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MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
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Minister of State
for Defence Procurement

D/MIN/TT/14110

12 July 1982

Dear Tom.

Thank you for your letter of 25th June to John Nott together with a copy of the proposed White Paper on Radioactive Waste Management. I note in particular paragraph 14 of the Paper which clarifies the management responsibility for defence wastes and underlines the necessity for a continued liaison between our officials to ensure that standards for disposal of these wastes and environmental acceptability are maintained.

In the past, there has been a considerable degree of co-operation between our two Departments in arranging disposal of defence radioactive wastes extending to the use of civil disposal arrangements and facilities which have become an important element in defence radioactive waste disposal strategy. I was particularly concerned, therefore, to ensure that this White Paper did not indicate any changes which could be detrimental to the Ministry of Defence.

The proposals for the setting up of a new Radioactive Waste Management Executive are particularly important.

/ Your ...

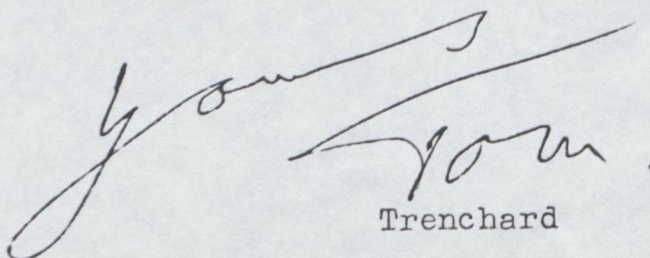
The Rt Hon Tom King MP

Your officials have given assurance that defence radioactive wastes will continue to be accepted by the Executive for disposal at the appropriate level of priority and with due regard to any security aspects involved. Arrangements have also been agreed for the MOD to be a permanently invited member of the NIREX Steering Group (the operational arm of the Executive) and to act on DOE Committees providing liaison between the new organisation and central Government.

I am happy that these assurances and formal connections with the Executive will ensure that MOD interests are not impaired. On the question of whether the assurances which the MOD have been given should be included in the White Paper, I totally agree that it would be inappropriate to draw public attention to the civil disposal arrangements for defence wastes. Indeed in the past we have always considered liaison between our Departments as being sufficient to ensure defence interests are safeguarded.

In view of the importance of this matter, I would appreciate confirmation that the understanding generated between our officials has your backing and that, while we will do our very best to avoid any public statement, if interest in the White Paper does stimulate questions regarding defence radioactive wastes, the MOD can confirm the intention that such wastes will be handled by the new Executive. Subject to this confirmation, I am content for the White Paper to be published.

I am copying this letter to the recipients of yours.


Trenchard

13 JUL 1982



~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Home Affairs



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MINISTER FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT
AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

My Ref: K/PSO/33278/82

WJH
R
22/7

21 July 1982

Dear Ian,

Thank you for looking at the text of our White Paper in relation to the management of defence wastes and for letting me have your reactions.

I was glad to hear that the proposals by the nuclear industry for a new Radioactive Waste management Executive (NIREX) meet with your approval. As you say, understandings have already been reached between our officials on the need for NIREX to give the appropriate level of priority to defence wastes and with due regard to security aspects. I think this clears the way sufficiently for the White Paper to be issued, but I believe that the correct procedure is that NIREX itself should confirm that defence wastes will be treated in the way we both intend.

The Director of the NIREX Unit at Harwell has already indicated his readiness to provide the same service to MoD in radioactive waste disposal as to its other principal customers, and to include MoD in meetings of the NIREX Steering Committee. But I am seeking confirmation direct from the nuclear industry representatives and will write to you again about that. For our part, we should also like your Department to join the new Radioactive Waste Liaison Committee which will act as the interface between Government and the nuclear industry on matters affecting the work of NIREX. I think this approach should provide you with the necessary assurance that MoD interests are being properly safeguarded.

Copies of this letter go to the recipients of yours.

[Handwritten signature]

TOM KING

Lord Trenchard

2 2 JUL 1982

