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Prime Minister

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PRIME MINISTER

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THE UK'S ABILITY TO COUNTER THE SOVIET
MILITARY THREAT TO THE UK BASE

You asked in your Private Secretary's letter of 20th December 1982 for an assessment of our ability to counter the overt and covert Soviet military threat to the UK base. This is attached.

2. Paragraphs 5-10 of the attachment deliberately set out all of the possible scenarios for Soviet attack on the United Kingdom; those which assume full-scale invasion are least likely and are not discussed at length in the paper. We can of course expand on the issues they raise, which are fundamental to our defence policy, if you wish.

3. Within the most likely scenario of attacks associated with general European conflict between NATO and the Warsaw Pact, it is difficult to assess the relative importance of the threats foreseen of air, sea and land operations by Soviet forces. The paper discusses most fully the threat posed by Soviet Special Forces (SPF) because this has most recently been identified and work has been in hand on combatting it. But it is worth emphasising that our assessment of this threat is derived from Soviet military doctrine and intelligence on the capabilities of SPF, not from hard intelligence that they would operate in the UK and tension and war. The most serious threat to the UK base is assessed to be from the air, followed by the maritime threat (including from Warsaw Pact merchant and fishing vessels) and that from SPF.



4. There is the additional problem that, while we can define the areas of potential threat, we can never be sure about the resources that the Soviet Union would, on the day, actually devote to attacking the United Kingdom. That decision would depend on their own judgement of priorities at the time. The result is to face us with a very difficult judgement about what proportion of our own resources to devote to defending the UK Base.

5. We are investing heavily in a substantial range of improvements to our capability which are summarised in the paper. Of course shortcomings remain and it is only realistic to recognise and allow for the prospect that if the Soviets choose to press home attacks at sea, on land or in the air we cannot guarantee stopping them. No foreseeable level of our own resources could do that.

6. The case for spending more of the available resources on the defence of the UK base would need to be looked at alongside the contribution to deterrence of other competing defence programmes. But I do not regard this paper as the right vehicle to address these issues. I invite you to note the attached assessment.

7. I am copying this minute and the attachment to the Home Secretary, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary and Sir Robert Armstrong.

WFA

Ministry of Defence
24th March 1983



24 MAR 1983

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A MILITARY ASSESSMENT OF
THE UNITED KINGDOM'S ABILITY TO COUNTER THE SOVIET MILITARY THREAT
TO THE UK BASE

1. The PS/Prime Minister's letter dated 20 Dec 82 asked for an assessment of our ability to counter the Soviet military threat to the UK Base, both overt and covert. The UK Base will be taken to be the UK land mass and offshore islands; the surrounding sea areas out to the edge of the Continental Shelf and the UK Air Defence Region (UKADR). The paper concentrates on forces based in and operating from the UK. From the outset, however, it should be noted that the defence of the UK does not rest only on these forces. Thus there is some danger in examining one of the major elements in our defence strategy in isolation. For example the battles in Europe and the Atlantic would be crucial to our survival. The UK is not only our homeland; it is also a NATO base which is vital to the success of the defence strategy of the Alliance and, in that wider sense to our whole security.

2. This assessment describes the role of the UK base; sets out the threat and possible scenarios for a Soviet attack on the UK base. It then identifies, in the context of a NATO/Warsaw Pact confrontation, the circumstances most likely to involve attack on the UK. In this context the paper then considers the threat to the UK from covert attack by Soviet special forces (SPF) and agents, and conventional attack on the UK base by air and seaborne forces. These assessments are then used to test our present defence arrangements and identify any shortcomings in our capabilities. Finally the paper reviews currently planned improvements to our forces.

ROLE OF THE UK BASE

3. In war, the UK would be a major base from which: the RN would maintain our strategic deterrent and fight for control of the Eastern Atlantic; the shallow sea around the UK and the Norwegian Sea; the Army would send some 129,000 reinforcements to the continental land battle; and the RAF would mount maritime air operations in the Eastern Atlantic and offensive operations in Europe. Additionally, some 200,000 US troops would be flown to reinforce Europe through UK airspace and thousands of air reinforcement and resupply sorties would pass through the UKADR; more than 400 American aircraft would join those already stationed here for offensive operations; some 20 million tons of supplies (including petroleum products) would be transported by ship across the Atlantic passing through UK base waters. Finally, the UK is an operating base for US strike aircraft and ballistic missile submarines (SSBN), a forward support base for the US Strike Fleet and, from late 83, will support up to 160 NATO Ground Launched Cruise Missiles (GLCM). Therefore, the UK is assessed as a high priority target for Soviet forces.

