

**CONFIDENTIAL**

PRIME MINISTER

Trident Briefing

Mr. Nott would like to arrange a briefing on the Trident programme for members of the Cabinet in the near future. He gave a presentation on the programme to Junior Ministers a short while ago in an effort to encourage them to take an active part in the publicity campaign which ~~Mr. Nott~~<sup>he</sup> has been leading to turn back the criticism from the CND movement and others of our nuclear weapons policy. Plainly, however, a briefing for Cabinet Ministers would need to be more detailed and more highly classified than what was done for Junior Ministers.

Mr. Nott's reasons for wishing to arrange such a briefing are plain. But I am afraid that there are risks about it. It would almost certainly become public knowledge and critics might suggest that it implied that Cabinet is not fully behind the original decision to acquire Trident. Moreover, someone might ask why Cabinet is being given a briefing now and not when the decision to go for Trident was made: the point here of course is that the vital decisions were not taken by Cabinet as a whole.

On balance, I incline against the briefing. Do you wish Mr. Nott to proceed with it or not?

*I am reluctant  
to give it to*

*Cabinet as a whole.*

*Can we try a particular group  
not*

*FM.*

21 May 1981

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