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June 1958

REPORT TO THE PRESIDENT AND THE PRIME MINISTER

Subject: Procedures for the Committing to the Attack of Nuclear Retaliatory Forces in the United Kingdom

1. Pursuant to the suggestion made by the Prime Minister to the President on April 24, 1958, representatives of the United States and United Kingdom Governments, led respectively by Mr. Robert Murphy and Sir Patrick Dean, have met in Washington. They studied how procedures of the two Governments might be concerted for reaching a decision to respond to a Soviet attack by committing nuclear retaliatory forces to the attack from the United Kingdom. The present report summarizes the results of these talks.

2. The basic understanding between the United Kingdom and United States Governments, regarding the use of bases in the United Kingdom by United States forces, provides that such use in an emergency shall be a matter for joint decision by the two Governments in the light of the circumstances at the time. A similar provision is incorporated in the Agreement of February 22, 1958, pursuant to which certain intermediate range ballistic missiles are to be provided to the United Kingdom Government by the United States Government. Decision by both parties would also be required in order to commit to the attack aircraft of the Royal Air Force Medium Bomber Force carrying nuclear weapons of United States origin.

3. If Western retaliation is to be successful, there must be mutually understood procedures for ordering the retaliatory forces referred to in paragraph 2 above into action with the minimum delay.

4. An outline of United Kingdom procedures is attached at Annex A, and an outline of United States procedures at Annex B. Representatives of the two Governments are satisfied that these procedures, which are designed to be put into effect with the minimum delay, are mutually understood and mutually consistent.



It will

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*J.K. Hartson* 10/8/75 ~~TOP SECRET~~  
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It will be seen that the "joint decision" required by the basic understanding between the two Governments would be taken by the President and the Prime Minister, who would speak personally with each other.

5. It should also be noted that the attached procedures relate only to the committing to the attack of retaliatory forces referred to in sub-paragraphs (a), (b) and (c) of paragraph 6 below. They do not deal with the employment of United States retaliatory forces located outside the United Kingdom or with the employment of United Kingdom retaliatory forces other than those specified in sub-paragraphs (a) and (b) of paragraph 6. The United States Government, of course, retains the right in accordance with normal procedures to withdraw from their United Kingdom bases United States Air Force units deployed in the United Kingdom, and to redeploy such units elsewhere.

6. The categories of retaliatory forces to which the attached procedures apply are as follows:

- (a) Aircraft of the Royal Air Force Medium Bomber Force which would carry nuclear weapons of United States origin when committed to the attack;
- (b) Royal Air Force IRBM force to be created pursuant to the Agreement of February 22, 1958;
- (c) Units of the United States Strategic Air Command located in the United Kingdom.

In addition, there are also located in the United Kingdom certain United Kingdom and United States tactical bomber units committed to SACEUR and having a nuclear retaliatory capability. The use of the bases in the United Kingdom on which United States tactical bomber units are located falls under the basic understanding referred to in paragraph 2 above. Some adaptation of the attached procedures may be required to make them applicable to the NATO-committed tactical bomber units referred to earlier in this paragraph. Accordingly, the two Governments have agreed that they will respectively review as soon as possible their procedures covering such units. After consultation with SACEUR, they will make any additions and/or modifications to the attached procedures that may prove necessary in order to make such procedures applicable to all categories of retaliatory forces, including tactical bomber units, located in the United Kingdom.

Robert Murphy  
Robert Murphy

P. Dean  
Patrick Dean



Washington, June 7, 1958.

RS  
Washington, June 9, 1958

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UNITED KINGDOM PROCEDURES PRIOR TO ACTION BY  
NUCLEAR RETALIATORY FORCES BASED IN THE  
UNITED KINGDOM.

1. In setting out courses of action to precede the despatch of nuclear retaliatory forces based in the United Kingdom two conditions of alert or warning periods are envisaged:-

- (a) Strategic Warning. This implies the receipt of early information by the Joint Intelligence Committee concerning enemy intention to attack. Under these conditions the maximum number of bomber aircraft would be deployed at readiness as quickly as possible.
- (b) Tactical Warning. This implies short warning of imminent attack derived from positive radar or other means. Under these conditions that portion of the medium bomber force held at readiness would be available for instant retaliatory action whilst the remainder of the force would come to readiness and be despatched in accordance with existing plans.

Strategic Warning.

