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13th September, 1960

CABINET

FACILITIES FOR UNITED STATES SUBMARINES IN SCOTLAND

Memorandum by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and the Minister of Defence

When the Cabinet last discussed this matter (C.C.(60) 48th Conclusions) they agreed in principle:-

"that facilities in the Clyde area should be made available for United States POLARIS submarines, on the understanding that satisfactory arrangements were made as regards the extent of United Kingdom control over their operations, and that an attempt should be made to obtain access to plans and technical information which would make it possible for the United Kingdom to obtain POLARIS submarines".

The facilities in question would consist of a depot ship (where the missiles would be stored), a floating dock and ancillary vessels; when the squadron had built up to full strength (nine submarines) there would probably be three submarines in the Clyde area at any one time. Negotiations with the United States Government have now reached the state at which a definitive agreement is in sight and it is possible to consider the terms of a memorandum of understanding and a public announcement.

Location

2. Formal United States agreement is awaited to the use of Holy Loch following a discreet reconnaissance by a team of United States Naval officers who expressed themselves as well satisfied with this site.

Consultation and Control

3. The circumstances are not quite the same for submarines refuelling from time to time in United Kingdom waters and for United States Air Force units based on United Kingdom airfields. We cannot therefore expect to have the same degree of control over all the operations of the United States submarines as we have over United States aircraft. However after lengthy discussion with the United States Government we are within sight of an understanding which will, we consider, be satisfactory from the point of view of public opinion in this country.

4. It has been agreed, and can be publicly announced, that the deployment and use in periods of emergency of the submarine depot ship and associated facilities should be a matter for joint consultation: this is based on the understanding that either side should be permitted to have the

tender removed from territorial waters if either the Americans or ourselves judged there was an emergency. An agreed formula is incorporated in the attached draft announcement.

5. It has also been agreed, and can be publicly announced, that launching of POLARIS missiles in United Kingdom territorial waters should be "a matter for joint decision". An agreed formula is incorporated in the attached draft announcement.

6. The United States Government have offered the following private assurance on control outside territorial waters:-

"With reference to the launching of missiles from United States POLARIS submarines outside United Kingdom territorial waters, the United States reaffirms the assurance given by President Eisenhower to Foreign Minister Eden on 9th March, 1953, that in the event of an emergency, such as increased tension or the threat of war, the United States will take every possible step to consult with Britain and other allies".

A formula for use in public is still under consideration. We have proposed the following to the United States Government as a statement which could come from their side. We consider this is the best we are likely to get out of them for public use:-

"The launching of missiles by United States submarines outside United Kingdom territorial waters is in the same category as the use of nuclear weapons generally. There can be no certainty that consultation would always be possible in an emergency but the United States Government will use their best endeavours to consult with their British and other allies as regards the use of POLARIS missiles as well as about the use of nuclear weapons generally".

United Kingdom POLARIS Submarines

7. The United States authorities have not been prepared to offer us a simple option to buy POLARIS submarines as a quid pro quo for facilities we were providing in Holy Loch; they have insisted that any reference to such submarines should be linked with the general requirements of the North Atlantic Alliance and are not prepared at the moment to negotiate a purely bilateral arrangement for supplying us with POLARIS submarines. The result of this would necessarily be to associate our own requirements with the Medium Range Ballistic Missile scheme of the North Atlantic Alliance and it would therefore be unacceptable to us. Publicly, we think it better to say nothing, especially since there is little prospect on financial grounds of our being able to include the purchase of POLARIS submarines in the defence budget for a number of years. Since the links between the United States Navy and the Royal Navy on these matters are very close, we are confident that we can rely on consultation and contact through Service channels as at present to provide the necessary technical collaboration. A special visit is being arranged to enable the Royal Navy to study the operational and logistic aspects of the United States Fleet ballistic missile programme at the invitation of the

Supreme Allied Commander Atlantic, Admiral Dennison. The First Sea Lord will also aim to take these matters further during his visit later in the year.

