

Administration of Joseph R. Biden, Jr., 2024

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting an Amendment to the 1958 Agreement Between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland for Cooperation on the Uses of Atomic Energy for Mutual Defense Purposes

July 29, 2024

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Madam President:)

I am pleased to transmit to the Congress, pursuant to section 123 d. of the Atomic Energy Act of 1954, as amended (42 U.S.C. 2153(d)), the text of an amendment (the "Amendment") to the Agreement Between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland for Cooperation on the Uses of Atomic Energy for Mutual Defense Purposes of July 3, 1958, as amended (the "1958 Agreement").

I am also pleased to transmit my written approval, authorization, and determination concerning the Amendment. The joint memorandum submitted to me by the Secretaries of Defense and Energy providing their position on the Amendment is also enclosed. A separate classified addendum with additional material is being provided under appropriate security arrangements.

The Amendment removes the expiration date of certain provisions of the 1958 Agreement that permit the transfer of certain equipment and material between the United States and the United Kingdom, to enable broad and enduring cooperation and make all provisions of the 1958 Agreement indefinite in duration.

The Amendment also clarifies that Article II(A) of the 1958 Agreement provides for the exchange of atomic information and other related classified information, controlled unclassified information, technical data and technology subject to either Party's export control requirements, sensitive nuclear technology, and controlled nuclear information, as is jointly determined to be necessary for the development of defense plans; the training of personnel in the employment of defense against atomic weapons; the evaluation of capabilities of potential enemies in the employment of atomic weapons and other military applications of atomic energy; the development of delivery systems compatible with atomic weapons; and the research, development, or design of military reactors.

The Amendment's revisions to Article II(B) of the 1958 Agreement clarify that these same types of information may be exchanged related to atomic weapons, including special nuclear materials properties and production or processing technology, as is determined necessary to improve the recipient's atomic weapon design, development, or fabrication capability.

The Amendment also consolidates reciprocal transfers of equipment, information, and material associated with naval nuclear propulsion cooperation, including information designated as naval nuclear propulsion information in Article III of the 1958 Agreement, and makes corresponding changes in that Article needed to provide for reciprocity.

The Amendment's additional revisions to the 1958 Agreement ensure consistency with the above-described changes as well as current United States and United Kingdom policies and practices regarding nuclear threat reduction, naval nuclear propulsion, and the security of the nuclear security enterprise, including personnel security.

In my judgment, the Amendment meets all statutory requirements. The United Kingdom intends to continue to maintain viable nuclear forces into the foreseeable future. The provisions of the 1958 Agreement, as amended by the Amendment, are consistent in every respect with United States commitments to the United Kingdom regarding the development and deployment of the United Kingdom TRIDENT Strategic Weapon System, continued cooperation in nuclear propulsion programs, and support for the United Kingdom atomic weapon and nuclear threat reduction programs.

Based on our steadfast partnership with the United Kingdom, and the United Kingdom's continued commitment of nuclear forces to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), I have concluded it is in the national interest of the United States to continue to assist the United Kingdom in maintaining a credible nuclear deterrent, which will further improve our mutual defense posture and support our collective interests under NATO.

I have considered the views and recommendations of the interested departments and agencies and have determined that the performance of the Amendment will promote, and will not constitute an unreasonable risk to, the common defense and security. Further, I have approved the program outlined in the Amendment and have determined that such program will promote, and will not constitute an unreasonable risk to, the common defense and security. Accordingly, I have approved the Amendment, authorized its execution, and urge that the Congress give it favorable consideration.

Sincerely,

JOSEPH R. BIDEN JR.

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Michael Johnson, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Kamala D. Harris, President of the Senate. An original was not available for verification of the content of this letter.

Categories: Communications to Congress : United Kingdom, cooperation with U.S. on uses of atomic energy for mutual defense, letter transmitting amendment to 1958 agreement.

Subjects: North Atlantic Treaty Organization; United Kingdom, nuclear energy cooperation with U.S.; United Kingdom, security cooperation with U.S.

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