

Ref: A09843



Defence

16

Copy No. 1 of 7 copies

(Copy 2 on Defence, June 1979  
'The Milledenhall Agreement')

TOP SECRET

MR. WHITMORE

*[Handwritten initials]*

Prime Minister

*BM  
29  
/6*

Meeting with President Carter

*For the rest of the briefing  
see Econ. Policy, May 1979  
(Tokyo Econ. Summit)*

The third paragraph of PMVR (79) 15 says that Nuclear and Intelligence matters are being dealt with in a separate brief.

I attach this brief, which is classified Top Secret, herewith. No other distribution is being given to it, but, in addition to my own copy, I have a spare copy which I could give to the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary if the Prime Minister should want to discuss any aspect of it with him en route to or in Tokyo.

*[Handwritten signature]*

(John Hunt)

22nd June, 1979

TOP SECRET

ECONOMIC SUMMIT, TOKYO, 28-29 JUNE 1979

PRIME MINISTER'S MEETING WITH  
PRESIDENT CARTER

NUCLEAR DEFENCE AND INTELLIGENCE CO-OPERATION

Brief by the Secretary of the Cabinet

POINTS TO MAKE

A. Future of the United Kingdom deterrent

① Future of Brit  
deterrent -  
strategy for  
co-operation.

- i. So far Ministers have only had a preliminary discussion about what should succeed Polaris. The Government are however committed to maintaining an effective strategic deterrent.
- ii. Glad to have President Carter's support for this and his agreement to bilateral talks. A small team of British officials are visiting Washington for talks on 30 and 31 July.
- iii. Too early to reach a view of what replacement system is most likely to meet our needs. Must take into account the mission it is required to fulfil, technical suitability, timing and costs. This is why we want to look at range of options covering both ballistic and cruise missiles.
- iv. We have valued the very close co-operation we have had with the United States in this area since 1958. We see the team's visit in July as the start of a new phase in this co-operation. Look forward to further exchanges with President Carter as our thinking develops.
- v. Welcome and wish to continue our close intelligence relationship.

B.

② \* ~ \*  
Very well with  
will be fine in  
possible if  
will keep  
interest of  
content.

\* ~ \*  
i. There have from time to time been suggestions from French sources that there might be some benefit to both of us from collaboration over the development of our strategic nuclear forces. We recognise there would be some political advantage in being able

\* ~ \* Words deleted and  
retained under S 3(4).  
CWayland, 13/12/11

TOP SECRET

to respond positively to these suggestions. But it is difficult to see what practical benefit we would derive from such collaboration. In any case we would do nothing which might be inconsistent with the commitments in our bilateral agreements with the United States. This severely limits the area for possible collaboration with the French

Paragraph Bii deleted and retained  
under Section 3(4).

Wayland

13 December 2011



TOP SECRET

## BACKGROUND

### A. The future of the United Kingdom deterrent

1. At the restricted meeting on 24 May, it was agreed that as a preliminary to further discussion by Ministers about what system to adopt as successor to Polaris, we needed more information about costs and other aspects of alternative options and that this could best be obtained by sending a small team of officials to Washington to talk to American officials. You wrote accordingly to President Carter, following up an approach which had been made by Mr. Callaghan, in the following terms:-

"One of the matters to which my colleagues and I are giving early attention is the future of the British deterrent. We have considered some preliminary studies of alternative options for a successor system. But we cannot take this consideration very far on the basis of information available from our own resources only. I know that my predecessor had asked if you would agree to a small team of senior officials coming over to Washington to talk to some of your people, on a very confidential basis, about certain aspects, including technical implications, cost and likely availability, of systems we are considering. I should like to renew that request and suggest that, if you agree, the systems covered might include the Trident C4, cruise missiles (SLCMs and ALCMs) and a modernised version of the Polaris A3. I understand of course that the decision to supply any of these systems would be a political one, though I assume from what Mr. Vance told us that there is nothing in the SALT II Treaty itself that would inhibit the United States from reaching a favourable decision with respect to any of the systems I have mentioned."

