

THIS IS A COPY. THE ORIGINAL IS
RETAINED UNDER SECTION 3 (4)
OF THE PUBLIC RECORDS ACT

Ref. A02150

PRIME MINISTER

Polaris Successor System

Following your meeting this morning I attach a draft message which I propose to send to Dr. Brzezinski, suggesting that Sir Frank Cooper and I should visit him in Washington early next week. Our main aim would be to negotiate on the waiver of the whole of the proposed research and development levy on the Polaris successor and on offset for the cost to us of manning United States-owned Rapiers in the United Kingdom,

on the lines of paragraph 15(iv) of my minute of 9th May, as agreed by Ministers this morning.

2. We should also raise with Dr. Brzezinski the question of the timing of an announcement. We should be emphasising that, while we were prepared to do all we could to meet the United States Government's wishes on this, and would be ready to reach agreement with them in the same timescale as the Polaris successor,

given the recent political exchanges in the House of Commons about its use.

3. We could discuss in detail the timetable for the exchange of letters and announcement on the Polaris successor. We could also discuss the one remaining point on the proposed exchange of letters between you and the President. The only point now outstanding on this relates to the sentence dealing with the implications for our conventional effort.

4. You will remember that the draft letter includes a paragraph on this, which reads (in the latest draft):

"In particular, I should like to assure you that the United Kingdom continues to give wholehearted support to the NATO long term defence programme, with its emphasis on the strengthening of conventional forces. The United Kingdom has substantially increased its defence spending, in accordance with NATO's collective policy, and plans to

42
Prime Minister: I agreed with
Sir R. Armstrong to send the letter as
amended. You may like therefore to
consider the formulation at the end
Copy No. 1 of 7 Copies
of para 4 a little more carefully.
It looks O.K. to me.

Am 13/5



TOP SECRET

make further such increases in the future in order to improve the effectiveness of its all-round contribution to allied deterrence and defence. In this regard, the United Kingdom intends to use the savings created by the co-operation of the United States Government in making the X missile system available, to expand its efforts to upgrade the United Kingdom's conventional forces."

The first two sentences of this are agreed; it is only the last sentence which is at issue. The last sentence above is an American draft, which is not acceptable to us. We proposed three alternative formulations, as follows:-

First formulation

"The co-operation of the United States Government in making the X missile system available should greatly assist the effort to maximise that effectiveness, in relation to conventional as well as nuclear forces."

Second formulation

"The efficient use of resources made possible by continued close co-operation in the field of strategic nuclear systems on the basis proposed above will play an important part in facilitating United Kingdom measures to maximise that effectiveness in the conventional as well as the nuclear field."

Third formulation

"The economies made possible by the co-operation of the United States Government in making the X missile system available will play a key part in facilitating United Kingdom Government measures to maximise the strength of United Kingdom conventional forces."

The Americans have said that they would strongly prefer to keep the language they originally proposed. They understand that we cannot take a binding commitment about the size and allocation of defence funds far into the future, and it was not their intention to ask for such a commitment; but they view this sentence as a political statement of importance to them and to their public, which would demonstrate forcefully to the Congress, and to any potential critics,

TOP SECRET



TOP SECRET

one of the reasons why it is in the interests of the United States to co-operate in the modernisation of the British nuclear force. They would however be reluctantly prepared to agree to the following alternative formulation:

"In this regard, the objective of the United Kingdom is to take advantage of the savings created by the co-operation of the United States in making the X missile system available in order to expand its efforts to upgrade its conventional forces."

We think that this formulation is still unacceptable to us, particularly because of the use of the word "expand" but that it could be made bearable by two changes, so as to read:

"In this regard, the objective of the United Kingdom Government is to take advantage of the economies made possible by the co-operation of the United States in making the X missile system available in order to reinforce its efforts to upgrade its conventional forces".

Agreed
mb

These amendments are reflected in the draft message to Dr. Brzezinski.

5. May I send the message to Dr. Brzezinski?
6. I am sending copies of this minute and of the draft message to the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary and the Defence Secretary.

