

Prime Minister

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PRIME MINISTER

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BASING OF CRUISE MISSILES AND ARMS CONTROL

When we discussed this in MISC 7 on 12th November it was left that we should reflect further but that in the meantime I should make clear to Herr Woerner and Mr Weinberger the difficulties for us that would be created by the Germans' wish to delay the arrival of initial equipments until September 1983, and our view that the right choice lay between an early July delivery of the launchers and missiles or a revised deployment date in early November 1983.

2. I had bilateral talks with Herr Woerner and Mr Weinberger (in that order) in the margins of the NATO Ministerial meetings at the beginning of the month. In so doing, I made sure, as we had agreed, that the Germans made as much of the running as possible - Herr Woerner saw Mr Weinberger before I did. Our respective officials followed up with a trilateral discussion. Records of all three meetings have been circulated. I also mentioned to Mr Weinberger the possibility of some joint training and this too has been followed up by officials. I did not, of course, mention training to the Germans.

3. We had agreed to resume our discussion in the New Year. The Americans have said that they will let us know in January how far they have got with revising the programme and this fits in well enough with the timetable we had in mind. I do not think there is any point in further discussion before that.



4. We also agreed that the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary and I should press for early completion of the NATO studies on short range battlefield nuclear weapons. Our officials have, I think, succeeded in injecting a certain amount of urgency into the work of the High Level Group of officials and that group is now committed to an interim report for the next Ministerial NPG meeting in March 1983. This commitment was endorsed in the Agreed Minute of the DPC though not highlighted in the communique: the time for that will be later when there is more to say. As with deployment, the action now rests with the Americans and we shall have some idea in January how well they are getting on in this field too.

5. There remains the problem of confidentiality. As you know, there has been some speculation about INF deployment timetables in the German Press which is accurate enough to suggest some official background briefing. In our contacts with the Germans and the Americans during the last week we have stressed the importance of maintaining security while timetable problems are being sorted out but I will be surprised if further leaks do not occur, in Washington as well as in Bonn. If so, then I think we maintain the line already proposed to you for dealing with possible questions last Tuesday.

6. Finally I should like to re-iterate the point that I made orally at our last meeting. The deployment of Cruise in the UK - an American nuclear missile under American control - is likely to cause my colleagues (particularly those who are unfamiliar with these issues) very considerable political problems in 1983. All the other political parties will either be opposed to Cruise deployments - or in favour of a dual-key system. We will be very vulnerable politically to the charge of hazarding the UK for an American system. My concern is that the row on this issue does not spill over into opposition against the national deterrent



where we can win the political argument. I think it is vital that you continue to pursue the revised deployment dates - and insist on joint training (as some offset to the lack of dual-key). In the end, I suspect you will be forced to concede the arguments for dual-key. I think this matter can only be re-opened direct between you and President Reagan. If we were to go to dual-key I shall certainly then sleep more safely in my bed.

7. I understand that you have asked for further advice on the dual-key question and I will let you have this soon.

8. I am sending copies of this to MISC 7 colleagues and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

Ministry of Defence
15th December 1982

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Drafted by Mr Nott and
signed in his absence