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PS/Secretary of State

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11/1/2

SOVIET UNION: CONCERN ABOUT A SURPRISE NATO ATTACK

Thank you for your minute MO14/10 of 27 March which sought advice on the line which the Secretary of State might take at the meeting which the Prime Minister has called on Wednesday, 4 April, to discuss JIC(84)(N)45.

2. Heightened Soviet concern about the possibility of a surprise NATO attack would of course be a very proper cause of concern for Western Governments. But it is I think necessary to consider the strength of the available evidence and the implications of possible NATO reactions carefully.

3.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Soviet reactions to Exercise ABLE ARCHER (an annual NATO command post exercise testing nuclear

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[illegible]

ABLE ARCHER

certainly [REDACTED]

report brings together [REDACTED] which are

5. These reservations notwithstanding, we clearly need to guard against any possibility of Soviet misinterpretation,

however slight the evidence. I would therefore wholly endorse the ^{final} ~~concluding~~ ^{the conclusion of} sentence of the paper which proposes further

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"close examination of the degree and scope of Warsaw Pact reactions to NATO nuclear exercises". The Prime Minister will however wish to consider whether any further steps need to be taken to allay possible Soviet concerns.

6. [REDACTED]

Exercise activity is however crucial not only to the effectiveness of our political and military command structures, but also to the credibility of deterrence. [REDACTED]

7. There is however one possibility that clearly merits discussion which might go some way to allaying possible Soviet concern, and which is compatible both with deterrence and with the Western position on confidence building measures, ie that NATO should inform the Soviet Union on a routine basis of proposed NATO exercise activity involving nuclear play.

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3.

2.

b. exercise activity is a vital element of deterrence; [REDACTED]

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c. nonetheless we must view with unease any evidence,

[REDACTED] of heightened Soviet concern. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

d. there may also be considerable merit in discussing,

[REDACTED] the
possibility that NATO should inform the Soviet Union on
a routine basis of proposed NATO exercise activity involving
nuclear play, as a useful confidence building measure.

DUS(P)

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