



EX RJ

(2)

Prime Minister

MO 21/2/28

Mus 22/6

PRIME MINISTER

STATEMENT ON THE DEFENCE ESTIMATES 1983

You will recall that, at the Cabinet meeting on 5th May, I was invited to proceed with the publication on 25th May of my Statement on Defence Estimates 1983, the draft of which had been discussed and approved by Cabinet colleagues, and earlier by the Defence and Overseas Policy Committee at their meeting on 18th April. Our plans for publication were, in the event, overtaken by the General Election and the Dissolution of Parliament.

2. You and my colleagues will wish to note that I have decided to proceed with publication of the Statement on Defence Estimates 1983 on Wednesday 6th July; and I will take the opportunity of announcing this intention by means of a Written Answer on Monday 4th July. The text is very largely unchanged from that approved by OD and Cabinet, although I have taken the opportunity of updating the wording on the equipment procurement programme. Also, the paragraph on the control of cruise missiles has been altered slightly to bring it into line with the Answer you gave in response to Sir Antony Buck's Parliamentary Question on 12th May.

3. I am copying this to our colleagues in OD; and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

Ministry of Defence
21st June 1983

12 JUN 1983





Ref.A083/1244

PRIME MINISTER

Statement on the Defence Estimates 1983

(C(83) 11)

FLAG A

BACKGROUND

The Secretary of State for Defence has amended the text of his draft White Paper to take account of the points made in the discussion at OD on 18 April. He has also taken all the points recorded in Mr Coles's letter of 27 April, which reflected your discussion with Mr Goodall and Mr Jackling, although he has decided to retain most of the passage referring to the Palme Commission in paragraph 4 of the essay "Nuclear Disarmament: Alternative Approaches". You thought this was too specialised for the average reader but were content for the Secretary of State for Defence to decide on its retention or omission. No other changes of substance have been made to the draft which was circulated to OD: the Lord Privy Seal and the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary commented in similar terms to you on the passages dealing with INF and nuclear disarmament.

2. Now that you have President Reagan's reply on the question of control of cruise missiles, it will be possible to draft the relevant paragraph (210).

3. Paragraph 326 still contains a passage in square brackets dealing with anti-radiation missiles: the Secretary of State for Defence is about to make his choice between the two competing systems HARM and ALARM.

HANDLING

4. You should invite the Secretary of State for Defence to introduce the Statement. The subsequent discussion should cover the following points:-

- (a) is the Cabinet content with the text?

FLAG B

FLAG C

2-13



- (b) when should the Statement be published? The Lord President should be asked whether the date originally suggested, 18 May, is too close to the date of the disarmament debate.

5. As regards control of cruise missiles, you will be receiving advice separately on the message from President Reagan. In the light of that advice, you may wish to inform the Cabinet that you intend to refer to this issue in your speech in the disarmament debate on 10 May and invite the Secretary of State for Defence to include a passage in the Statement using the same, or a closely similar, form of words.

CONCLUSION

6. The Cabinet might be guided to reach the following conclusions:-

- (i) to agree the Statement on the Defence Estimates 1983.
- (ii) to invite the Secretary of State for Defence to decide on a suitable date for its publication in consultation with the Lord President.

RA

ROBERT ARMSTRONG



4 MAY 1995



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MO 21/2/28

4th July 1983

A.S.C. 11/7

p.a.

Dear Willie

/ I enclose a personal advance copy of The Statement
on the Defence Estimates 1983, which as you are aware is
/ to be published at 14.30 hours, Wednesday 6th July, plus
a detailed Question and Answer brief.

Copies of this letter are also being sent to the
Private Secretaries to the Lord President of the Council,
the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs
and the Leader of the House.

Yours Sincerely.

Harry Kentish

(H KENTISH)
Parliamentary Clerk

W F S Rickett Esq

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Hansard 4 July 1983

Written Answers.

White Paper

Mr. Wilkinson asked the Secretary of State for Defence when he expects to publish the current year's defence White Paper.

Mr. Heseltine: On Wednesday 6 July.