REA

(Robert Armstrong)

12th May, 1980

TOP SECRET

THIS IS A COPY. THE ORIGINAL IS
RETAINED UNDER SECTION 3 (4)
OF THE PUBLIC RECORDS ACT

DRAFT MESSAGE FROM SIR ROBERT ARMSTRONG,
CABINET OFFICE, LONDON, TO
DR. ZBIGNIEW BRZEZINSKI, WHITE HOUSE

Thank you for the messages which David Aaron and you sent to Robert Wade-Gery (who is at present on sick leave) on 6th and 7th May regarding the Polaris follow-on issue.

2. We are at this stage generally content with the general timetable and scenario you propose for the exchange of letters and public announcement. There may be points of detail we need to discuss further; and this assumes that we have by then settled the outstanding "domestic" issues in the European Community.

3. I think we are now close to agreement on the proposed text of the exchange of letters, subject on our side to final Ministerial approval, [On the Prime Minister's letter, we could accept the proposed wording of the fourth paragraph suggested in paragraph 5 of David Aaron's message of 6th May, provided that we substituted "economies made possible" for "savings created" and "reinforce" for "expand".]

*but I shall want
to discuss one or two
outstanding points*

4. We share your wish to wrap up in the same timescale other outstanding issues,

As you will have heard, we see a link between this matter, the political problems of which are now considerably greater for us than they were, and the outstanding difference on R and D costs which was discussed with Bob Komer.

5. I think that it would be useful if we could now discuss all these matters with you, with a view to bringing them to a conclusion as soon as possible. One possibility would be for me to come to Washington for



TOP SECRET

this purpose early next week, accompanied by Frank Cooper, if you could find time for a meeting on Monday 19 May or - less good for me - Tuesday 20 May. Alternatively I gather that David Aaron might be able to stop over in London on his way back from Vienna later this week.

CONQUEROR
LONDON

TOP SECRET



The National Archives

LETTERCODE/SERIES <i>PREM 19</i>	Date and sign
PIECE/ITEM <i>159</i> (one piece/item number)	
Extract/Item details: <i>Minute from Alexander to Armstrong dated 12 May 1980</i>	
CLOSED FOR YEARS UNDER FOI EXEMPTION	
RETAINED UNDER SECTION 3(4) OF THE PUBLIC RECORDS ACT 1958	<i>18/1/11</i> <i>J. Gray</i>
TEMPORARILY RETAINED	
MISSING ON TRANSFER	
MISSING	
NUMBER NOT USED	

Instructions for completion of Dummy Card

Use **Black Pen** to complete form

Use the card for one piece/item number only

Enter the Lettercode, Series and Piece/Item references clearly
e.g.

LETTERCODE/SERIES <i>GRA 168</i>
PIECE/ITEM <i>49</i> (ONE PIECE/ITEM NUMBER ONLY)

Please Sign and Date in the box adjacent to the description that applies to the document being replaced by the Dummy Card

If the document is Closed under a FOI exemption, enter the number of years closed. See the TNA guidance *Preparation of records for transfer to The National Archives*, section 18.2

The box described as 'Missing' is for TNA use only (it will apply to a document that is not in its proper place after it has been transferred to TNA)

TOP SECRET

40

Top copy filed
Parliament (49c Procedure edited letters) Pt 3.

May 1980, H/C Def. C. Nec Inquiry.

Ref. A02149

Copy No. 2 of 3 Copies

MR. ALEXANDER

House of Commons Defence Committee: Enquiry into Successor Systems

In his minute dated 9th May the Secretary of State for Defence seeks the Prime Minister's agreement that he should "play it long" on the submission of Government evidence to the House of Commons Defence Committee on their enquiry into Polaris successor systems, and avoid an open breach with the Committee as long as possible.

2. At the time he sent his minute the Secretary of State for Defence was not aware of the Polaris successor timetable now proposed by the White House for an exchange of letters in the last week of June and a public announcement on 1st July. If this timetable can be achieved - and in many ways it suits us well - it should not be too difficult to string the Committee along for the next seven weeks, particularly with the Spring Bank Holiday intervening. It will be important to maintain the Committee's goodwill in order to do everything possible to ensure a favourable reception of the public announcement in the House when it is made. This is particularly desirable, because there will probably be complaints that a policy decision of this magnitude should not have been taken before a major Commons debate on the issue.