2. Following the receipt of Intelligence information that enemy attack may be expected in the near future the following are to be informed:-

- (a) The Prime Minister and certain designated Ministers;
- (b) The U.K. Chiefs of Staff;
- (c) The U.S. Intelligence authorities.

3. The Chief of the Air Staff will take all necessary action to bring the Royal Air Force to a high state of operational readiness and the Commander, 7th Air Division, S.A.C. will be notified of action taken to increase the readiness of the medium bomber force.

4. The Prime Minister and the President of the United States will consult together regarding a joint decision to commit to the attack retaliatory forces based in the United Kingdom.

Tactical Warning.

5. When the Commander in Chief, Fighter Command, receives positive radar or other warning of impending enemy attack

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-2-

he will immediately inform:-

- (a) Air Ministry;
- (b) C. in C. Bomber Command;
- (c) Commander, 7th Air Division, S.A.C.

6. The Chief of the Air Staff will inform the Prime Minister, certain other designated Ministers, and the Chiefs of Staff. The Prime Minister will speak personally with the President of the United States regarding a joint decision to commit to the attack nuclear retaliatory forces based in the United Kingdom.

7. On receipt of tactical warning the Chief of the Air Staff will order the medium bomber force to immediate readiness for take off. At his discretion he may order the force into the air under "positive control" procedure, if he deems such action necessary to avoid loss on the ground by enemy action. In this sense "positive control" means the aircraft will fly on pre-arranged routes toward targets, but will not pass beyond a specified line pending the receipt of further definite instructions. The time at which aircraft are scheduled to reach this specified line will be made known to the Prime Minister and the United Kingdom Chiefs of Staff. The Commander of S.A.C. units in the United Kingdom and SACEUR will be informed of this action.

Warheads of American Origin.

8. Under both conditions described above, namely, strategic and tactical warning, when the Prime Minister and the President of the United States consult together regarding the launching of nuclear retaliatory forces, it will be necessary for them to agree on the use of nuclear warheads of American origin, if they are deemed to be required. The United Kingdom retaliatory forces affected by this decision are:-

- (a) The Medium Bomber Force;
- (b) The Royal Air Force IRBM force to be created pursuant to the agreement of February 22, 1958.

9. Following agreement on the use of American warheads the Prime Minister will authorise the Chairman C.O.S. Committee to implement war plans requiring their use.

~~TOP SECRET~~

~~TOP SECRET~~

ANNEX B

PROCEDURES PRECEDING ATTACK BY UNITED STATES  
RETALIATORY FORCES FROM THE UNITED KINGDOM

1. These procedures apply under two conditions, that of strategic warning and that of tactical warning, defined as follows:
  - a. Strategic warning - warning, based on all available information, concerning possible enemy intent to initiate hostilities. Strategic warning is considered to be a time sufficient to permit United States forces in being to be deployed and in a state of maximum readiness.
  - b. Tactical warning - warning based on information which positively indicates that an enemy attack is underway, or has occurred. Tactical warning will allow for little or no deployment of forces.
2. On receipt by the National Indications Center of Intelligence information which indicates that an enemy is likely to launch an attack, the United States Intelligence authorities will be informed and they will immediately notify the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the members of the National Security Council.
3. In the case of strategic warning (1.a. above) received by the United States, the intelligence information and the evaluation thereof will have been passed to the Joint Intelligence Committee (London) and the Joint Intelligence Committee (Ottawa) pursuant to the Tripartite Alert procedure agreed to among the Governments of the United Kingdom, Canada and the United States.
4. Upon receiving tactical warning (1.b. above), the Commander-in-Chief, Strategic Air Command may launch his Alert Force under "Positive Control" procedure, which proceeds on pre-arranged routes toward targets, but will not pass beyond a specified line without further definite instructions.
5. The following actions will be taken, depending upon the type of warning received:
  - a. The Secretary of Defense will advise the President of the situation.
  - b. The Department of Defense will notify appropriate Government agencies of the situation.



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-2-

c. The Joint Chiefs of Staff will simultaneously dispatch prepared alert messages to all field commanders including CINCEUR and CINCSAC; the Members of the NATO Standing Group; major NATO commanders; and the Chairmen, Chiefs of Staff Committees, United Kingdom and Canada.

6. The President will speak personally with the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom regarding joint decision to commit forces located in the United Kingdom.

7. Upon the President's authorization, the Joint Chiefs of Staff will direct the implementation of appropriate war plans, stating that the use of atomic weapons is authorized.



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