THE THREAT

4. In addition to the elements of their strategic and intermediate nuclear forces tasked against the UK the Soviet Union poses a conventional threat from air, sea and land operations. These threats are summarised below:

a. Air. Up to 188 medium and heavy bombers (BACKFIRE, BADGER, BLINDER) possibly supplemented by some of the 190 FENCER based within range of the UK. The new aircraft like the BACKFIRE and FENCER have a greater speed, range and weapon load than older aircraft. The air threat is the most potent ⁽¹⁾ of those facing the UK and would be tasked against our nuclear forces and their associated communications facilities; air defence facilities; command centres and reinforcement ports, and airfields.

b. Sea. It is assessed that about 15 nuclear and conventional submarines would be deployed to UK base waters to attack naval units and reinforcement shipping. There is an extensive capability for mining within UK waters by submarines/surface vessels and aircraft.

c. Land. Sabotage, and raids by SPF, would be expected in the UK. Of the order of 500 SPF could be expected to operate in small groups. They are capable of causing damage to key installations out of all proportion to their numbers. Their capability, method of operating, and likely targets are covered in paragraph 11.

SCENARIOS FOR A WARSAW PACT ATTACK ON THE UK

5. Four scenarios are posed for Soviet attack on the UK base. These are:

Note:

(1) Hansard volume 34 page 847-854. SofS for Defence statement 21 Dec 82

a. A Soviet invasion of the UK using airborne or seaborne forces at an early stage in a NATO/WP conflict.

b. A Soviet invasion of the UK following the collapse of resistance in Europe.

c. Sabotage and operations by SPF in a period of tension before war.

d. Conventional and covert attack in the initial stages of war.

Scenarios a b and d could of course begin with or escalate to chemical and/or nuclear attacks.

6. Invasion. The Warsaw Pact could commit all of its airborne and seaborne resources to mount an air/sea invasion of the United Kingdom at an early stage in a NATO/WP conflict. Such an invasion would be preceded by air attack aimed at minimising resistance. But distances involved, and the lack of adequate air protection that the WP could make available, led the JIC⁽²⁾ to conclude that such large scale employment of airborne and seaborne forces against the UK would be unlikely. There is also the possibility of an attack confined to the UK. But that would, under the terms of the North Atlantic Treaty, be deemed an attack on the Alliance as a whole, and the full capabilities of NATO forces could be brought to the aid of the UK. Were the UK membership of NATO unable in itself to

Note:

(2) JIC 82 (6).

UK 1(2)

deter such WP action the UK Independent Deterrent should do so.
 This scenario is regarded as the least likely.

7. Invasion of the UK after the Collapse of European Defences.

The second scenario assumes that NATO forces have been routed in Europe and that the UK, with only the US as an effective ally, is faced with a 1940 situation of an enemy in command of Europe planning to invade and subdue the UK. NATO has resolved that in the event of the failure of conventional defences nuclear weapons would be used to force the WP to cease hostilities. If necessary this would include resort to strategic weapons. It is, therefore, scarcely credible, in view of this resolve that WP forces could overrun Europe, absorb the weight of NATO's theatre nuclear weapons, as well as the strategic weapons of France, and still retain the capacity to invade the UK. Should this happen and include a nuclear exchange involving the UK, the UK would be in a survival and recovery posture and would be hard pressed to repel determined invasion. Because this scenario could not develop to a European collapse without recourse to a full scale nuclear exchange it is not considered further.

