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THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
WASHINGTON

JUN 17 1959

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By HDA/HH 11/30/93

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

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  - With concurrence of DDP
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- EO 12356, Sec. 1.3 (a) 1, 5, 7  
ACDC/CR by 924 616/16

Dear Mr. Secretary:

The Joint Chiefs of Staff have recommended and I agree that negotiations with the United Kingdom should be undertaken on an expedited basis with the objective of making available certain U.S. air defense weapons for U.K. interceptor aircraft, to include the authorization of expenditure of such weapons under conditions to be approved by both Governments.

A fundamental requirement for air defense is that its weapons systems be constantly ready for instant employment. This requires that warheads be mounted on missiles and loaded on alert aircraft ready for instant employment upon receipt of authenticated orders from proper authority. To achieve this fast reaction time in the RAF air defense system it is proposed that interceptor aircraft be maintained in the maximum alert status with the U.S. GENIE rocket installed on the Lightning aircraft. During this alert status, U.S. personnel will maintain surveillance over the interceptors until a point in time at which these interceptors are ordered into flight. It is conceived that the flight of the interceptor with these weapons would be authorized under two conditions which would be set forth in a Government level agreement. The first condition may be described as strategic alert; the other as tactical alert. Strategic alert would be declared by U.K. authorities on the basis of criteria at least equivalent to criteria for a U.S. declaration of "Air Defense Readiness" and this declaration would be confirmed by USCINCEUR or higher authority. Tactical alert would occur when a target is declared "hostile" by the U.K. authorities and its "hostile" identification is confirmed by USCINCEUR or his representative, including but not below the level of a commander of a numbered air force or comparable level. A target could be

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declared "hostile" only pursuant to rules of interception and engagement agreed upon at the Governmental level and incorporated into the Governmental agreement. Expenditure of air defense atomic rockets from U.K. aircraft would be authorized only against a "hostile" target which has been confirmed as "hostile" by USCINCEUR or his representative, including but not below the level of a commander of a numbered air force or comparable level.

Under these circumstances the expenditure of the nuclear weapons may become necessary for air defense before their transfer to the United Kingdom can be authorized by the President pursuant to U.S. law. Accordingly, if the air defense of the United Kingdom by the R. A. F. equipped with U.S. nuclear weapons is to be maintained on an instant readiness basis, arrangements must be made whereby these weapons may be expended by the R. A. F. without formal transfer of ownership. I believe this can be done by the adoption of the concept of control without physical custody and by Presidential authorization for the expenditure of U.S. atomic weapons in the air defense of the United Kingdom by U.K. forces. A draft of a proposed Article of the agreement setting forth this concept is inclosed (Inclosure 1).

Inclosed herewith for your concurrence (Inclosure 2) and for transmission to the President, if you concur, is a letter which sets forth this concept and recommends that he approve the "Authorization for the Expenditure of U.S. Weapons in the Air Defense of United Kingdom and U.S. Forces Therein" attached thereto. This authorization, if approved by the President, will provide a basis for the Department of Defense in coordination with the Department of State and with appropriate authorities of the United Kingdom

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to work out the necessary arrangements, to include rules of intercept and engagement, for approval by both Governments.

Sincerely yours,

*Thomas Spates*  
DEPUTY

2 Inclosures:

- 1) Draft of Proposed Article II
- 2) Letter to the President

The Honorable

The Secretary of State

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