

ATOMIC

and thus improve the overall weapon availability. Both the French and ourselves could also use strategically some weapons delivered by aircraft. However, their limited strike-second capability means that they could only be regarded as a ~~potential~~ bonus which an enemy could not rule entirely out of court.

31. We have previously accepted that the assured strike-second destruction of 7 to 10 cities, including Moscow and Leningrad, which one Polaris submarine always on patrol would provide, is enough to give an independent strategic deterrent of some significance; although the margin would be narrow and the 20 city capability given by two submarines always on patrol would be more convincing. The minimum of three SSBNs which an Anglo-French force could always provide, would form a strategic strike that should increase deterrence in the eyes of any rational government. To this force whether operated independently or in combination could be added the capability represented by the 27 land-based French missiles (though these can not be regarded as strike-second weapons in the same sense as Polaris type missiles).

32. The British and French forces, even in combination, and assuming they are suitably modified to take account of future possible ABM systems, would not reach the threshold of damage which certain studies have suggested would lead to the complete breakdown of the Soviet Union. One can only say that either together or separately they would inflict a formidable degree of damage, rising and presumably increasing deterrence in proportion to the number of weapons employed.

33. How convincing would such a combination be in hostile eyes? Any increased physical effectiveness which combination might bring to the British and French forces would be related to agreement about operational employment. The combined effectiveness which we have indicated above - as compared to the sum of the effectiveness of the two component parts - would only apply, for certain, if such agreement existed. However, it can be argued that the agreement does not have to be total,

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Secretary of State

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BRITISH UNDERGROUND TEST PROGRAMME

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2. The test device, LUTE, for the ROUSANNE test is now being assembled in Nevada and should be moved to the emplacement hole by about 16 October 1981. Before this move takes place, the Americans require notification that the test can be taken to completion because, once the emplacement operation begins, it is virtually impossible to go into reverse.

3. I propose that we should follow the usual practice over publicity, i.e. to give no prior public warning but, immediately after the event, to make a Press announcement simultaneously in London and the United States. This announcement will be similar to those we have used previously. The outcome of the test will be notified to you as soon as possible after the event.

4. You will wish to seek the agreement of the Prime Minister to the final clearance of the test and I therefore attach a draft minute.

R. L.
CSA

7 October 1981

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