Financial Arrangements

8. These will be the subject of detailed discussion with other Departments concerned and with the United States authorities. In negotiation the United States Government will no doubt seek financial concessions, and may cite precedents drawn from other agreements covering shared strategic undertakings. But in principle we should, at any rate as an opening gambit, seek full repayment for all facilities provided by the Admiralty and of any other expenditure that may be incurred in fulfilment of the American project. For example:-

- (a) for facilities provided from naval sources the Admiralty would recover full costs, as for services rendered to any other foreign government, including appropriate departmental expenses: this would cover for example the provision and laying of moorings, the supply of stores, any emergency repairs in Royal Dockyards, all works services etc.;
- (b) any accommodation required to be retained by the Admiralty on behalf of and before use by the United States Navy would be maintained at United States Navy cost;
- (c) if any works services undertaken for the United States Navy were cancelled before construction had commenced, the design costs and other preliminary disbursements would be met by the United States Navy.

9. The United States are not likely to need much land; it would be reasonable to offer them at the outset one exception to the re-payment principle in respect of the purchase of any land they may require. This would accord with the North Atlantic Alliance Infrastructure practice.

Administrative Arrangements

10. Timing. The United States target date for establishing their depot ship in Holy Loch is now February 1961. The floating dock would not come across until the summer of 1961. There is, therefore, time for the necessary preparatory work and local consultation provided that a reasonably early public announcement makes it possible to lift the present strict security rules. Such preparatory measures as can be put in hand unobtrusively, including the laying of moorings in Holy Loch, are being taken.

11. Safety Organisation on the Clyde. The Admiralty intend to provide the necessary monitoring facilities and suitably qualified staff and to establish an emergency organisation which would come into operation in the very unlikely event of an accident: it is planned that executive control of this reorganisation should be vested in the Royal Navy. It is also planned to set up a local liaison committee following the pattern of those established at the Atomic Energy Authority's nuclear stations. This committee would include representatives of the local authorities and civil emergency

services. It would play an important part in educating local public opinion, and in preparing plans for dealing with the hazards associated with the project. The question of indemnifying Her Majesty's Government against nuclear risks will have to be discussed with the United States authorities.

12. Public Announcement. It is proposed that a statement should be made in Parliament on either Tuesday or Wednesday, 25th or 26th October, and that a similar announcement should be made in Washington by the United States authorities at the same time.

13. Conclusions and Recommendations. We invite our colleagues to endorse:-

- (a) the terms on which it is proposed to provide facilities in the Clyde;
- (b) the lines of the proposed draft United Kingdom statement, for final clearance with the United States authorities;
- (c) the proposed financial arrangements.

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H.W.

13th September, 1960.

ANNEXDRAFT ANNOUNCEMENT

The United States Navy have recently carried out a number of successful underwater test firings of the POLARIS missile. The first missile firing submarine, the GEORGE WASHINGTON, will become operational before long. It will be quickly followed by other vessels now nearing completion. A new and flexible element will thereby be added to the strategic nuclear deterrent.

2. Clearly there would be operational advantage if sheltered anchorage on this side of the Atlantic could be provided for a submarine depot ship and floating dock, and this Her Majesty's Government have undertaken to provide. These facilities would be used by United States submarines on routine patrol in peacetime. The anchorage will be provided in the Holy Loch in the Clyde and the depot ship should be established there during February of next year, with the floating dock to follow a little later. Supporting facilities will be provided by the Royal Navy.

3. Measures will be co-ordinated by the United States Naval authorities in London and the Admiralty to govern the operation of United States submarines in peacetime so as to prevent mutual interference between United Kingdom and United States submarines and anti-submarine forces in such matters as sanctuary, routing, arrival and departure notices.

4. The deployment and use in periods of emergency of the submarine depot ship and associated facilities in the United Kingdom would be a matter for joint consultation.

5. The launching of POLARIS missiles at any time from United States submarines in United Kingdom territorial waters would be a matter of joint decision between the two Governments. (Formula on control outside territorial waters to be inserted.)

6. Under normal operating conditions no risk to health or safety will arise from the presence of these submarines, or of their weapons. Local arrangements will include the setting up of a Liaison Committee which will ensure the fullest possible consultation with the local authorities and interests concerned.

7. Her Majesty's Government welcome this agreement as an admirable example of co-operation between allies. It owes much to the close and friendly relationship which exists between the two Navies.

13th September, 1960.