President Carter replied on 8 June:-

"Your May 30 letter proposed to send United Kingdom officials to Washington to discuss strategic force modernisation alternatives which the United Kingdom is considering. The viability and effectiveness of the British deterrent has long been a matter of

TOP SECRET

interest to the United States and co-operation between us. I have asked Dr. Brzezinski to contact John Hunt to arrange an early meeting on the lines you propose. Of course, we will both wish to consider the results of these talks and further exchanges before reaching any decisions. I can assure you that all the alternatives you mention remain open under the SALT II Treaty."

It has since been agreed that the bilateral official talks will be held on 30 and 31 July.

2. Depending on the option preferred certain decisions may be needed in 1980 if we are to ensure that the new system can be operational by the early 1990s.

B. \* ~~~~~ \*

1. The question of Anglo-French nuclear collaboration did come up at your meeting with President Giscard. But it was not clear whether the President's suggestion for exchanging views related to TNF modernisation and preparations for SALT III or to national plans in the strategic field. Because of the difficulties over the latter (and the absence of any foreseeable practical benefit to us) the intention is to regard the suggestion as applying to TNF and SALT III unless or until we have a more direct and positive indication that President Giscard has more than this in mind.

2.

\* ~~~~~ \*

Passages deleted and retained under  
Section 3(4).

AWayland

13 December 2015

TOP SECRET

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Page extracted and retained under  
Section 3(x). *AWayland*  
13 December 2011



The National Archives

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TOP SECRET

AND PERSONAL

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15 JS



COPY NO. 4 OF 4 COPIES

10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Private Secretary*

16 June 1979

T 23/79T & T 18/79T  
I enclose, for the personal information of the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary and those senior officials directly concerned with this issue, copies of an exchange of messages between the Prime Minister and President Carter about further exchanges between UK and US officials about the future of the UK nuclear deterrent.

I am sending a copy of this letter, and its enclosures, to Roger Facer (Ministry of Defence) for the personal information of the Defence Secretary and to Martin Vile (Cabinet Office).

B. G. CARTLEDGE

G.G.H. Walden, Esq.,  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

T23/79T

**PRIME MINISTER'S  
PERSONAL MESSAGE  
SERIAL No. T23/79T**

*Defence*  
Prime Minister 14

VZCZCWAG013  
=00 WTE24  
DE WTE £4778 1591506  
O 081513Z JUN 79  
FM PRESIDENT CARTER  
TO PRIME MINISTER THATCHER  
ZEM

*So far, so good.*

*They're very quickly  
air. 8/6*

T O P S E C R E T SENSITIVE VIA CABINET OFFICE CHANNELS WH91187

DEAR PRIME MINISTER THATCHER:

YOUR MAY 30 LETTER PROPOSED TO SEND UK OFFICIALS TO WASHINGTON TO DISCUSS STRATEGIC FORCE MODERNIZATION ALTERNATIVES WHICH THE UK IS CONSIDERING. THE VIABILITY AND EFFECTIVENESS OF THE BRITISH DETERRENT HAS LONG BEEN A MATTER OF INTEREST TO THE UNITED STATES AND COOPERATION BETWEEN US. I HAVE ASKED DR. BRZEZINSKI TO CONTACT JOHN HUNT TO ARRANGE AN EARLY MEETING ON THE LINES YOU PROPOSE. OF COURSE, WE WILL BOTH WISH TO CONSIDER THE RESULTS OF THESE TALKS AND FURTHER EXCHANGES BEFORE REACHING ANY DECISIONS. I CAN ASSURE YOU THAT ALL THE ALTERNATIVES YOU MENTION REMAIN OPEN UNDER THE SALT II TREATY.

