

This was cancelled in a hospital.

NUCLEAR DEFENCE : KEY POINTS

The Ministry of Defence of the United Kingdom has published an aide-mémoire in the form of a set of six cards answering the different questions concerning the debate on nuclear defence for public information. The aide-mémoire is reproduced herebelow in-extenso :

General

Public concern about nuclear weapons undeniable - a concern we all share. But these weapons can't be disinvited - have to devise system that recognises this unpleasant fact of life. Nuclear weapons would cause appalling destruction. Everyone agrees we must do all we can to prevent their being used.

Moral/Ethical

All war is evil. Nuclear weapons prevent war. Not immoral to possess nuclear weapons. How can it be if they deter threat of attack on us? Nuclear weapons cannot be wished away. Government has responsibility to ensure they are never used again.

Deterrence

Preventing all war, including non-nuclear - that's the aim of nuclear deterrence. Shows potential aggressor just not worth it. Soviet Union has massive nuclear and conventional forces. NATO needs enough of both to show risks of attack outweigh potential gains. Deterrence is only one part of our policy. Must seek to relax international tension by diplomatic means and reduce forces by arms control and disarmament. No war in Europe for over 35 years - thanks to deterrence. Any alternative policy must work better - no proof any would. Can't afford risk of undermining peace and freedom. NATO is a defensive alliance. It will never use any weapons - conventional or nuclear - in Europe except in response to attack.

UK Independent Deterrent/Trident

UK independent deterrent strengthens NATO's ability to deter aggression by further complicating Soviet plans. Also provides ultimate guarantee of national survival. TRIDENT most cost-effective way to replace Polaris in 1990s. Will ensure continuation of capability considered vital by successive governments of different political views. Cost not excessive. It will take only 3 per cent of the defence budget - or less than 14 pence per week for each Briton while coming into service. Insurance not usually cheap - but this is excellent value compared with other forms of insurance. No increases of conventional forces like more divisions of tanks would provide same insurance. Not escalation of arms race. Trident is a replacement for Polaris. Will still be very small proportion of Soviet forces. Increased capability compared with Polaris necessary to cope with likely improvements in Soviet defences. Will last well into 21st century. Who can tell what danger Britain might face then? (For example, Trident will allow for likely improvements in Soviet defences.) Better and more cost-effective as strategic deterrent than cruise missiles. They would need many more submarines which are biggest single part of Trident cost, and - because of cruise missiles' shorter range - have far less 'sea room' in which to hide. Cruise on ground or surface ships are more vulnerable, less credible, more expensive.

Polaris has worked for 15 years already. But nothing lasts for ever and replacement will be needed in the mid 90s. Insurance has to be kept up to date - you don't cancel it because your house hasn't burned down this year!

Cruise

Cruise is NATO modernising nuclear capability in face of large and growing Soviet forces. Over 300 SS20s now deployed, each with 3 warheads. NATO needs Cruise to deter Soviets threatening limited nuclear strikes on Europe. Europeans mainly pressed for it. NATO's modernisation decision accompanied by offer to negotiate with Soviets on arms reductions. Talks now begun. NATO's aim is to eliminate land-based nuclear missiles of most concern to both sides. If agreed, this would make Cruise unnecessary. Cruise is NOT American plan to fight limited nuclear war in Europe. (Intended to deter Soviets from thinking they could do so.) NOT a 'first-strike' weapon. (No part of NATO policy. Cruise unsuited to that role - too slow, too few, incapable of attacking invulnerable submarines.) NOT to be American-controlled. (Any use of bases in UK would be joint UK/US decision.)

Disarmament

Unilateral disarmament not the answer.... Would increase risk of war by undermining West's ability to deter aggression. Would not make UK less of target. Takes no account of Soviet superiority in conventional forces. Would cut no ice with Soviets - reduce their incentive to negotiate on arms control. Only way forward : sustained, patient effort for realistic and balanced measures of multilateral disarmament. Must try to enhance security at lower force levels. European nuclear-free zones? - just another form of unilateral disarmament. Europe could still be threatened by weapons beyond the Urals. Nuclear-free not nuclear-safe!

Multilateral approach has worked. Both sides now talking reductions in nuclear weapons. (Further information from Emergency Services (F6) Division, Home Office, 50 Queen Anne's Gate, London SW1H 9AT, United Kingdom)

NEW PRODUCTS AND EQUIPMENT

SE/339/1 - New, large-size, semi-rigid, folding motor-boats with the following qualities : speed, resistance, unsinkability. The larger models can be 20 m. long and 5.5 m. wide. When folded they are less than 2.5 m. They can be assembled and inflated in 30 seconds with a bottle of CO2. Their design is based on a large wind-surf board made out of epoxy foam and aromatic polyamide which is attached to a semi-rigid, folding, aluminium alloy hull. The air-foats which are glued to the sides are made of chloroformed polyethylene (Hypalon). Should the boat capsize it is righted by detachable air arcs. Furthermore, detachable lateral floats filled with aerated material ensure that the boat is unsinkable even should it be riddled by more than a hundred bullets per linear metre. (Etablissements Hennebutte, 43 av. Foch, 64200 Biarritz, France)