

File upstairs -

UK / SLBM's

---

DECLASSIFIED

E.O. 13526, Section 3.5

NLN 04-44/1321, per sec. 3.3(b)(1)(6)(9), ltr. 9/27/2011

By: AM, NARA; Date: 4/6/2012

[p. 1 of 9]

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

Henry -

We have taken care  
of the British technical  
people on Posidon and  
now we wait for  
them to make a  
decision.

Sam

~~TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE/EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY~~

June 26, 1973

MEMORANDUM FOR

THE HONORABLE JAMES R. SCHLESINGER  
THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

Henry would like your views on the attached as quickly as possible.

Brent Scowcroft  
Brigadier General, USAF  
Deputy Assistant to the President  
for National Security Affairs

Attachment

~~TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE/EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY~~



15 June 1973

The Honorable  
Henry A Kissinger  
White House  
Washington DC

Dear Henry,


IMPROVEMENTS TO THE BRITISH STRATEGIC NUCLEAR DETERRENT

Burke Trend has asked me to pass to you the enclosed message as soon as possible. In explanation of it I should like to point out that the new factor which has led us to raise this question is the account which you gave us of the latest situation in the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks. We are very much aware of the Congressional problems to which you referred during your earlier conversations with Burke Trend on this subject, but we wonder whether they may be less insuperable as a result of the position which we understand you propose to take in the SALT (ie rejection of any limitations on SLBM MIRVs).

Burke Trend has asked me to draw your attention particularly to the intention of HMG to reach a decision on the various options open to us by the end of July, as stated in the last sentence of the enclosed message.

I should very much like to have an opportunity to discuss this message with you, but I realise that you are more than usually occupied at present. Perhaps you would be good enough to get in touch with me when you have an opportunity to do so.

7 - sincerely  
Rowley Cramer



Text of message from Sir Burke Trend to  
The Honorary Henry A Kissinger:

"When we met on 4 June in Washington I told you how grateful we were for the valuable reply you had sent to the Aide Memoire I left with you on 10 May last. Since then we have, once again, reviewed the options for improving the British strategic nuclear deterrent. The Prime Minister has had very much in mind that President Nixon would wish to have, if possible, an indication of the option we preferred before Mr Brezhnev arrives in Washington next week, but I am sorry to have to tell you that it has not yet been possible to reach a decision. One particular factor is that we are not sure whether we fully understand all the implications of what is said in paragraph 15 of your reply about the impact of the Strategic Arms Limitation Agreement.

2. That paragraph has confirmed what you had already told us personally: namely, that you have rejected Soviet demands for inclusion in the proposed declaration of principles on SALT of a ban on the transfer of strategic offensive weapon systems and that you are neither proposing nor prepared to accept, in the SALT negotiations themselves, any limitation on SLBM MIRVS.

3. Since our first talk in Washington last summer I have understood that there could be substantial political difficulties, arising both from Congress and from the SALT II negotiations with the Soviet Union, in the way of any proposal to transfer to Britain a system incorporating

/MIRV



SANITIZED COPY

**SANITIZED**

per sec. 3.3(b)(1)(6)(9)

MIRV technology. When [redacted] came to London in the middle of February for the purpose of conveying the offer of the Mark III Warhead, we clearly understood from him that the Poseidon system would have to be suitably de-MIRVED. Our examination of your offer has been based on that understanding. It has now occurred to us, however, that, in the light of what you have told us about the SALT negotiations, the political obstacles might not be so difficult as we have assumed. If this should be so, and if the President were ready to contemplate the possibility of offering fully MIRVED Poseidon there would, as you will recognise, be substantial advantages for us which we should wish to have the opportunity of weighing up before finally making our choice of options.

4. We are naturally reluctant to seek further information on top of all that you have so generously done to assist us: but we would be most grateful if you could let us know, as soon as possible, whether the alternative option of fully MIRVED Poseidon is one that it would be open to us to consider. I should make it clear that my Ministers intend to decide between the options for improvement of our strategic nuclear deterrent no later than the end of July."

SANITIZED COPY

NLN 04-44/1321; p. 6 of 9