8. A Soviet Threat to use Chemical Weapons. It is conceivable that the WP might threaten selective use of chemical weapons (CW) against the UK in both the above scenarios, to disrupt the vital support role the UK plays for NATO operations. Attacks could either take the form of isolated tactical use against high-value targets such as airfields or early-warning sites, or use could be widespread with massive CW attacks against ports, marshalling areas and

communications choke points, with the prospect of heavy civilian casualties. Although we have no direct retaliatory CW capability, widespread Soviet use of CW might be deterred by the UK's possession of tactical, or in the last resort, strategic nuclear weapons. However it is doubtful if such considerations would deter the Soviet Union from selective use of CW against military targets. If the Soviet Union did attack with chemical weapons we have virtually no defences in this country to deal with them.

9. The Soviet Nuclear Weapon Threat. The UK possesses a powerful strategic deterrent - underpinned by a range of tactical nuclear weapons - which provides a credible deterrent against "out of the blue" nuclear attacks on the UK. Even after a first use of theatre weapons elsewhere in Europe, the UK's possession of nuclear weapons might still deter the Soviet Union from mounting selective nuclear attacks on this country. In the last resort more widespread use would probably be deterred by the huge destruction in the Soviet Union which Polaris/Chevaline today, and Trident D5 tomorrow, could wreak. We must expect, though, that if deterrence at the tactical or strategic level should fail, the UK would be exposed either to very damaging strikes in specific areas where high-value military targets exist, or in the worst case to much wider devastation. Few civil or defence programmes exist which provide a national capability to withstand a nuclear attack; moreover, neither have the majority of our HQs been hardened or protected against damage from nuclear weapons. It is therefore imperative that we take

every opportunity, as the French do, to stress the effectiveness of our nuclear forces and our determination to use them if necessary, in a graduated and flexible manner.

10. Involvement of the UK in a General European Conflict between NATO and the WP. The third and fourth scenarios (paragraphs 5c and 5d above) are set in the context of Soviet hostilities against the UK as part of general aggression against NATO. In the initial stages of conventional war the WP's principal task would be the destruction of NATO nuclear delivery systems in Europe. Many of these targets are in the UK and, moreover, the UK plays a key role in the support of NATO and therefore offers many other targets of high priority to the WP. However, from the outset the Soviet Union would have to balance the effect of conventional attacks on targets in the UK against the need to achieve quick and decisive results in Europe and would, therefore, be unlikely to commit the major part of its forces to attacking the UK. Nonetheless with the probable availability of ⁽²⁾ sea and air forces the Soviet Union would almost certainly still try to achieve its aim of neutralising the UK. It is assessed that from a late stage of a period of tension the WP would use agents and SPF to mount covert operations and also conduct covert mining; from the outbreak of hostilities would mount sustained air attack on targets in the UK, continue mining and covert operations, and conduct operations using submarines in UK base waters. Set in the context of a general NATO/Warsaw Pact war this scenario is considered the most credible

Note:

(2) JIC 82(6).

UK (2)

and is adopted in this assessment to test our current defence capabilities in terms of defence against covert attack; soviet maritime operations, and WP offensive air operations against the UK.

LAND OPERATIONS AGAINST SPF ATTACK

11. The SPF Threat. Plans for the ground defence of the UK are based primarily on the defence of Key Points (KPs) against covert attack. It is assessed ⁽³⁾ that there will be no major threat of sabotage by foreign states in a period of tension leading to war, other than from the Soviet Union and its allies. Both SPF and indigenous groups are unlikely to engage in sabotage unless under Soviet direction. The threat during a period of tension and conventional war is assessed to be from about 500 SPF operating in small groups which vary in size according to the task, and which can be as small as five men. They are likely to be inserted into the country during a period of tension by legal means; during conventional war entry would be covert, probably by sea although entry by parachute cannot be discounted. However, even after infiltration in a period of rising tension, SPF units would remain under tight control from the Soviet Union, given that premature sabotage operations might endanger any last minute negotiations intended to avert war or might increase the warning time available to NATO. They would be tasked with both reconnaissance and sabotage and may wear plain clothes, NATO or Soviet uniforms. SPF (or Spetznaz in Soviet terminology) are selected for their political reliability and physical fitness. They are highly trained and can be expected to be proficient in underwater and other advanced demolition techniques,

Note:

(3) JIC 81(17).

able to use stand off weapons and will operate high speed burst transmission radios. Attacks might be mounted under diversionary activity calculated to distract UK security forces. The effects of their operations would be out of all proportion to their numbers involved. Their primary targets would be our nuclear forces and their associated communications facilities, air defence facilities, command centres and reinforcement ports and airfields and could include attacks on military and political decision makers. This assessment of the threat is derived from Soviet military doctrine and intelligence on the capability of Soviet SPF; there is no hard intelligence of SPF intentions for operations in the UK.

