

COS 1160/901A

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Ministry of Defence

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STRATEGIC NUCLEAR DETERRENT

1. You will be aware that, in the light of CSA's minute (1) reporting the outcome of the Central Committees' further work on Submarine and Missile Programmes and his presentation to the Secretary of State on 15 July 1981 reinforcing the major issues that require decisions, the Secretary of State has asked (2) for advice on the full likely costs involved in possibly moving to a D5/16 tube force, bearing also in mind decisions pending on Polaris. In view of this and your concern (3) (4) that the programme must be monitored continuously and in the most rigorous way, I consider you would wish to form a collective view in the near future of the overall impact on our defence capability of the options under consideration not only for Trident but also for Polaris and Chevaline.

2. As a first step I believe you will wish to invite ACDS(PoI), in consultation with the Defence Secretariat and as appropriate with DCDS(OR) and DCDS(I), to produce a broad preliminary review, and draft submission to the Secretary of State assessing the major possible increases and decreases in cost to all aspects of the Strategic Nuclear Deterrent programme from now throughout the LTC period, indicating the effect that decisions on the options could have on our overall defence capability. I consider you will wish to discuss this work at a meeting of your committee in early August.

Notes:

1. CSA/280/81 dated 9 July 1981.
2. NO 18/1/1 dated 15 July 1981.
3. CGS 60-3-4 dated 15 July 1981.
4. VCAS.0978 dated 15 July 1981.

~~SECRET~~



DRAFT

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CHEVALINE FLIGHT TRIALS

You will recall that my letter to you of 14 October gave notice of a sequence of three CHEVALINE flight trials from HMS RENOWN in mid-November, following the successful completion earlier in the year of the pad-launched trials.

2. It was decided in the event not to proceed with the third, because the first two went wrong. Briefly, the launches themselves went successfully, but in both cases a failure in the primary ordnance supply circuit, after the separation of the Penetration Aid Carrier (PAC) from the second stage of the missile, meant that the complex sequence of events which should then follow (e.g. the deployment of decoys) was not initiated.

3. This is an unwelcome setback, especially as despite intensive investigation we are not yet sure of the causes. Some areas of potential weakness in the primary ordnance circuit have been identified and remedial action is in hand. We plan to launch three further trial rounds from a submarine in July 1981. There will inevitably be delay to the first operational deployment, previously scheduled for mid-1981 (although initially with only a partial complement of missiles). Public statements on the matter have however been deliberately imprecise, so no new announcement is needed. We are now aiming at first deployment of a full tactical outload in March 1982. Whether we achieve this depends crucially on how the July trials go.

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