



CF file

ASSOCIATION OF PROFESSIONAL, EXECUTIVE, CLERICAL & COMPUTER STAFF

Our Ref:

Your Ref:

A/15/33

15th July 1983

The Rt Hon Margaret Thatcher MP
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
London SW1A 2AL

R 20/7
[Signature]

Pl h/w paper for next
week's cabinet meeting.
A.S.C. 20/7.

HARM Versus ALARM Missile Programme

I have been asked by my Executive Council to write to you and express their hope and desire that you should continue to resolutely support the ALARM programme in the discussions in the Cabinet.

On the general issue of the balance of military purchases between the USA and Britain the balance has always been to the advantage of America. When the missile comes into service in the period 1986 to 1990 Britain will be committed by the present Government to very large purchases based on the Trident programme from the USA. Moreover by that time all estimates of the relative value of sterling in relation to foreign currencies show that it will have declined and therefore the real cost of purchasing overseas missiles like the HARM missile will be appreciably greater.

The high technology Seeker on the ALARM will help develop the UK micro-chip industry. This technology is fundamental to the development of missiles over the next twenty years and will provide the basis for four more missile programmes, so that if we buy the American HARM missile we shall eliminate British systems' capability in this field for the next twenty years.

The experience of British missile production is that this is an area where we export a substantial proportion of the product, and British Aerospace expect to export at least twice as many ALARM missiles as it produces for the Ministry of Defence. This clearly will assist in maintaining employment in the UK, employment in the ALARM programme will be twice that of the HARM programme in the UK, and in generating wealth to enable the country to maintain its defence programme.

/The.....

22 WORPLE ROAD, LONDON SW19 4DF

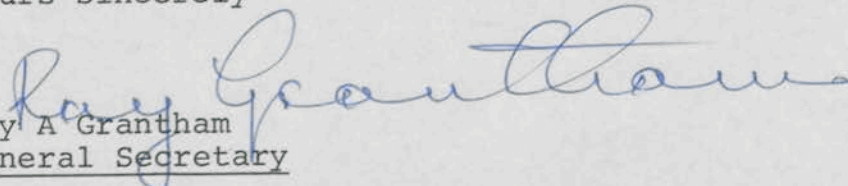
Telephone: 01-947 3131

The ALARM missile is half the weight of the HARM missile and aircraft like the Harrier and the Tornado can therefore carry twice as many. In addition it is light enough to be carried on light aircraft like the Hawk and helicopters which can be used to suppress short-range defences leaving the missiles on the Harries and Tornados to be used on defences near the target. On any reasonable calculation the use of the ALARM compared with the HARM will substantially reduce the loss rate among Harrier and Tornado aircraft and this means that the indirect savings from the programme are so great as to be fundamental.

Finally British Aerospace is in the course of a further redundancy programme at the present time. Should the ALARM programme not be activated there will be further redundancies and its ability to finance civil programmes which is already severely affected by the failure to provide any continuing launch-aid on civil programmes since privatisation will be further hampered with a consequential further loss of sales and employment.

My Executive Council believes that the stand that you have taken on this matter is a principled one, is in the interest of the defence of the country and the protection of the RAF strike force, and will generate the greatest possible wealth from the investment concerned to the advantage of the country in maintaining employment and strengthening our technological capacity for the future.

Yours sincerely


Roy A Grantham
General Secretary

RAG/BR

Reference,
March 83,
Horn / 4/ arm

da
Defence

20 July 1983

I write to thank you for your letter of 15 July conveying the views of your Executive Council on the choice to be made with regard to the purchase of a defence suppression weapon (HARM versus ALARM). Your letter will be placed before the Prime Minister.

A. J. COLES

Roy Grantham, Esq.

ls