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By V.C. NARA Date 7/17/99

TOP SECRET



BRITISH EMBASSY,  
WASHINGTON.

April 30, 1958.

*Dear Mr Secretary*

As I promised when I saw you  
this morning, I enclose a copy of a letter  
from the Prime Minister to the President,  
which he wished me to send you personally.

*Yours sincerely*

*Harold Clegg*

The Honorable

John Foster Dulles.

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By V.C. NARA Date 7/17/88

*April 24, 1958*

10 Downing Street,

London S.W. 1.

Dear Friend,

Recent developments have convinced us more than ever that, if it ever became necessary to launch the Western nuclear retaliation to a Soviet attack, we could not risk any delay in ordering the strategic nuclear forces into action if they were to be successful. We have accordingly been considering the procedural steps which would be needed in this country to ensure that, if need arose, the decision to launch the nuclear retaliatory forces stationed here could be taken quickly.

Although our considerations have been limited specifically to a Soviet attack on the United Kingdom, you would no doubt be involved with us from the beginning. Any Soviet attack on us would almost certainly coincide with a simultaneous attack either on United States bases elsewhere or, with increasing likelihood as time passes, on the United States mainland. In addition, there is the question of Strategic Air Command units here, and the

/American...

President

of the United States.

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American and British forces under operational command of SACEUR stationed in the United Kingdom.

I am sure you will agree that it is essential that the procedural arrangements in the two countries leading up to the decision to launch the nuclear retaliation should be fully in line. I should like to suggest, therefore, that talks should be held in Washington shortly to make sure that we have a fully agreed and understood procedure for dealing with this vital question.

If you agree to this proposal, perhaps you could nominate someone on your side who would be responsible for the talks. I should like to nominate as our representative Sir Patrick Dear, the Chairman of our Joint Intelligence Committee. He is known to you and, if you agreed, could come over to see your people at a mutually convenient time. He would be accompanied by experts to deal with the technical questions. As regards timing, I am inclined to think that a meeting should take place as soon as both sides are ready; and I would suggest perhaps the end of May, if this was convenient for your representatives.

We think that this subject should be discussed on a broad basis to include both action to be taken on an intelligence alert and action to be taken on warning

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of an impending attack. We should be glad to let your representative know, in advance of the talks, through our Embassy in Washington, the lines on which we have been thinking.

The question of nuclear retaliation certainly has wider implications (e.g. in respect of the other N.A.T.O. countries); but we feel, and I hope you will agree, that if we were to discuss it between ourselves in the first instance, this would provide a basis for discussing the wider N.A.T.O. problem later.

Yours ever,

Signed Harold Macmillan.

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SENT TO: Amembassy LONDON 7735

PRESIDENTIAL HANDLING

For Ambassador.

Please deliver following message from President to Prime Minister:

QTE Dear Harold: April 30, 1958

I have your letter of the 24th. I quite agree with your suggestion that our two governments study how to concert actions under the circumstances that you envision.

We will be ready to name our representative in a day or so. I suggest that this whole matter be done on a most secret basis.

With warm regard,

As ever,

IKE UNQTE.

DULLES

Please confirm date and time of delivery.

Dist.  
Desired  
(Offices  
Only)

Drafted by:  
WH - The President

Telegraphic transmission and  
classification approved by:

John Foster Dulles

Clearances:

EUR - Mr. Elbrick

S/S - Mr. Calhoun

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