

Titchen  
(SCWA)

20th September 1982

Trident

Many thanks for your letter of 15th September, which was written following your talk to Tessa earlier in the day.

I understand, precisely, the reasons which prompted you to write as you did.

I will do what I can, but it may not be much.

See you in Brighton next month.

IAN GOW

David W Mitchell Esq

Ian

David Mitchell (Scottish President) telephoned.

The attached article - Financial Times 14/9/82

1. This has caused considerable concern to the Scottish, since when we appeared to be at odds with the US over John Browne Engineering, we announced at the same time that the jobs which were going to go in support of Trident to Coalbridge were in fact going to Georgia in the US - error in timing.
2. With the uncertainty that Mr Nott's impending resignation injected into this scene and the doubt which DM thinks this article states very well, perhaps some definitive statement at an early date may be helpful.

Tessa  
15.9.82

# Thinking again about Trident

THE BRITISH Government's decision to service the Trident missiles for the country's future nuclear deterrent in the U.S. rather than Scotland is not in itself an official admission that the Trident programme has already gone astray. Yet it is still pretty peculiar even by the Government's own criteria.

One of the arguments that ministers have repeatedly made in favour of Trident was that it would create, or at least preserve, British jobs. The justification of a weapons system capable of destroying or defending millions of lives on the grounds that it would keep a few thousand people in work always seemed remarkably thin. Now the Government has abandoned that leaf.

## *Spurious*

It has also admitted that the costs of Trident are escalating to the point at which they could impair the rest of the defence programme. The decision to have the missiles serviced in the U.S. is intended to save some £500m. Last March, when the agreement to acquire the D-5 missile was announced, it was claimed that such costs could be borne quite easily by the British defence budget.

The argument that savings can be used to boost conventional, as distinct from nuclear, forces is spurious, at least until it is proved. The fact is that we are talking about expenditure many years ahead and the Ministry of Defence, in 1982, has no power to allocate that.

The last word will come from the Treasury and the politicians in office at the time.

There is also a point about independence. Those who want a specifically British independent nuclear deterrent can hardly claim that this is what they are getting if missiles have to be serviced in America.

## *Rejection*

For our part, we have long been sceptical about Trident and indeed about the requirement for British nuclear deterrents in general. The real need is for deterrents by the Atlantic alliance as a whole. It remains unclear that a British nuclear capability is the best way of contributing to that. The most appropriate British contribution might well be more and better equipped conventional forces. That is something which needs to be urgently discussed within Nato.

Since announcing its decision to go for Trident in 1980, and for the more advanced version this year, the Government has won few, if any, converts to its position. The Labour Party is against it. The Liberals and Social Democrats have very considerable reservations, almost to the extent of rejection. In his statement last week Mr John Nott, the Defence Secretary, seemed to retract some of the Government's own arguments. The lesson is plain enough: it is time to review the whole issue.

liquidity crisis by offering \$1.85bn of bridging finance to

ing system can no longer be sustained.

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## touch

Though one or two seem to be getting about it, the £1bn "tain" in GEC's resale one of the tangible fruitful working that Lord Weinstock man Lord Nelson have enjoyed over years.

Weinstock paid tribute on Friday role. Without him, with English Electric would never have ta he said. Nor would flourished since as it

It was Nelson's initiative brought about the me he and his father, man of English Electric tried to make such 1960. "But the between asset value ings could not be r he says.

But eight years later ing to Weinstock's t AEI, the Clark b Plessey put in a bid Electric.

Plessey was only size of English Electric the bid was not welcomed says Nelson, who h his father as head of pany. He promptly s Weinstock that a m GEC would bring benefit.

"We have a good says Nelson, "as proved." More than men slotted easily in pective responsibility Weinstock likes to shop and I like to about meeting people

Such an function seems ta Lord Carrington— son's interest in business is likely even when he Ie chair he will continue as much time ab Staffordshire farm

Carrington, too, the GEC home ba

S.C.U.A.  
1882  
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15 Sept 1982

Dear Ian,

I explained my concern to your secretary  
about the article VIZ-A-VIZ the present defence  
scene. Perhaps some definitive statement would be welcome.

The timing of the "Job transfer" from Campbell to  
Geoff U.S.A. Co-incidentally Bill John Brown panders from  
U.S.A. has quite "extraordinarily unflattering" - if you  
know what I mean!

Best wishes,

Ian Gow M.P.

David

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