*P.A.  
8/6  
11/6*

SINCERELY,

JIMMY CARTER

0157  
£4778

NNNN

WTE DE CAB

QSL AT 08-1521Z

KS

FOR WHITE HOUSE COMMUNICATIONS STAFF FROM 10 DOWNING STREET,  
LONDON

Immediately following is a TOP SECRET PERSONAL message to  
President Carter from Prime Minister Thatcher, for the President's  
eyes only. Please ensure special handling.

..... PRIME MINISTER'S

PERSONAL MESSAGE

SERIAL No. T18 / 79 T

TOP SECRET

PERSONAL MESSAGE TO PRESIDENT CARTER, WHITE HOUSE, FROM PRIME  
MINISTER THATCHER, 30 MAY 1979

Dear Mr. President,

We were very glad to welcome Mr. Vance to London ~~this~~ last  
week and to have the opportunity so soon after taking office  
to exchange views with him on such a wide range of subjects.

I told Mr. Vance that one of the matters to which my  
colleagues and I are giving early attention is the future of  
the British deterrent. We have considered some preliminary  
studies of alternative options for a successor system. But  
we cannot take this consideration very far on the basis of  
information available from our own resources only. I know  
that my predecessor had asked if you would agree to a small  
team of senior officials coming over to Washington to talk  
to some of your people, on a very confidential basis, about  
certain aspects, including technical implications, cost and  
likely availability, of systems we are considering. I should  
like to renew that request and suggest that, if you agree, the  
systems covered might include the Trident C4, cruise missiles  
(SLCMs and ALCMs) and a modernised version of the Polaris A3.  
I understand of course that the decision to supply any of these  
systems would be a political one, though I assume from what  
Mr. Vance told us that there is nothing in the SALT II Treaty  
itself that would inhibit the United States from reaching a  
favourable decision with respect to any of the systems I have  
mentioned.

/The people

TOP SECRET

- 2 -

The people I would like to send are Sir Clive Rose of the Cabinet Office, Sir Anthony Duff of the Foreign Office and Professor Ron Mason, the Chief Scientific Adviser in the Ministry of Defence. If this is acceptable to you, I should be grateful if you would let me know whom they should contact in the first instance. I hope it may be possible to make arrangements for an early visit.

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely,

MARGARET THATCHER

T19/29 T  
CAB/WH 001/30

FOR WHITE HOUSE COMMUNICATIONS STAFF FROM 10 DOWNING STREET,  
LONDON.

IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING IS A TOP SECRET PERSONAL MESSAGE TO  
PRESIDENT CARTER FROM PRIME MINISTER THATCHER, FOR THE PRESIDENT'S  
EYES ONLY. PLEASE ENSURE SPECIAL HANDLING.

O 301030Z MAY 79  
FM CABINET OFFICE LONDON  
TO WHITE HOUSE

TOP SECRET

PERSONAL MESSAGE TO PRESIDENT CARTER, WHITE HOUSE, FROM  
PRIME MINISTER THATCHER, 30 MAY 1979.

DEAR MR PRESIDENT,

WE WERE VERY GLAD TO WELCOME MR VANCE TO LONDON LAST WEEK  
AND TO HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY SO SOON AFTER TAKING OFFICE TO  
EXCHANGE VIEWS WITH HIM ON SUCH A WIDE RANGE OF SUBJECTS.

