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MR CARTLEDGE

c Sir John Hunt

*1/2 certainly
I would like an
amended version
to be couched in
Prime Minister
As you would probably not wish
to be troubled with these papers during
Congress, I have suggested to Sir Able
Rast that he might go ahead with the
updating proposed at 'X' (para. 4) on a
contingency basis, so that it is ready
for your meeting on 24 Oct/76 if required.*

Chevaline

[B]
[A]

[C]

[D]

In his minute of 19th September, the Secretary of State for Defence replied to the questions asked by the Prime Minister on 3rd August. Mr Mulley explained why only a combination of the three features of the Chevaline programme would provide the capability to penetrate the Moscow AEM system. Dr Owen (in his Private Secretary's letter of 23rd September) has again questioned the need to have the Moscow capability and proposed that the criterion established by the JIC in 1972 should be re-examined. He has also asked for a break-down of the cost of the three features of the programme. In his letter of 29th September, the Defence Secretary's Private Secretary explains why it is not possible to provide this cost break-down and records Mr Mulley's view that there would be no point in a new study of the 1972 criterion. But Mr Mulley agrees that the facts quoted in JIC(A)(72) 30 should be updated.

2. As Mr Mulley points out, the Moscow criterion has been reaffirmed several times by Ministers since 1974. The last occasion, to which he refers, was at the meeting held under the Prime Minister's chairmanship on 29th July 1976, at which neither Dr Owen nor Mr Mulley took part since they had not then assumed their present appointments. In his minute of 26th July however Dr Owen said that, although he questioned the correctness of the Moscow criterion, he was not in favour of cancelling Chevaline. It is clear, therefore that he does not regard a re-examination of the Moscow criterion as a necessary pre-condition for the decision to continue the Chevaline programme.

3. There may well be a case for a new study of the criterion, since some of the premises on which the 1972 conclusions were based may need to be modified in the light of developments during the past five years. At least it would be appropriate to put in hand a new assessment in connection with any contingency planning for a possible successor system. You will note that, in response to the questions asked by the Prime Minister, Mr Mulley said, in his minute of 19th September, that he would be ready to discuss how work on this issue might proceed at the meeting which I understand has

now been provisionally arranged for 24th October. It might be helpful if Mr Mulley could be asked to let his colleagues know in advance of the meeting his tentative thinking on this subject. But I suggest that the question of commissioning a new JIC assessment should be left for discussion at the meeting itself.

X | 4. As regards the factual updating of the 1972 report, I have consulted the Chairman, JIC, who considers this could be done by the Assessments Staff in time for the meeting in October. If the Prime Minister approves, I will arrange for this to go ahead. //

- done 29.

Clive Rose

30th September 1977

CLIVE ROSE