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x R-SIT Room & copy approval + edit to Brzezinski

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE
EYES ONLY

July 11, 1980

MEMORANDUM FOR: THE PRESIDENT
FROM: ZBIGNIEW BRZEZINSKI *ZB*
SUBJECT: Letters to Schmidt and Giscard

Due to a number of logistical problems, the British have had to move up the timetable for informing Schmidt and Giscard about the impending announcement. Armstrong will inform Schmidt this evening in Bonn, and Giscard Saturday morning in Paris. Your letters to the two informing them of your decision should arrive shortly thereafter in each case.

We have drafted a Presidential message that will be sent to the two over the Cabinet Lines. The message, which follows below, has been cleared with State and Defense, and ought to go out as soon as possible. Do you approve?

Dear Helmut/Valery:

PM
Margaret Thatcher has informed you of the formal UK request that the United States sell Trident missiles, equipment and supporting services to the United Kingdom on roughly the same basis as Polaris was supplied in the past. I want you to know that I plan to inform her shortly that the United States is willing to sell the Trident I as she proposed.

I view this decision by Britain as an important step for the Alliance. The independent British strategic missile force which is assigned to NATO plays an important role in ensuring a strong Alliance deterrent. and all Allies have an important stake in seeing this deterrent maintained in the future. For this reason I am pleased to respond favorably to the British request and to continue the close US-UK cooperation on strategic nuclear forces that has been an important element in trans-Atlantic defense cooperation for some time.

PM TL
In connection with this sale, Margaret has stated that it is the objective of the United Kingdom to take advantage of the economies made possible by the cooperation of the United States

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Review July 11, 1986

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E.O. 12958, Sec. 3.6
PER 126/64 NY HORE NLC-97-51
BY *[Signature]*
NARS. DATE 2/19/99

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Use PM Thatcher
vs Margaret

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2

in making the Trident system available in order to reinforce its efforts to upgrade conventional forces. While Britain will pay the full cost of the materials it will acquire, the enormous additional financial burden that independent United Kingdom strategic missile research and development would have imposed was one of the factors influencing my decision to sell Britain the highly advanced Trident missile, including its MIRV capability.

This step is entirely consistent with SALT. As you know from our consultations during the negotiations of the SALT II Treaty, the U.S. has made clear that the Treaty does not preclude cooperation with our Allies, including cooperation on force modernization. Indeed, we have stressed that the transfer of numerically limited systems is not necessarily precluded. Though we must anticipate that the Soviets will react negatively, they certainly understood this to apply with special strength to the intensive pattern of US-UK cooperation.

This joint decision has been the subject of extensive preparation. We needed to go forward with it now in order to give the Congress an adequate amount of time to consider the Trident sale in this session. Neither the decision nor its timing is linked in any way to the recent events in the TNF field. Indeed, the Soviets themselves now apparently draw a distinction between TNF and national central strategic systems. Although some may attempt to connect this decision with the TNF issue, there is no substantive basis for viewing the modernized British deterrent as an alternative or addition to the USLRTNF deployments, since the British strategic force and the U.S. TNF force perform different functions. The modernization of the already existing British sea-based deterrent force does not answer NATO's need to make up deficiencies in its land-based deterrent in Europe.

I view this step as an important further measure in strengthening our common defense. I want to repeat Margaret's request that you regard this information as strictly confidential until the announcement is made in the House of Commons on July 17.

With warm regards,

Sincerely,

P.M.T.R.

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