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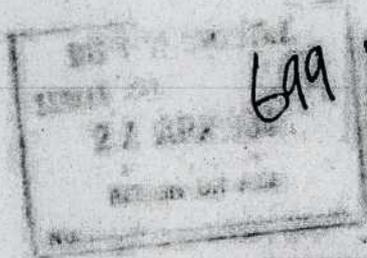
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From the Private Secretary

10 April 1984



14/10
o/r.
1. NA/DCRS (2)
2. SO/DUSI 16 Apr 11/16
3. PA/PDI (wp) 11/4
4. Hd of DUS (S) - for proposal
~~5. ...~~ AGI
We don't seem to have got the right flavour injected!

SOVIET CONCERN ABOUT A SURPRISE NATO ATTACK

The Prime Minister held an ad hoc meeting today which was attended by the Lord President, the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary, the Secretary of State for Defence, Sir Robert Armstrong, [redacted] and "C".

The purpose of the meeting was to consider what action should be taken about the conclusions of the Joint Intelligence Committee in JIC(84)(N)45 of 23 March, 1984 and in particular the Committee's conclusion [redacted]

The Prime Minister recalled that in her conversations with Communist leaders, especially during her visit to Hungary, she had tried to impress upon them the sincerity of the desire of the West for disarmament and the fact that NATO was a defensive organisation which threatened no one. [redacted]

We should consider what could be done to remove the danger that, by mis-calculating Western intentions, the Soviet Union would over-react.

[redacted] explained that there had been some difference of view in the JIC on the weight to be put on the Soviet reaction [redacted]

Nevertheless, the Committee stood by its conclusions in the JIC report under reference. And the unusual nature of the Soviet reaction to Able Archer had been highlighted by a [redacted]

The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary said that, taking account of the evidence [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] he felt that the JIC conclusions must be accepted. It was desirable to discuss the conclusions with the US Government, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] (the Prime Minister felt that insufficient attention might have been paid to the significance of the latter point). On the other hand, it was pointed out that the Russians had just notified the United States for the first time of ICBM flights within the Soviet Union.

Discussion then turned to the action to be taken on the JIC report. It was agreed that officials should meet urgently to consider the nature of an approach to the United States, including the question of [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary would discuss our concerns with [REDACTED] at the two meetings he expected to have with him in May. In preparation for this, HM Ambassador, Washington, would be instructed to go over the ground with the US State Department.

There was a more general need to continue and perhaps intensify HMG's efforts to promote an atmosphere of greater confidence between East and West. The Minister for Trade would visit Moscow in May. The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary would go there in July for discussions with Mr. Gromyko and planned to visit some of the Eastern European countries in September. It was for consideration whether the Prime Minister should invite a senior member of the Politbureau, perhaps Mr. Gorbachev, to visit this country later in the year. The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary was invited to consider whether it would be wise to accelerate our programme of contacts with the Soviet Union. The Prime Minister stressed that we should seek to maintain the momentum created by her own visit to Hungary and the Soviet Union.

I am copying this letter to [REDACTED] (Lord President's Office), [REDACTED] (Ministry of Defence), Sir Robert Armstrong, [REDACTED] and "C".

[REDACTED] Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.