3. The proposed timetable is at present very sensitive. I therefore recommend that the Prime Minister reply to the Secretary of State for Defence by agreeing to his suggestion to play this long, but accepting the desirability of keeping the Committee happy by meeting their wishes so far as possible, particularly in regard to their proposed visits to Faslane and Rosyth which, as he says, raise no real security problem. It might indeed be usefully suggested to the Committee that they ought to start their enquiry by making these visits in order to improve their understanding of the practical issues involved.

ROBERT ARMSTRONG

ROBERT ARMSTRONG

12th May, 1980

TOP SECRET



The National Archives

LETTERCODE/SERIES <i>PREM 19</i>	Date and sign
PIECE/ITEM <i>159</i> (one piece/item number)	
Extract/Item details: <i>Ref: A02133</i> <i>Armstrong to Prime Minister</i> <i>dated 9 May 1980</i>	
CLOSED FOR YEARS UNDER FOI EXEMPTION	
RETAINED UNDER SECTION 3(4) OF THE PUBLIC RECORDS ACT 1958	<i>18/1/11</i> <i>J. Gray</i>
TEMPORARILY RETAINED	
MISSING ON TRANSFER	
MISSING	
NUMBER NOT USED	

Instructions for completion of Dummy Card

Use **Black Pen** to complete form

Use the card for one piece/item number only

Enter the Lettercode, Series and Piece/Item references clearly
e.g.

LETTERCODE/SERIES <i>GRA 168</i>
PIECE/ITEM <i>49</i> (ONE PIECE/ITEM NUMBER ONLY)

Please Sign and Date in the box adjacent to the description that applies to the document being replaced by the Dummy Card

If the document is Closed under a FOI exemption, enter the number of years closed. See the TNA guidance *Preparation of records for transfer to The National Archives*, section 18.2

The box described as 'Missing' is for TNA use only (it will apply to a document that is not in its proper place after it has been transferred to TNA)

M. O'D. B. Alexander, Esq.

oio



CABINET OFFICE

With the compliments of
The Private Secretary to the
Secretary of the Cabinet

70 Whitehall, London SW1A 2AS

Telephone 01-233 3000

Downey 44

TOP SECRET



*For
Print*

CABINET OFFICE

70 Whitehall, London SW1A 2AS Telephone 01-233 8319

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

Copy No. **4** of 4 Copies

14th May, 1980

Ref. A02174

With his minute of 12th May to the Prime Minister which he copied to the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary and the Secretary of State for Defence, Sir Robert Armstrong attached a draft message to Dr. Brzezinski. This draft message was changed somewhat in the light of comments from No. 10 and has now been despatched. I enclose a copy.

I should be grateful if you and Richard Mottram in Sir Frank Cooper's office, to whom I am copying this letter and the enclosure, could ensure that the message is only seen by the very restricted group of people who need to see it.

I am also copying the letter, together with the enclosure, to Michael Alexander in No. 10.

D. J. WRIGHT

(D. J. Wright)
Private Secretary

R. A. Burns, Esq.

Sir M. Palliser's Office

TOP SECRET

THIS IS A COPY. THE ORIGINAL IS
RETAINED UNDER SECTION 3 (4)
OF THE PUBLIC RECORDS ACT

1 1411007 MAY 20
CABINET OFFICE LONDON
TO WHITE HOUSE

IT
T
FROM SIR ROBERT ARMSTRONG, CABINET OFFICE LONDON
FOR DR ZBIGNIEW BRZCZINSKI, WHITE HOUSE

THANK YOU FOR THE MESSAGES WHICH DAVID AARON AND YOU SENT TO ROBERT WADE-GERY (WHO IS AT PRESENT ON SICK LEAVE) ON 6 AND 7 MAY REGARDING THE POLARIS FOLLOW-ON ISSUE.

2. WE ARE AT THIS STAGE GENERALLY CONTENT WITH THE GENERAL TIMETABLE AND SCENARIO YOU PROPOSE FOR THE EXCHANGE OF LETTERS AND PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT. THERE MAY BE POINTS OF DETAIL WE NEED TO DISCUSS FURTHER; AND THIS ASSUMES THAT WE HAVE BY THEN SETTLED THE OUTSTANDING +DOMESTIC+ ISSUES IN THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY.

