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1. Status of the U.K. Thor Program

Under the 1958 agreement, the U.S. Air Force undertook to furnish the RAF with 60 THOR missiles to be manned in the U.K. by four RAF squadrons. The missiles are delivered and the British declared the THOR squadrons operational in December, 1959. Defense has been concerned for some time, however, over delays which have occurred in "mating" warheads to missiles, an operation essential to the attainment of the 15-minute readiness condition.

Initially there was an apparent reluctance on the part of the Cabinet to authorize mating. Early this year, it seemed that this obstacle had been overcome. Then, a delay was occasioned by the British request for an additional safety feature. The situation has been complicated by USAF problems in providing custody of the mated missiles which would be compatible with U.S. nuclear security requirements. Both safety and custody questions seem now to be settled and it appears that once again the operation awaits a U.K. Government political decision. The latest word is that a favorable decision has been taken. We understand that this subject came up during the Gates-Watkinson talks on June 1 and that both sides agreed that there was no longer any problem. There is still, however, no confirmation that mating has commenced.

Another aspect of the situation is the decision of the GAO to conduct a survey of the USAF handling of the THOR program. GAO representatives visited the U.K. this spring. In the course of their investigations, they became aware of the delays in achieving fully operational status of the missiles. They have sought information relative to the British conduct of the program. State and Defense agreed that U.S. officials will not provide British data without prior consent of the U.K. Government.

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2. Blue Streak - Skybolt

The President informed Prime Minister Macmillan at Camp David on March 29 that the U.S. is prepared, subject to its own priorities, to provide Skybolt missiles, minus warheads, to the British on a reimbursable basis in 1965 or thereafter. The agreement was made dependent on the Skybolt development program. Reference was also made to U.S. plans to make Polaris missiles available to NATO and, if necessary, to assist joint European production of Polaris.

Armed with these assurances of U.S. assistance in the deterrent field, the British proceeded with their decision to abandon independent production of the Blue Streak fixed base IRBM. In addition to THORS, U.K. deterrent forces are to consist of its V-bomber force, eventually armed with Skybolt. They hope also to be able, at some time in the future, to add a mobile base Polaris to their deterrent.

The announcement of the cancellation of the military Blue Streak program aroused a storm of criticism in Parliament. Labor Party spokesmen attacked the Government for launching the Blue Streak development in the first place and for not abandoning it earlier.

A by-product of the Blue Streak debate in the U.K. is the strain placed upon the Labor Party's official nuclear policy. Gaitskell's leadership of the Party has been severely tested as sentiment, particularly in the trade unions, grew for a unilateral nuclear disarmament. Very recently, however, there has been an apparent increase of trade union support for Gaitskell on Defense policy.

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The U.S. and U.K. concluded an agreement February 15, 1960, providing for the installation and operation of a ballistic early warning station on Flyingdales Moor in Yorkshire. Essentially, the U.S. is to provide and install the radar for the station and pay for communications to link the station with the remainder of the BMEWS network. The British provide the site, buildings and running costs. The station will be operated by the RAF. Information obtained will be available simultaneously to U.K. and U.S. operation centers. The station is tied into similar installations in Greenland and Alaska. Advance warning can thus be given of attacks on North America and the United Kingdom.

The BMEWS Agreement encountered considerable criticism in the U.K. It was argued that new developments in weapons made the system useless as far as Britain was concerned. The "four-minute" warning which according to U.K. Government spokesmen might be all that the U.K. would receive was deemed insufficient to mount a U.K. retaliatory attack. Critics charged that the existence of the station was an asset to U.S. continental defense but only a danger to the U.K. as a target. Nature lovers protested the siting of the giant radar in the midst of a national park.

There have been questions in the U.K. with regard to the relationship between BMEWS and MIDAS. The latter is to be a satellite equipped with detection devices which, passing overhead, could presumably spot missile launching operations before the missile could be detected by BMEWS radar beam. MIDAS is not yet developed. Preliminary discussions have been held with the British looking towards the possibility of establishment in the future of a MIDAS receiving station in the U.K.

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4.
5. Transfer of Brewster Morris to Bonn

Present plans are that Brewster Morris, FSO-1, Political Counselor at London, will transfer to Bonn as DCM this summer. Personnel is assigning Elin O'Shaughnessy, FSO-1, to replace Brewster. O'Shaughnessy is now DCM in Belgrade. As of the moment, EUR/EX does not know London's reaction to the assignment of O'Shaughnessy.

Another pending change at London is the establishment of a new political officer position to be filled by an Eastern European specialist, Malcolm Tom, FSO-3. Tom will proceed directly to London at the conclusion of his service on the disarmament delegation in Geneva.