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Press & Public Relations
Department.

Phone: 01-222 0151/8
01-222 9000

Conservative Central
Office.
32 Smith Square,
London SW1P3HH

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Extract from a speech by the Rt Hon Peter Walker MP, (Worcester),
Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, speaking in Droitwich
on Sunday, 8th May 1983.

THE ERADICATION OF BRITAIN'S INFLUENCE ABROAD

The Rt Hon Peter Walker MBE MP, Member of Parliament for
Worcester and Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food,
speaking in Droitwich on Sunday, 8th May, said:

In the past Labour leaders of the Opposition have boasted
of the dynamic impact they would make in the first hundred
days of a new Labour Government.

If Michael Foot succeeds, in the first hundred days of a new
Labour Government Britain's influence abroad would be
eradicated. The Labour Party has a foreign policy that would
be destined to be more disastrous than any foreign policy
of any major British political party since Britain enjoyed
a parliamentary democracy.

The Labour Party will fight the general election on three
major foreign policy planks: withdrawal from the European
community, scrapping the British independent nuclear deterrent:
and no American nuclear bases in Britain, including no
deployment of cruise missiles.

Each of these policies would have disastrous consequences
if implemented alone. Taken together they amount to a
catastrophe from which this country would never recover.

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Consider whom this foreign policy would delight and whom it would depress. None of our partners in the European community, from socialist France to Christian Democratic West Germany, wants us to leave the EEC. Neither does the United States which cares passionately about a united western Europe. All would regard our departure as a setback to western unity. The nine western European countries in the Community and the two about to join would feel that we had treated them with contempt and they would doubtless retaliate with a similar contempt. We would move from being one of the most influential countries in western Europe to being the most despised. But the Soviet Union never wanted Britain to join the EEC and would be delighted if we withdrew. Labour's policy of withdrawal would provoke dismay among our friends and delight among our enemies.

Labour's plan to refuse cruise missiles and boot out existing American nuclear bases would delight the Soviet Union. Such an outcome has long been an aim of their foreign policy. None of our European allies want us to follow this course. The Germans, the Italians, even the Dutch are preparing to deploy cruise missiles if Russia does not withdraw its phalanx of deadly SS-20s, poised to strike Europe's capitals. If Britain was to renege on its deployment of cruise, then NATO's strategy would fall apart, and so would NATO. The United States, our staunchest, most powerful ally, would be disillusioned and conclude that western Europe no longer had the will to defend itself. It would withdraw into a fortress America, leaving western Europe lost, neutralist and a prey for Soviet adventures.

Once again Labour's foreign policy would cause dismay among our allies, whether led by left-wing or right-wing governments, and provoke delight in the Kremlin.

As to Labour's plan to scrap, unilaterally, our independent nuclear deterrent, who wants us to do that? Certainly not President Reagan's America which wants to see a strong, powerful Britain capable of defending itself and anxious not to give any concession to the Soviet Union in arms negotiations without first securing similar reductions on the Soviet side.

Certainly not President Mitterand's France, where a socialist government is undertaking an expensive modernisation of the French force de frappe, the equivalent of our independent nuclear deterrent. Nor does any other ally press us to give up our nuclear arms. But the Soviet Union does. It would dearly love Britain to follow the path of unilateral nuclear disarmament, knowing full well that it would not volunteer similar concessions in the aftermath. For the third time Labour's foreign policy would bring despair to our friends, and solace to our enemies.

It is hard to credit that the party which now proposes such disasters is the same Labour Party which began the development of our own independent nuclear forces, took us into NATO and made the first agreements for America to station nuclear weapons in this country. But then Michael Foot's Labour party is not the same as the Labour Party of Clem Attlee.

The country has never been presented with such a foreign policy as the one with which Labour will fight the next election. It is standing on a foreign policy platform which will, in its major essentials, improve our relationships with the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact countries, and alienate, disillusion and depress our allies, who could even turn against us, banishing us from the collective decisions of the western democracies, whose views Labour clearly holds in contempt. Then who would we turn to? New Zealand, Australia? They both regard good relations with America as vital and are hardly likely to offer a Labour Britain much comfort. Canada? Not as long as it remains a loyal ally of America and a staunch member of NATO. South Africa? Surely not an option for a Labour government. But the Soviet Union and its allies would be holding out its so-called friendship. Would a Labour Britain be able to resist the hug of the Soviet bear?

The consequences of Labour's foreign and defence policy are so staggering in their awfulness that I want to underline their implications. Implementing Labour's programme on cruise,

Trident and the EEC, taken together, would leave us friendless among our allies and popular with our enemies. It would be equivalent, in this second Elizabethan age, of Elizabeth the First sending Sir Francis Drake to the stake, sinking our navy and proposing marriage to King Philip of Spain.

It is an appalling prospect and one the British people will not stomach, which is why Labour on its present policies can never be elected.

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