3. I THINK WE ARE NOW CLOSE TO AGREEMENT ON THE PROPOSED TEXT OF THE EXCHANGE OF LETTERS, SUBJECT ON OUR SIDE TO FINAL MINISTERIAL APPROVAL, THOUGH WE SHOULD LIKE TO DISCUSS FURTHER WITH YOU THE LAST SENTENCE OF THE FOURTH PARAGRAPH OF THE PRIME MINISTER'S LETTER.

4. WE SHARE YOUR WISH TO WRAP UP IN THE SAME TIME SCALE OTHER OUTSTANDING ISSUES, ON THAT BUT THE POLITICAL PROBLEMS ARE NOW CONSIDERABLY GREATER FOR US THAN THEY WERE, AND WE SHOULD LIKE TO PURSUE WITH YOU HOW THIS AFFECTS THE WHOLE COMPLEX OF ISSUES.

5. I THINK THAT IT WOULD BE USEFUL IF WE COULD NOW DISCUSS ALL THESE MATTERS WITH YOU, WITH A VIEW TO BRINGING THEM TO A CONCLUSION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. ONE POSSIBILITY WOULD BE FOR ME TO COME TO WASHINGTON FOR THIS PURPOSE EARLY NEXT WEEK, ACCOMPANIED BY FRANK COOPER, IF YOU COULD FIND TIME FOR A MEETING ON MONDAY, 19 MAY, OR - LESS GOOD FOR ME - TUESDAY, 20 MAY. ALTERNATIVELY I GATHER THAT DAVID AARON MIGHT BE ABLE TO STOP OVER IN LONDON ON HIS WAY BACK FROM VIENNA LATER THIS WEEK; WE SHOULD BE VERY HAPPY TO USE THAT OPPORTUNITY TO TALK WITH HIM, AND RESERVE THE POSSIBILITY OF A VISIT TO WASHINGTON FOR A LITTLE LATER, IF NEED BE.

IT

30 IT AT 14/1/152 PL

END MAIL TMS AKK

TOP SECRET

Copy No: 2

of 4 copies



43
Defence

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

SIR ROBERT ARMSTRONG

POLARIS SUCCESSOR SYSTEM

We discussed yesterday your minute of 12 May to the Prime Minister on this subject. You agreed to send a somewhat amended version of the draft message attached to that minute. The Prime Minister has subsequently reviewed the various formulations set out in your minute about the relationship between any "savings" made possible by U.S. cooperation on the Polaris Successor and our subsequent effort in the conventional field. The Prime Minister has approved the final formulation, i.e. that referred to in the original draft of your message to Dr. Brzezinski.

I am copying this minute to George Walden (Foreign and Commonwealth Office) and Brian Norbury (Ministry of Defence).

M. O'D. B. ALEXANDER

14 May 1980

TOP SECRET

ABJ



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

7 May 1980

Dear Aline,

POLARIS

After their meeting at the White House on 5 May, Brzezinski drew Lord Carrington aside and raised the subject of the successor to Polaris. Brzezinski said that he hoped to get this settled by the end of June. The deal would however have to be a package, including something on research and development costs,

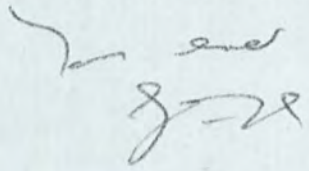
Moreover, the end of June would not be a perfect time for an announcement because of:

- (a) Schmidt's prospective visit to Moscow;
- (b) the Belgians and TNF; and
- (c) the Venice Summit.

He did not however imply that these were overriding considerations on the question of timing.

The Secretary of State refrained from comment, except to express the hope that early progress could be made.

I am copying this letter to Robert Wade-Gery in the Cabinet Office.


(G G H Walden)

C A Whitmore Esq
10 Downing Street

THIS IS A COPY. THE ORIGINAL IS
RETAINED UNDER SECTION 3 (4)
OF THE PUBLIC RECORDS ACT