12. The UK Ground Defence Organisation. The guarding of KPs is the biggest single ground defence task of the armed forces, at least initially. It involves the guarding of some 400 national KPs once the threat to them seems likely to exceed police resources. Although this is by no means the only Home Defence task, it is the largest and the most predictable one.

13. In a period of tension when Ministers consider that the potential threat from SPF is sufficient to warrant it, Government War Book Measures would be implemented to authorise the armed forces to deploy to protect KPs which are installations considered vital to the national interest. It is expected, at the same time, that emergency legislation would be passed giving additional powers to the police and armed forces to enable them to carry out their

duties. A list of KPs is drawn up in peace by the Cabinet Office.
These arrangements are described in detail at Annex A.

14. Military plans have been drawn up for the protection of all
KPs. Under the first part of this plan, 16 KPs have been identified
which are vital to the national interest and are directly
concerned with the implementation of the National Retaliatory War
Plan (NRWP). They are almost certain to be attacked and have no
redundancy. These 16 are termed "Super Priority Type I Key Points"
(SPKP). It has been agreed that top priority will be given to
guaranteeing the security of these SPKPs at an early stage in
transition to war. It is intended to do this by establishing strong
guard forces at each of them, consisting of up to 250 men equipped
and trained for the task.

15. Plans for guarding the remaining KPs such as communications
centres, docks, and administrative and logistic resources,
are based either on establishing a full guard force where single
Service resources allow, or on providing a small armed presence as
a basis for reinforcement by mobile reaction forces. This process
of establishing a presence at these remaining KPs will be carried
out in an agreed order of priority, as manpower becomes available on
the completion of return plans, restriction of training or the
completion of mobilisation. Clearly it would be desirable to
provide a full guard at every KP, rather than just a presence.
Because the majority of Royal Air Force KPs are on existing
stations the Royal Air Force is able to use its ground personnel

to cover, albeit thinly, the majority of its installations; however, shortage of manpower leaves the Royal Navy and the Army with no choice but to adopt the flexible course that has been outlined.

16. All KPs will be grouped into military Tactical Areas of Responsibility (TAOR). The purpose of these TAORs is to create a framework within which Home Defence forces may be deployed more economically than in the past. Such TAORs will normally be based on County boundaries in order to facilitate liaison with the civil police and local authorities. The KPs themselves will have designated Ground Defence Areas (GDA). Military responsibility for operations within GDAs will rest with the Service officer responsible for the KP. Outside these areas responsibility for military operations will lie with the TAOR commander. In this way the KP guard forces of all three Services will be able to turn to the TAOR commander who will be ready to back them up as necessary by using mobile reaction forces to which he will have access at military TAOR level. Each Army District is responsible for the TAORs located within its boundaries and the prime purpose of its reaction forces is to anticipate the progress of the battle and, acting on good intelligence, to reinforce the weaker KPs before they are attacked by the enemy. Furthermore, one Brigade is held in reserve at national level and one battalion in each military district. Protection of US KPs is a US responsibility.

17. Present Capability. Our present capability is heavily dependent on the return of Regular troops from places such as Cyprus and the Falkland Islands. It is by no means certain that these plans will be completed but if they are a total of 104,000 men will be available for Home Defence when mobilisation is complete. This does not allow us to provide a full static guard for all KPs, let alone the installations which, although not warranting KP status, would cause disruption to the war effort if damaged or destroyed. However the plans outlined above are designed to give military commanders the capability to respond in the most effective way to the threat with the forces available.

18. Shortcomings. Our ground defence forces are short of 40,000 men. Stocks of small arms are inadequate and we are severely deficient in Nuclear Biological and Chemical (NBC) equipment; survivable communications, and sufficient protected war headquarters.

