



MINISTRY OF DEFENCE  
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CCBT 2

D/S of S/PS/10

12th January 1984

*mf*

- 1) Mr ~~Cole~~ A.J.C.  $\frac{12}{1}$
- 2) Pae Murkin

Dear Tim,

To note

*TR 12/1*

An article appeared in the "Morning Star" on 4th January, alleging that official papers for 1953, and recently released by the Public Record Office, show that the Prime Minister "deliberately tried to mislead the House of Commons" about cruise missiles. I enclose a copy of the article.

The story is based on the records of two meetings in March 1953, one between Mr Eden and Mr Dulles, and one subsequently between Mr Eden and President Eisenhower. (Copies of the relevant documents are attached). The discussions concerned two issues. One was the use of US bases in the United Kingdom, the second was the use of US nuclear weapons "generally", ie anywhere in the world. The 1952 communique formula was in fact not an issue. It was endorsed without either hesitation or discussion; the talks therefore all concerned the second issue. The records reveal the understandable reluctance of the United States, then as now, to make any binding public commitment; and their equal determination not to act irresponsibly in a matter which could have momentous consequences for others.

The short answer to the "Morning Star"'s accusation is that the President's remarks were made in the context of a discussion, not about the use of US bases in the UK, but about the use of US nuclear weapons generally. There is therefore no conflict between his comments and the entirely separate matter of the understanding on joint decision-making between the two Governments about any use of US bases in this country. Moreover the discussions recorded in these papers have long since been overtaken by the commitment to consultation "time and circumstances permitting" given by both the USA and the UK in the Athens Guidelines of 1962, to which Ministers have referred publicly (a 1980 Hansard extract is attached).

Tim Flesher Esq



There would, perhaps, be some danger in encouraging detailed public scrutiny of the documents. The record of the 9th March meeting does not explicitly say that President Eisenhower's remarks were not intended also to refer to the 1952 understandings; a somewhat maladroit placing of the word "only" in the first paragraph of the second column of the 6th March discussion leaves scope for misinterpretation; and the use of the term "premeditated use" in the record of the 9th March discussion (penultimate sentence) will certainly be taken to imply that the United States was then (and by implication is now) plotting a "first strike" attack against the Soviet Union.

Mr Heseltine believes that, although more recent answers given by Ministers - particularly the Prime Minister's Written Answer to Sir Anthony Buck on 12th May last year - have clarified the position considerably, the Prime Minister should be aware of the earlier exchanges in case the matter is raised in Question Time. I attach a copy of a short line to take which might be suitable in such an event.

Yours sincerely,  
B P Neale

(B P NEALE)  
Private Secretary

MORNING STAR

By THE EDITOR

**WE ACCUSE Mrs. Thatcher of deliberately misleading the British people over the Cruise missile. She has deliberately tried to mislead the House of Commons.**

The assurances she gave about the agreements on the use of the US bases in Britain are worthless. Official documents which have now been released show this to be so.

Mrs. Thatcher made a lot about those so-called agreements. According to her, those agreements gave Britain a veto on the use of the US bases for the launching of a nuclear war.

Therefore, she said, a dual-key arrangement was an unnecessary and expensive luxury as far as Cruise was concerned.

But the official documents that have now been released show that the so-called agreements are simply a sham.

They state quite clearly that President Eisenhower told Anthony Eden bluntly that it would be "treasonous" on his part to give a binding assurance that Britain would be consulted in all circumstances.

Never mind the qualification that it would only be in an "extreme emergency" that Britain would not be consulted. The US would decide in any case what constituted an "extreme emergency."

The fact is that those official documents make it clear that the US could launch its nuclear weapons from the US bases in Britain if it considered that this was necessary.

Furthermore they show that the US considers itself free to do so, and that all British governments since 1953 have accepted this.

If we are to talk about treason, then those

governments since 1953 must be condemned as treasonable governments.

They have been prepared to see this country reduced to a radioactive rubbish heap on the say-so of a US president who considered that he faced an "extreme emergency."

Just think of the "extreme emergency" we would then face.

But the treasonable character of these governments' actions is shown even more starkly in the official documents.

Anthony Eden pointed out that if the US were to use its nuclear weapons from bases in other countries, say Turkey, "the Soviet reaction might well be to attack the United Kingdom."

That is certainly a reasonable assumption, given the fact that Britain is bristling with US nuclear weapons targeted on the Soviet Union.

