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Prime Minister

5th September 1984

This is a revision of the paper which you justly criticized in July. It is a considerable improvement.

Yes not

Agree that I should circulate it to non-official participants in CP's seminar?
New letter.

CJP 6/9.

FOREIGN POLICY SEMINAR: NATO STRATEGY

Thank you for your letter of 6th August about the Prime Minister's forthcoming Seminar on NATO Strategy.

/ As requested, I attach a revised paper. This concentrates, as the Prime Minister wished, on the question of the continuing validity of the strategy of Flexible Response. I also attach a list of key points which it seems to us might sensibly form the basis for discussion. You may feel it would be worth forwarding these to the outside participants together with the paper itself.

I am copying this letter and the attachments to Colin Budd, (FCO).

Yours ever,

Richard Mottram

(R C MOTTRAM)

C Powell Esq

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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

11 September, 1984.

Foreign Policy Seminar: NATO Strategy

Thank you for your letter of 5 September enclosing a revised paper on the strategy of flexible response for the Seminar on NATO Strategy on 1 October. The Prime Minister is content for the paper to issue, and I am circulating it to the non-official participants in the Seminar.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Colin Budd (Foreign and Commonwealth Office).

Charles Powell

R.C. Mottram, Esq.,
Ministry of Defence.

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FLEXIBLE RESPONSETHE ORIGINS AND NATURE OF FLEXIBLE RESPONSE

1. NATO's security is based on the twin approaches of deterrence and defence. Deterrence seeks to influence decisively and positively the calculation of the leaders of the Soviet Union that they would run an unacceptable degree of risk regardless of the nature of an attack: if deterrence fails, NATO's declared aim is, by carrying out a robust forward defence, to restore the status quo ante using a level of force as far short as possible of an all out strategic nuclear exchange. NATO's present strategy is one of flexibility in response to aggression, and seeks to blend into an overall strategic consensus the disparate elements which form NATO's military and political posture.

2. 'Flexible Response' was adopted in December 1967 after some 'ten years' of debate about the Alliance's strategic posture. The previous strategy - massive nuclear retaliation - which dated from 1956, assigned to NATO's (weak) conventional forces the tasks of:

- a. forcing the aggressor to mobilize for an attack (thereby increasing the warning time to NATO).
- and
- b. holding him as far forward as possible just long enough for the certain and overwhelming nuclear response to be made.

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3. This 'tripwire' was accepted by the Europeans in particular who were able to see that it:

- a. linked the defence of the US inextricably with Europe.
- b. provided a less expensive alternative to maintaining the size of conventional forces that would otherwise have been needed to ensure defeat of a Soviet conventional attack.

But even during the late 50s, developments in Soviet nuclear capabilities were undermining the credibility of tripwire. These encompassed the introduction of Soviet long/medium range bombers, and the development of ICBMs. The attainment in the 1960s by the Soviets of the ability to strike US territory with nuclear weapons (along with their overwhelming conventional forces) destroyed the credibility of 'tripwire' because the deterrent threat that the US would automatically launch a strategic nuclear attack on Russia to defeat conventional aggression had irretrievably lost its force. As de Gaulle was reported to have said "No US President will exchange Chicago for Lyon".

4. Some 10 years lapsed between the first suggestion that NATO should revise its strategy and the adoption of the strategy of flexible response. In the course of that process, described in a recent US Report as "the longest and

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most divisive debate in the history of the Alliance", virtually every issue that has emerged in the current questioning of NATO's strategy was addressed in depth in the Alliance: the reliability of the US nuclear guarantee; the feasibility of achieving a satisfactory conventional balance in Europe; the benefits and risks of first use of nuclear weapons; and the implication for deterrence of stronger conventional defence and a 'higher' nuclear threshold.

5. France has pursued an independent nuclear policy which is akin to 'tripwire'. Although there is potential for more flexible employment options inherent in her modernisation plans and an enhanced role for conventional forces, she remains sceptical about NATO's strategy of flexible response, and the declared role of her theatre weapons remains that of a "final warning" of a strategic nuclear response. Such a policy would not suit NATO's sophisticated theatre nuclear doctrine and is made possible only by the unique position of France who, though outside NATO's military structure, nonetheless enjoys the shelter of the US strategic umbrella and the "glacis" provided by the FRG. Many analysts doubt the credibility of France's nuclear stance, notwithstanding these advantages.

6. There are three key principles underlying NATO's deterrent strategy:

- a. a manifest determination to act jointly and defend NATO's Treaty Area against all forms of aggression.

