located in a single base at Greenham Common, we could still claim some credit with the United States for stomaching this arrangement.

(Robert Armstrong)

23rd April, 1980



MO 11/2/2

W

PRIME MINISTERBASING OF US GROUND LAUNCHED CRUISE MISSILES (GLCMs)  
IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

We now need to decide where in the United Kingdom the US should base the 160 ground launched cruise missiles we have agreed should come here under NATO's long range theatre nuclear force modernisation programme. The Americans have done a fair amount of practical work on this and we have discussed with them exhaustively the issues involved.

2. The Americans want to have only one British base (there will be only one base in each of the other European countries where GLCMs will be based, although it is fair from our point of view to note that we are taking more flights than anyone else). On military grounds I am persuaded that this would be acceptable given the operational concept for GLCMs which was endorsed, with our agreement, at the last meeting of the NATO Nuclear Planning Group; a note explaining this is at Annex, but in essence limited basing is reasonable given that security against attack will be given first by the wide geographical spread of GLCM and other nuclear systems within NATO and, secondly, by the ability to deploy individual GLCM launchers to widely dispersed sites during a period of tension (this can be done in a matter of hours even from a single base). In terms of domestic politics, however, I am clear that it would not be acceptable to have only one base and that it would be preferable to have a minimum of three. The Ministers in my Department agree with this view but believe that two bases would be tolerable. Michael Jopling and the Whips, with whom I have shared the problem, are of the same opinion.

3. I have put my views to Dr Harold Brown, the US Secretary for Defense but he has said that while he is prepared to accept a three, or two, base deployment this could be only on the basis of the UK finding the extra costs involved. Even two bases will be significantly more expensive than one in money and manpower and Dr Brown is apprehensive that if the UK insists upon multi-basing, the FRG and Italy may be tempted to do the same for their own domestic reasons,



thus greatly increasing the global cost of the GLCM programme. We know that the Pentagon is under very strong Congressional pressure to reduce overseas expenditure, particularly on personnel.

4. I consider, however, that the Americans must be pressed on this. My own budget is, as you know, exceptionally hard pressed. I would find it difficult to justify an additional direct burden in respect of GLCM which could even on a conservative basis be as much as an extra £20M in capital and £3M a year in running costs. I therefore propose to resist the US demand. But as a compromise I think that we should be prepared to agree to limiting our requirement to two bases only, thus significantly reducing the extra costs involved. In essence I would say to Dr Brown that we cannot afford a financial contribution beyond what we shall already be making via NATO infrastructure, but that by coming down to two bases we shall be paying a considerable price in terms of domestic political difficulty. We would be prepared to pay that price to ensure the success of the NATO programme but would expect the US to pay what would be for them a relatively small extra resource cost. There is clearly a risk in this approach that we might lose some of the goodwill engendered by our support of the US in the NATO discussions last year, as well as complicating negotiations in other fields. But I believe that it is the right line to take at this stage.

5. As regards the choice of bases, the three sites acceptable to the Americans are the US Air Force standby bases at Greenham Common (Berkshire) and Wethersfield (Essex) together with the former RAF airfield at Molesworth (Cambridgeshire). All three sites are broadly acceptable to us on cost, environmental and safety grounds. For a two base deployment the choice would be Greenham Common and Molesworth. (Greenham Common may, of course, prove particularly difficult, but should be manageable as one of two sites).



6. Whichever combination of sites is chosen, considerable local opposition seems inevitable. I think that we have no alternative but to meet this head-on. I am preparing a vigorous public relations campaign including the distribution of an information folder and an offer to provide Ministerial representation at public meetings, and will be consulting the Paymaster General about this. But a public announcement about the choice of sites must await agreement with the Americans on the cost aspect.

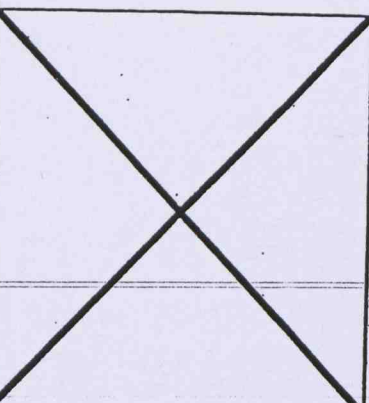
7. Subject to your agreement, I would propose to seek to reach agreement with Dr Brown on the basis of paragraph 4 above.

8. I am sending copies of this minute to the Home Secretary, the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary, the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Chief Whip; and to the Secretary of the Cabinet.

*HL*

Ministry of Defence

18th April 1980

DEPARTMENT/SERIES ..... <i>PREM 19</i> ..... PIECE/ITEM ..... <i>3641</i> ..... (one piece/item number)	Date and sign
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