19. Testing of the Home Defence Organisation. The command and control procedures are practised in command post exercises, most recently on WINTEX 83. The tactical deployment of troops on the ground is not always possible on KP sites because of security considerations, but it is a basic infantry skill which is practised frequently. A security survey to assess the physical protection of SPKPs is a mandatory requirement when an installation is added to the list. In addition the security of SPKPs has been tested by the SAS and

is being reviewed in the light of their recommendations. The list of SPKPs is currently being revised and their security arrangements are subject to continuous review.

20. Planned Improvements. By 1990, with the expansion of the Territorial Army, more efficient use of reservists and the build up of the Home Service Force to a minimum of 4,500 men, we should have at least 90,000 soldiers available for Home Defence, in addition to the 24,000 men contributed by the RN and RAF. Ground defence communications will be improved and our current deficiencies of NBC equipment will be reduced. With the introduction of the new generation of small arms our present shortfall will be overcome. New concepts of operations and much improved joint planning with the Police will ensure the optimum use of these increased resources.

MARITIME OPERATIONS IN UK BASE WATERS

21. Maritime Threat. The maritime threat to the UK can be broken down into:

a. Submarine. It is assessed that up to 4 nuclear powered cruise missile submarines (SSGN), 3 nuclear powered attack submarines (SSN) and 8 diesel powered attack submarines (SSK) could be employed against targets in UK base Waters. (2)

Note:
(2) JIC 82(6).

UK 1(2)

b. Mining. The Soviet Union has a very large stock of mines which can be laid by submarines, surface ships and aircraft. As the majority of reinforcement and resupply shipping for Europe will pass through UK base waters this is likely to be a high priority area for Soviet mining. Mining can be carried out covertly both before the start of hostilities and after and overtly on the commencement of hostilities.

c. Merchant and Fishing Fleets. The large Soviet Merchant and Fishing Fleets are known to be engaged in intelligence gathering and surveillance in UK base waters in peace and this is likely to be extended in war. Additionally they could engage in:

- (1) Insertion of SPF.
- (2) Mining.
- (3) Support of naval forces.
- (4) Trawling of sea bed surveillance cables.
- (5) Scuttling in strategic positions.

22. Current Maritime Defence Capability. For maritime defence we have:

a. Surface Escorts, ASW Helicopters, Maritime Patrol Aircraft ^(MPA) and a very limited defensive mining capability (using WWII vintage mines) to counter the submarine threat. These forces will be operating almost exclusively in shallow

Note:
(2) JIC 82(6).

water where their effectiveness, both in detection and attack, is limited. The bulk of our ASW forces are declared to NATO and, therefore, cannot be guaranteed to be available exclusively for use in UK base waters. Responsibility for the defence of these waters is divided between CINCHAN and CINCEASTLANT. UK ASW forces immediately available to CINCHAN include 5 escorts and 8 MPA and no ASW helicopters although additional forces may be available at longer notice. CINCHAN assesses (5) that he requires 14 escorts, one missile destroyer, one helicopter carrier, 9 MPA and 24 ASW shore helicopters to carry out his tasks. The Eastern Atlantic is a large area and the UK base waters are only a part. Forces will be allocated by CINCEASTLANT according to the threats and priorities. SACLANT has assessed that there are considerable shortfalls in the forces required to carry out all his tasks simultaneously with an acceptable degree of risk. These shortages will be reflected in the Eastern Atlantic and hence in UK base waters.

b. 36 purpose-built mine countermeasure vessels (MCMV) and 20 vessels taken up from trade in time of tension to counter the mining threat. These will be required to keep open the Clyde (for US/UK SSBNs and SSNs) and the routes and approaches to main Reinforcement/Resupply ports, naval bases and ports handling national supplies. It has been assessed (6) that 80 MCMV (including the 20 taken up from trade) would be required to carry out all tasks simultaneously.

Notes:

(4) DPQ 82 reply.

(5) CINCHAN Force Proposals 83-88.