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- b. a recognisable Alliance capability to respond effectively at all levels of aggression, and to escalate if necessary.
- c. a flexibility in response which would prevent the Soviet Union from predicting with confidence NATO's specific response to aggression, and which will lead the Soviet Union to conclude that an unacceptable degree of risk would be involved regardless of the nature, place and time of an attack.

These three principles are built on a coalescence of political will and military posture. Both aspects must be demonstrable and credible to the potential aggressor (and also to electorates) if NATO's deterrent strategy is to succeed.

7. It is implicit in the Alliance, whose treaty states that "an armed attack against one ... shall be considered an attack against them all", that all members participate on an equal basis in the process of decision-making. And it is also central that the Alliance should send to the Soviet Union clear signals of continuing political cohesion and of its political will to mount direct defence and to escalate where necessary to whatever level is needed to persuade the aggressor to pull back. This demonstration of cohesion - which should not be confused with absolute harmony at all times - must be maintained in peacetime and, critically, in a period of rising tension. Failure to maintain a clear signal, especially during tension, could allow the Soviets to (mis-) calculate that NATO's political determination, and thus its military capacities, would crumble in the face of actual aggression.

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8. There are three basic components of NATO's military posture:

a. conventional forces - to deter and counter as far as possible any Soviet non-nuclear attack by direct defence, with an implicit threat of escalation to the use of nuclear forces.

b. theatre nuclear forces - to provide an additional deterrent to conventional attack, and also to Soviet use of TNF; and to provide NATO with a range of nuclear options short of a strategic exchange, but which demonstrates our willingness to escalate the conflict to the strategic nuclear level if necessary.

c. strategic nuclear forces - to be able to inflict unacceptable damage on the Soviet Union even after a Soviet pre-emptive first strike, and to provide the ultimate threat to deter Soviet aggression.

COMPROMISES IMPLICIT IN FLEXIBLE RESPONSE

9. The conclusions which were reached in 1967 are based on a series of compromises that reflected the (differing) views of the US and its Allies. In some instances the compromises stem from geography: others derive from markedly different political viewpoints. In every case, however, the compromise was built on the desire not to expose cracks between the US and Europe: these same potential differences remain, albeit below the surface, within the Alliance today.

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10. There are some military penalties to be paid in a slavish interpretation of forward defence - a cardinal military precept once hostilities have started is to use depth in defence to give our forces greater protection and more freedom of action - and the resultant deployments in the FRG do not necessarily make best use either of terrain and/or the conventional capacities of the Alliance. But the Europeans, and especially the FRG, with vivid memories of the devastation of two world wars, were (and are) not prepared to accept the principle of a forward 'glacis' of territory: there could be no 'disposable' Western states to act as a buffer between super-powers.

11. Ever since their first efforts at the February 1952 Lisbon North Atlantic Council meeting, Alliance members have never been prepared to provide the resources needed to mount a full conventional defence to a major Soviet attack. The concept of threatened escalation by NATO to the first use of nuclear weapons reflects this fact.

12. There is no defined length to any phase of NATO's response. There is an underlying tension between the US who would wish to delay nuclear exchanges as long as possible (hence their emphasis on building up warstocks in Europe, and the need to reinforce) and the Europeans, especially the FRG, who view with alarm the consequences of a major conventional war fought on their soil. (Henry Kissinger tartly observed that the Europeans would prefer to have a nuclear war fought between the US and the USSR over their heads). These wishes represent the extremes of polarity: there are other elements which although implicit were never addressed in detail; they include:

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- a. the natural preference to defeat the enemy quickly by conventional means as close to NATO's borders as possible.
- b. the need to be able to fight the conventional battle long enough to allow NATO political authorities to make calculated decisions about the employment of nuclear weapons if necessary, and for further reinforcements to arrive.

13. Nor was the impact of 'flexible response' on NATO's maritime posture addressed in detail. Different considerations apply to the conduct of operations on land and at sea; for example, mobility of maritime forces and their relative freedom from geographical constraints provide a wide range of options in tension, transition to war and war - yet the same principles underlying flexible response must apply in both areas.

14. Striking the right balance between ready and in-place forces and rapid reinforcement is no easy matter. Reinforcement is a vital element of deterrence: however, its implementation raises difficult and conflicting issues for decision makers. Its success will depend in no small measure on timely political decisions early in a period of tension which may not prove easy, not least because they may be seen as escalatory. Equally, the costs (political and resource) of in-station forces make it inevitable that heavy reliance will be placed on reinforcement.

