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(3) 1989/90 onwards - production of warheads for Successor System.

- 95 - 600

(4) Beginning about 1995 replacement of remaining WE 177s to give stockpile of 100% NAST 1231 weapons.

100

3. Note that planned improvements in UK fissile material production facilities are aimed at making UK self sufficient for submarine propulsion purposes and this programme has no great bearing on UK weapons production.

4. Providing the US helps and the programme is sequential then the total package of 177 + NAST 1231 + LRNTF + Successor is considered manageable.

5. In essence, it seems that the impact of LRNTF would be to cause a displacement of one third of the NAST 1231 programme into the mid-1990s. But note that a mixed 177/1231 stockpile no smaller in quantity than the existing one could be maintained. All the above general points would have to be studied in greater depth once the precise size of future UK nuclear weapons programme is known.

COMMENT

6. My own tentative estimate is that CNS may be unduly pessimistic about the impact of LRNTF on fissile materials and warhead production. Given early decisions, and reasonable weapons totals, proper management and US help, the total programme looks feasible at this stage. I have consulted the ND, DPS and Defence Science 6.

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TJ  
SCDS(B)1

Afternote:

The DPS have asked me to point out that a failure by the UK to contribute hardware to a NATO LRNTF, could conceivably lead to a reluctance on the part of the US to help us with our other ongoing and envisaged national nuclear weapons programmes.

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