(6) ORC 34/81. MCM concept and nuclear paper

23. Countering the Threat from Merchant and Fishing Vessels. At present in peacetime there is little we can do to control the activities of Soviet merchant and fishing vessels within UK territorial waters; and they effectively enjoy unlimited access to UK ports. We shall be seeking to prohibit their entry into certain sensitive ports (including those in the Clyde) during the current negotiations on the Anglo-Soviet Treaty of 1968. In addition, Ministers are being invited to agree that Soviet merchant ships should be required to give 48 hours notice of their arrival at any port. If the Russians do not agree to our proposals, it will be necessary to consider legislation. Such restrictions, which could be expanded under emergency powers in a period of tension, will go some way to countering the threat in and around ports but will not prevent hostile activities in territorial waters or on the high seas. Until the declaration of General Alert the only counter to such activities will be by surveillance, which is likely to be very expensive in terms of assets required. But, after General Alert we would have little difficulty in sinking any merchant and fishing vessels considered a threat. It should be noted that no measures are planned at present to control non-Soviet Warsaw Pact shipping in peacetime.

24. Maritime Defence Improvements. Within the next ten years improvements to our maritime defences should include:

- a. Modern torpedoes and active sonars with a better shallow water capability incorporated in the Type 23 frigate, other

new ships and the new EH 101 ASW helicopter to replace the SEA KING.

b. Continuing replacement of the ageing TON class MCMV with the new HUNT class; the Extra Deep Armed Team Sweep minesweeper; and the introduction of the single role mine hunter.

c. The new Continental Shelf mine and improvements to existing mines.

d. The provision of air-refuelling probes and anti-surface-vessel weapons for NIMROD has significantly improved our ASW capability.

The qualitative improvements will increase our capability although there will still be a severe shortage of platforms.

AIR DEFENCE OF THE UK

25. Air Defence Capability. Against the threat at paragraph 4a the NATO air defence system comprising the continental radars, surface-to-air missiles, and continental based fighters, should take a heavy toll of WP aircraft attacking the UK directly from the East. However, the NATO screen is very thin in the Jutland peninsula, enabling tactical routing to reduce WP attrition. Moreover, aircraft such as the BACKFIRE have the range to carry out an indirect approach from the West, thereby avoiding continental air defences completely. The main elements of our current air defence system are:

a. Excluding No 23 Squadron, which is in the Falklands, we have 94 PHANTOM and LIGHTNING fighters in 7 Squadrons at 4 main bases. It is hoped that this number will be increased when current negotiations to buy at least 12 PHANTOM F4J aircraft from the USN are completed.

b. One squadron of BLOODHOUND medium range surface to air missiles (SAM) covering, broadly, the East Coast between the Thames and the Humber. An additional squadron (withdrawn from Germany) will be added this summer; the area covered will remain the same, but there will be more comprehensive coverage within it.

c. Two squadrons of short range RAPIER missiles protecting 2 airfields in Scotland.

d. Ground radars and communications dating mainly from the 1950s and not hardened.

e. 5 SHACKLETON AEW aircraft.

26. Shortcomings in 1983 Air Defences. Our air defence fighters are likely to be outnumbered and have insufficient stocks of air-to-air missiles (AAM); BLOODHOUND only protects a limited area of the UK; only 2 airfields have RAPIER protection; and our air defence radar and communications are susceptible to battle damage.

27. Air Defence Improvements. A major modernisation of the air defence system is now in hand; by the late 1980's we will have:

- a. 150 TORNADO F2 and PHANTOM fighters; increased but still inadequate stocks of more modern air-to-air missiles (SKY FLASH, AIM 9L); plus 72 HAWK training aircraft, fitted with AIM 9L missiles, to assist in air defence tasks by day.
- b. Increased air-to-air refuelling capacity, with TRISTARS and VC10s first supplementing and finally replacing the VULCANS and most of the VICTORS.
- c. 11 NIMROD Airborne Early Warning aircraft and more survivable radars, linked by ECM resistant and secure communications, together with hardened command and control centres.
- d. An additional RAPIER squadron for the RAF, as well as those provided for the defence of USAF bases.

AREAS OF RISK

28. Military. At present, our ability to withstand a determined Warsaw Pact attack is questionable and many likely targets are at risk. The improvement plans outlined will narrow the gap between assessments of the present WP threat and our ability to counter it. Moreover, the public knowledge of these plans will, to an extent, act as a deterrent against attack. However, we must expect the threat to increase with time; already we forecast the first deployment of Soviet cruise missiles within the next 5 years and,

if deterrence failed, even our future forces, as presently planned, could not guarantee to prevent WP forces from achieving severe disruption of the UK base. Nevertheless shortcomings, will be:

a. Air Defence. The need for more fighter aircraft, with adequate weapon stocks, and for increased SAM coverage.