In other words, British governments have known all along that, by selling Britain to the US as a massive nuclear base, they have been putting us in danger of annihilation at the whim of the US president, whether he chooses to fire first from his bases in Britain or elsewhere.

We could have a cast-iron agreement on the use of bases in Britain. But we could still be wiped out because the US chose to launch its nuclear attack from one of its bases in another country.

That is of course, the nightmare reality of belonging to the US-dominated NATO alliance. That is the price of having anything whatsoever to do with nuclear weapons controlled by the US.

The Soviet Union has made it clear that it will guarantee not to target its missiles on any country which refuses to allow US nuclear weapons on its soil.

The official papers just released make it clear that the only sane path is to take up that offer.

We should become non-nuclear. That is the only way to take our fate out of the hands of the US president over whom we have no control.

DAILY TELEGRAPH

### GREENHAM CAR<sup>3</sup> DRIVER CHARGED

A man has been charged with causing actual bodily harm to a Ministry of Defence policeman after an incident at a main entrance to Greenham Common air base early yesterday when a yellow Morris Marina crashed through a security checkpoint.

A Ministry spokesman said it knocked the policeman into the barbed wire fencing.



The National Archives

LETTERCODE/SERIES <b>PREM 19</b> .....	Date and sign
PIECE/ITEM ..... <b>1690</b> (one piece/item number)	
Extract/Item details:  <b>CONSULTATION ON THE USE OF THE ATOMIC WEAPON</b>  <b>FRIDAY 6TH MARCH 1953</b>  [Enclosure to letter Neale to Fletcher dated 12 January 1984]	
CLOSED FOR .....YEARS UNDER FOI EXEMPTION	
RETAINED UNDER SECTION 3(4) OF THE PUBLIC RECORDS ACT 1958	<b>dkj</b> <b>11/02/2015</b>
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LETTERCODE/SERIES <b>PREM 19</b>	Date and sign
PIECE/ITEM ..... <b>1690</b> (one piece/item number)	sign
Extract/Item details: <b>MEETING WITH THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES IN THE WHITE HOUSE IN WASHINGTON AT 10AM ON MONDAY 9TH MARCH 1953</b> [Enclosure to letter Neale to Fletcher dated 12 January 1984]	
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HOUSE OF COMMONS (HAWARD)

VOL 995 COL 588 PT II

12 December 1980

#### Cruise Missiles

Mr. Alton asked the Secretary of State for Defence whether he will explain the statement of the Under-Secretary of State for the Army on 13 June, *Official Report*, c. 1095, that the United States of America has committed itself to consult its allies about a decision on the use of cruise missiles, time and circumstances permitting; and if he will describe what will happen if time or circumstances do not permit, and specify who will decide whether or not time and circumstances permit.

Mr. Pym: At the North Atlantic Council meeting at Athens in 1962, both the United Kingdom and the United States specifically committed themselves to consult their allies, time and circumstances permitting, before releasing their nuclear weapons for use. The Council also adopted guidelines on the degree to which political consultation on such use might be possible. It would not be in the public interest to reveal the precise details of the arrangements.

The separate arrangements for joint decision over the use of United States bases in the United Kingdom were set out in the reply of my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister to the hon. Member for Harlow (Mr. Newens) on 20 December 1979.—[Vol. 976, c. 321.]

MS



HOUSE OF COMMONS (HANSARD)

Vol 42 col 433

12 May 1983

#### Cruise Missiles

Mr. Buck asked the Prime Minister whether she will make a further statement with respect to the arrangements for joint control of cruise missiles in the event of their deployment in the United Kingdom.

The Prime Minister: The existing understandings between the United Kingdom and the United States governing the use by the United States of nuclear weapons and bases in this country have been jointly reviewed in the light of the planned deployment of cruise missiles. We are satisfied that they are effective. The arrangements will apply to United States cruise missiles based in the United Kingdom whether on or off bases. The effect of the understandings and the arrangements for implementing them is that no nuclear weapon would be fired or launched from British territory without the agreement of the British Prime Minister.

LINE TO TAKE

- Absolutely no question of PM misleading anybody.
- Position on US bases in UK is as stated by PM. Not contradicted by anything in 1953 papers.
- Discussions recorded in the 1953 papers not concerned with US bases in UK; concerned with use of nuclear weapons anywhere in world.
- Discussions recorded in the 1953 papers long since overtaken by commitments to consultation with allies given by both US and UK and recorded in the Athens guidelines.