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

Ref. A02623

15th July, 1980

British Strategic Nuclear Force

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

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

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

D. J. WRIGHT

(D. J. Wright)
Private Secretary

J. F. Halliday, Esq.

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