(Paragraph 26).

b. Maritime Defence. A shortage of surface escorts, ASW helicopters, MPA and defensive mines to counter the submarine threat and MCMVs (particularly minehunters) to counter the mining threat. The need to conduct surveillance against WP Merchant and Fishing vessels in UK base waters will stretch our already inadequate forces still further (Paragraph 23). Until after General Alert when the problem can be dealt with by our air and sea forces.

c. Ground Defence. The need for more manpower; weapons; NBC equipment, and survivable communications and War Headquarters at National level and below. Continued over reliance upon plans to return units based overseas and on mobile rather than static guards (paragraphs 17, 18 and 20).

In all areas the quality of equipment is being improved; but qualitative improvements cannot entirely make up for quantitative shortfalls.

29. Civil Preparedness. Civil Defence tasks will make immense demands on manpower which has not yet been identified or earmarked; nor can it be provided from the manpower available to the Services. Furthermore, military effort cannot function fully in either tension or war without considerable civil backing. It is, therefore, important, for that Military effort, that the momentum of current initiatives in the field of Civil Home Defence Planning be maintained and that joint arrangements with the Civil authorities be practised regularly to prove their effectiveness. However, because we have no plans for NBC protection for the civil population even if the above arrangements are fully effective, the use of CW would cause major disruption to civil support of the military.

CONCLUSIONS

30. Improvements are in hand which will enable us to narrow some of the present gaps in our capability, particularly in air defence, by the late 1980s. However, in the face of the developing threat, further enhancements are required. But we must maintain a balanced approach to our commitments in all areas of our defence strategy; further enhancements to UK defence could only be achieved within the planned defence budget by diverting resources from our contribution to NATO on the mainland of Europe, or in the maritime areas of the Eastern Atlantic, or by reducing support for our out of area interests. The interdependence of our National and NATO defensive roles makes any reduction in our NATO contribution a threat to our homeland. The view of the Chiefs of Staff is that our present balance of investment between UK defence and other elements of our strategy is about right.

Annex:

A. Arrangements for the Selection and Protection of Key Points
(2 pages).

ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE SELECTION AND PROTECTION OF KEY POINTS

1. Under the supervision of HDO(KP), Departments draw up in peacetime a list of installations which are considered to have a vital role in war. The criteria for inclusion on this list are very strict and many installations, whose function is duplicated elsewhere, or whose role, whilst very important is not vital, are excluded, for example fuel depots and railway installations. An agreed list is then produced in Whitehall which places KPs under various categories. Of these the most important comprise those installations which have, at any time, a crucial role in enabling the United Kingdom to receive timely warning of an imminent nuclear attack or to carry out a counter-strike. These KPs are given priority for peacetime surveys of their vulnerability and for physical protection measures, as well as for military guarding in tension and war. In the case of many of our nuclear force installations their peacetime protection arrangements do, of course, already involve a measure of military guarding. Thus the priority now given to these KPs accords well with the JIC assessment that they would be the primary targets of the SPF.

2. Other Key Point installations are grouped into those whose major disruption would seriously affect the maintenance and continuity of Government either centrally at any time or in war, regionally; and those considered to have a vital role in enabling the United Kingdom to fulfil its commitment to NATO during tension and war, and those (outside the scope of the JIC assessment) which might require military guarding in the survival period after a nuclear

Attack had taken place on this country. However it must be stressed that many important installations fall outside the scope of these definitions and are therefore not guarded due to the lack of manpower available. These represent potential targets for the SPF.

3. Initially, in a period of tension, protection of KPs would rest with the police. Once such protection was no longer considered adequate to meet the developing threat, a decision would be sought from the Cabinet to introduce military cover in accordance with our plans at some or all of the KPs. A contingency Bill is now being drafted to provide the necessary powers to both the police and the military to deal more effectively with the SPF threat.

4. Work is in hand to improve our arrangements to cater for the threat in tension and war. We are in particular looking at ways of improving our liaison with the civil police and to this end a Home Office paper is currently being staffed to establish a joint police/military concept of operations for use in transition to war and war.

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