I TOLD MR VANCE THAT ONE OF THE MATTERS TO WHICH MY COLLEAGUES  
AND I ARE GIVING EARLY ATTENTION IS THE FUTURE OF THE BRITISH  
DETERRENT. WE HAVE CONSIDERED SOME PRELIMINARY STUDIES OF  
ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS FOR A SUCCESSOR SYSTEM. BUT WE CANNOT  
TAKE THIS CONSIDERATION VERY FAR ON THE BASIS OF INFORMATION  
AVAILABLE FROM OUR OWN RESOURCES ONLY. I KNOW THAT MY PREDECESSOR  
HAD ASKED IF YOU WOULD AGREE TO A SMALL TEAM OF SENIOR OFFICIALS  
COMING OVER TO WASHINGTON TO TALK TO SOME OF YOUR PEOPLE, ON  
A VERY CONFIDENTIAL BASIS, ABOUT CERTAIN ASPECTS, INCLUDING  
TECHNICAL IMPLICATIONS, COST AND LIKELY AVAILABILITY, OF  
SYSTEMS WE ARE CONSIDERING. I SHOULD LIKE TO RENEW THAT  
REQUEST AND SUGGEST THAT, IF YOU AGREE, THE SYSTEMS COVERED  
MIGHT INCLUDE THE TRIDENT C4, CRUISE MISSILES (SLCM'S AND  
ALCM'S) AND A MODERNISED VERSION OF THE POLARIS A3. I UNDERSTAND  
OF COURSE THAT THE DECISION TO SUPPLY ANY OF THESE SYSTEMS  
WOULD BE A POLITICAL ONE, THOUGH I ASSUME FROM WHAT MR VANCE  
TOLD US THAT THERE IS NOTHING IN THE SALT II TREATY ITSELF  
THAT WOULD INHIBIT THE UNITED STATES FROM REACHING A FAVOURABLE  
DECISION WITH RESPECT TO ANY OF THE SYSTEMS I HAVE MENTIONED.

THE PEOPLE I WOULD LIKE TO SEND ARE SIR CLIVE ROSE OF THE  
CABINET OFFICE, SIR ANTHONY DUFF OF THE FOREIGN OFFICE AND  
PROFESSOR RON MASON, THE CHIEF SCIENTIFIC ADVISER IN THE  
MINISTRY OF DEFENCE. IF THIS IS ACCEPTABLE TO YOU, I SHOULD  
BE GRATEFUL IF YOU WOULD LET ME KNOW WHOM THEY SHOULD CONTACT  
IN THE FIRST INSTANCE. I HOPE IT MAY BE POSSIBLE TO MAKE  
ARRANGEMENTS FOR AN EARLY VISIT.

WITH BEST WISHES,  
YOURS SINCERELY,  
MARGARET THATCHER

SENT AT 30/1031Z JA

Ref: A09642



Copy No. 1 of 3 copies

TOP SECRET

*Prime Minister*

PRIME MINISTER

*Content with  
his revised draft?*

*Gen  
27/5*

Nuclear Deterrent: Message to  
President Carter

I attach the draft message to President Carter which we have slightly revised and shortened following the discussion this evening.

*Agreed M.*

John Hunt

24th May 1979



TOP SECRET

DRAFT LETTER FROM THE PRIME MINISTER TO  
PRESIDENT CARTER

We were very glad to welcome Mr. Vance to London this week and to have the opportunity so soon after taking office to exchange views with him on such a wide range of subjects.

I told Mr. Vance that one of the matters to which my colleagues and I are giving early attention is the future of the British deterrent. We have considered some preliminary studies of alternative options for a successor system. But we cannot take this consideration very far on the basis of information available from our own resources only. I know that my predecessor had asked if you would agree to a small team of senior officials coming over to Washington to talk to some of your people, on a very confidential basis, about certain aspects, including technical implications, cost and likely availability, of systems we are considering. I should like to renew that request and suggest that, if you agree, the systems covered might include the Trident C4, cruise missiles (SLCMs and ALCMs) and a modernised version of the Polaris A3. I understand of course that the decision to supply any of these systems would be a political one, though I assume from what Mr. Vance told us that there is nothing in the SALT II Treaty itself that would inhibit the United States from reaching a favourable decision with respect to any of the systems I have mentioned.

The people I would like to send are Sir Clive Rose of the Cabinet Office, Sir Anthony Duff of the Foreign Office and Professor Ron Mason, the Chief Scientific Adviser in the Ministry of Defence. If this is acceptable to you, I should be grateful if you would let me know whom they should contact in the first instance. I hope it may be possible to make arrangements for an early visit.