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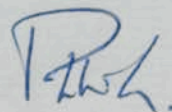
MR COLES

*see minute
ADL 8.
3*cc Sir Robert Armstrong
Mr FacerTrident: Exchange of Letters

I attach the draft of the Prime Minister's letter to President Reagan, as approved at MISC 7 yesterday. The same draft is at present with the White House for final approval, which they have promised to let us have in the course of today (their time). Once this is received (see below), I should be grateful if you could prepare the top copy in final form (dated 11th March and unclassified); invite the Prime Minister to sign it; and let me have it (under top secret cover) by lunchtime on 8th March, so that I can send it to Sir N Henderson in the bag that afternoon, which will arrive in time for him to effect the actual exchange at about 9 am (2 pm London time) on 11th March. Before he does so we will have informed him that the Cabinet have formally reconfirmed their approval of the agreement; and he will then be in a position to let us know that the exchange has been effected, before the simultaneous public announcements are made at 3.30 pm London time (10.30 am Washington time).

2. If American reconfirmation of the text is received before close of play (our time) today, Mr Facer or I will let you know. If it is received later than that, the DIO will inform the No. 10 Duty Clerk and ask him to let you know urgently. If the Americans suggest any changes, the DIO will consult me before contacting No. 10; if they are unimportant I will simply ask him to ask No. 10 to incorporate them, but if they are substantive I will consult the Ministry of Defence and Foreign and Commonwealth Office (and if necessary the White House) before letting you have a recommendation on their acceptability.

3. I have asked the Ministry of Defence similarly to let me have the signed top copy of the Defence Secretary's 11th March letter to Mr Weinberger.



R L WADE-GERY

5th March 1982

DRAFT

LETTER A

To: The President, The White House, Washington, DC

From: The Prime Minister

1. I wrote to your predecessor on 10 July 1980 to ask whether the United States Government would be ready to supply Trident I missiles equipment and supporting services to the United Kingdom on a similar basis to that on which the Polaris missiles were supplied under the Polaris Sales Agreement of 6 April 1963. President Carter replied on 14 July confirming that the United States Government were prepared to do so, subject to and in accordance with applicable United States law and procedures.
2. In the light of decisions taken by the United States Government in 1981 to accelerate their own programme to procure Trident II missiles, and to phase out the Trident I programme earlier than had hitherto been intended, the United Kingdom Government have carried out a review of their nuclear deterrent programme. In the light of this review, I am now writing to ask whether in place of Trident I missiles the United States Government would be ready to supply Trident II missiles, equipment and supporting services on a continuing basis and in a manner generally similar to that in which Polaris was supplied. The United Kingdom Government would wish to purchase these missiles complete with multiple, independently targettable re-entry vehicles but without the warheads themselves. I propose that, as in the past, close co-ordination should be maintained between the executive agencies of the two Governments in order to assure compatibility of equipment.
3. Like the Polaris force, and consistently with the agreement reached in 1980 on the supply of Trident I missiles, the United Kingdom Trident II force will be assigned to the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation; and except where the United Kingdom Government may decide that supreme national interests are at stake, this successor force will be used for the purposes of international defence of the Western alliance in all circumstances. It is my understanding that co-operation in the modernisation of the United Kingdom nuclear deterrent in the manner proposed would be consistent with the present and prospective international obligations of both parties.

TOP SECRET

4. I would like to assure you that the United Kingdom Government remain wholly committed to the strengthening of the Alliance's conventional forces. The United Kingdom Government have in recent years substantially increased their defence spending and further increases are planned for the future in order to sustain the United Kingdom's all-round contribution to allied deterrence and defence. The economies made possible by the United States Government's co-operation with respect to the supply of the Trident I missile system will be used in order to reinforce the United Kingdom Government's continuing efforts to upgrade their conventional forces.

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