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THE WHITE HOUSE

TOP SECRET

WASHINGTON

October 15, 1979

Dear Madame Prime Minister:

As we go forward in the North Atlantic Alliance toward a decision on Theater Nuclear Forces, I want to share with you my views on the decisions which you and I will make concerning cooperation in the future modernization of the British nuclear deterrent.

First, I can assure you that my approach to the question of modernizing your strategic forces -- including the option of the C-4 Missile system -- will be affirmative and fully in keeping with our traditional relationship of close cooperation in the strategic nuclear field.

Second, with respect to the delicate question of timing of the decisions, I believe it is extremely important to avoid providing any pretext which either the Soviets or some of our more reluctant friends could seize upon to damage the prospects of an Alliance consensus on long-range theater nuclear deployments by the end of the year. I believe that too early an exposure of our plans regarding the British deterrent would provide an excuse for some of our friends not to assume their fair share both of LRTNF deployments and of the responsibility for the corresponding decisions.

Therefore, I suggest we discuss this issue, including the timing of any British request and American response, when we meet in December. I would also propose that to minimize the possibility of inadvertent disclosure, we keep to a minimum discussions between our respective officials, civilian and military.

I know I can count on your understanding of these timing considerations just as you can be confident

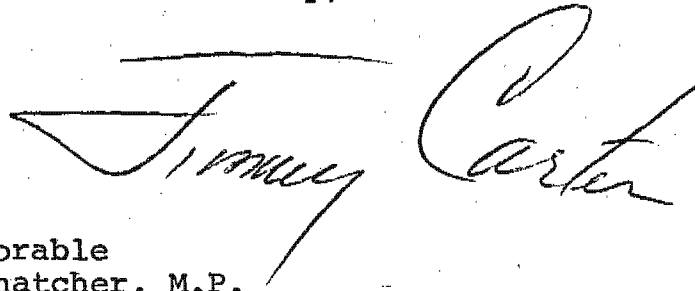
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of my appreciation of the contribution of  
the British deterrent to the security of the  
Alliance and of the need for its modernization.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jimmy Carter". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned to the right of the word "Sincerely,".

The Right Honorable  
Margaret R. Thatcher, M.P.  
Prime Minister  
London

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