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From the Private Secretary

18 April, 1983

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

The Prime Minister had a brief discussion with your Secretary of State, and the Chief of the Defence Staff, today following my letter to you of 5 April about Mr. Heseltine's minute of 24 March and its attachment.

The limitations, described in my letter, on the UK's ability to counter the Soviet military threat were considered. Mr. Heseltine explained that the various plans which were in hand to improve our capability made the picture less sombre (though perhaps not totally reassuring) and said that he would let the Prime Minister have another paper illustrating this point.

Mrs. Thatcher expressed particular interest in the problem of controlling Warsaw Pact shipping in peacetime and Mr. Heseltine undertook to let her have a note on the latest state of discussion of this matter in Whitehall.

I am copying this letter to Tony Rawsthorne (Home Office), John Kerr (H.M. Treasury), Brian Fall (Foreign and Commonwealth Office) and Richard Hatfield (Cabinet Office).

Richard Mottram, Esq.,
Ministry of Defence