

CONFIDENTIAL

Ref. A0651

MR. WHITMORE

1.
Prime Minister.

These proposals seem sensible.


Do you agree to them?

Yes one fhd
14 xi

Mr. Wade-Gery sent you a copy of a letter of 29th October from Mr. Streator in the United States Embassy offering United States equipment on free loan for secure speech between the President and the Prime Minister, the Federal German Chancellor and the French President. I am advised that the equipment is better in terms of speech quality than that now used with the White House. I therefore recommend that we accept the United States offer.

2. If we, the Germans and the French all take up the United States offer, it would make sense to use the equipment also between the three European capitals. The offer makes no provision for such use, but I understand that all that is necessary to be able to do this is to provide suitable cypher key material and that this can be arranged. Herr Schtler told me during our recent visit to Bonn that the Germans intend to accept the offer and that he would be prepared to consider using the United States equipment rather than the West German ELCROVOX between No. 10 and the Chancellery. We do not yet know if the French intend to accept the United States offer. But if they do we can safely assume that they will arrange for a link between Paris and Bonn. So I think we ought to go for one between London and Paris as well. So far we have had only a secure teleprinter link with the Elysee. But the cost of a secure speech link would in the new circumstances be negligible; and though we might not use the facility much it would surely be wrong in principle to leave London-Paris as the sole exception to a system under which the Head of Government in each of the four capitals could otherwise talk securely to each of the other three.

3. We have already established that the Americans would have no objection to our using for these extra lateral purposes the equipment they are offering to supply. They would not be able to listen in to our conversations with Bonn or Paris; each link would have its own unique cypher key, and we would not use an American-supplied key except for our link with Washington.



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4. If the Prime Minister agrees, we will pursue accordingly with the Americans, the Germans and the French. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office and GCHQ have been consulted and concur.

RA

(Robert Armstrong)

14th November, 1979

CONFIDENTIAL *Security*



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Principal Private Secretary

SIR ROBERT ARMSTRONG

The Prime Minister has seen your minute AO651 of 14 November.

She agrees that we should accept the American offer and also seek to use their equipment for our links with Paris and Bonn. She is content for you to pursue your proposals with the Americans, the Germans and the French.

C. A. WHITMORE

20 November 1979

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SECRET



EMBASSY OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

LONDON

October 29, 1979

- 1. Copy (for advance *inf*)
to Sir R Armstrong
Th. Whitmore ✓
- 2. Mr. Wright
for draft submission
to No 10 as agreed
please.

Mr. Robert Wade-Gery
Deputy Secretary
Cabinet Office
Whitehall, SW1 2AS

CABINET OFFICE
B...4004...
30 OCT 1979
FILING INSTRU...
FILE No.

R. Wright
30/x

Dear Robert:

As you know President Carter has expressed interest in establishing a secure voice link between himself and the Prime Minister, the German Chancellor and the French President. Washington has been examining the feasibility of such an arrangement and is now prepared to proceed. The Embassy has been asked to encourage your government's participation in such a system.

The secure voice system which the United States is now proposing will have good voice quality including voice recognition. Utilizing ordinary international and local dial telephone systems, this secure voice link will use the most modern equipment available. It will be simple to operate, much like a regular telephone. When operational, each Head of State will have secure voice capability with the President. The United States proposes to provide hardware, installation, and maintenance for the system. Commercial telephone toll charges will be incurred with each use of the secure voice telephones. The side placing the call would bear the expense of the call.

I understand your experts have already had an opportunity to discuss with ours some of the technical aspects of the system we are proposing. If you require any further information, please let us know. We look forward to receiving your reaction to this proposal.

Sincerely,

EJ
Edward J. Streator
Minister

SECRET



30 OCT 1979