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CRITICISMS OF FLEXIBLE RESPONSE

15. Whilst there is clear and unequivocal public support for NATO there are many critics of the West's reliance on nuclear weapons. Critics range from the responsible to the absurd fringes of the peace movements who have no interest whatsoever in the concept of deterrence. It is important, however, even when considering the important contributions to the debate made by the 'responsible' critics, to make a clear distinction between those who doubt the intellectual, political and military validity of the overall strategic concept, and those who merely regard its implementation as deficient. A number of so-called 'alternative strategies' have been propounded by various commentators responsible and mischievous alike. These cover concepts such as: no first use of nuclear weapons; nuclear free zones; rapid moves to new advanced weapons technology (to obviate the need for nuclear, especially battlefield, weapons); unilateral nuclear disarmament.

16. As paragraph 4 indicates, none of these issues is new. However, there are various reasons why public concern has revived in recent years. They include worries about the growth of Soviet military power across the spectrum and about the role of nuclear weapons in NATO strategy following the 1979 decision to modernise NATO INF, as well as US and UK strategic modernisation programmes. There is also a growing aversion to nuclear matters, both civil and military, and an inchoate feeling in some quarters that Arms Control is not being pursued adequately by the Alliance.

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17. When analysing alternative defence strategies, however, it is vital not to address them solely from a western perspective: although the strategy must be credible in Western eyes it is important to state clearly that the most critical analysis, in terms of the efficacy of a strategic concept, is that of the potential aggressor. NATO's objective is to seek to influence Soviet calculations to ensure that Soviet leaders decide that whatever the incentive (which at the moment is not great) the gamble of using the military option would not be worth taking. The litmus test, therefore, of any alternative defence concept is whether it would be more convincing to the Soviet Union. There is no evidence that, since 1967, the Soviet leadership has ever doubted the political will and military capacity of the Alliance to respond robustly to aggression. There is no immediately obvious reason, despite Soviet preponderance in conventional and longer range theatre nuclear forces, and broad strategic nuclear parity, why the Soviets should alter their assessment. And there is nothing in any of the alternative defence concepts that would be any more credible than flexible response in Soviet eyes. Indeed, inasmuch as such concepts could simplify Warsaw Pact operational planning or leave NATO forces at risk, they would work to the Soviets' advantage. This is not to say that there are not areas of weakness which if allowed to go uncorrected might lead to a change in the Soviet perception. Flexible response is only as flexible as the forces provided to put it into effect allow.

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18. That said, powerful and responsible criticisms have been made of NATO's military posture which could have implications for future Alliance policy, and which call into question the ability of the Alliance to meet its current military objectives. It is therefore worth analysing the circumstances under which flexible response may be invalidated:

a. a complete collapse of the strategic balance in favour of the Soviet Union would destroy the threat of ultimate retaliation and would leave the Alliance open to nuclear blackmail.

b. if NATO's theatre nuclear capabilities ceased to provide an appropriate range of options linking conventional and strategic forces the ability of the Alliance to threaten a controlled escalation would be damaged. This could put NATO in the impossible dilemma of suing for peace or launching a strategic nuclear attack because it was left with no adequate intermediate options.

c. a major conventional reduction in Europe could deny the Alliance the ability to undertake a robust direct defence and would in effect be a return to 'tripwire'. It could thereby tempt the Soviet Union to make a quick 'surgical' attack with limited aims confident that the US would not

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risk a strategic nuclear exchange in such circumstances, though such a scenario would need to assume that the UK's and French strategic forces would also be similarly inhibited.

d. A perception by the Soviets - rightly or wrongly - that NATO's political will would collapse in the face of a major conventional attack would obviously be a disastrous development: and it follows therefore that the Alliance should seek to foster and demonstrate its political cohesion as one of its highest priorities.

e. a force posture in any Region, for example on the Flanks, so weak as to inhibit an Alliance response to a limited Soviet incursion.

19. We believe that the overall strategic concept is sound - indeed there is neither evidence to support an early obituary, nor any available alternative strategy that would score in the same way as flexible response in Soviet calculations. But we should analyse against current criticisms whether any changes need to be made to NATO's military posture to enhance the strategy. This paper does not address the highly complex issues of strategic nuclear forces, and the US Strategic Defence Initiative: suffice it to say that the retention of broad strategic nuclear stability with a secure second-strike capability between the

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super-powers is a necessary pre-condition of the NATO's deterrent strategy. The three key areas which need to be addressed are conventional forces and theatre nuclear capabilities; and regional imbalances within the Alliance.

20. Criticisms of the conventional leg of the triad of forces is based on evidence of: sheer numerical inferiority; limited sustainability; low level of equipment standardisation and interoperability; inadequate reserves; blunting of the qualitative edge. An understandable (and sometimes automatic) reaction is to seek to extend our conventional capacity simply by spending more on defence. For a wide variety of reasons, this is impossible to achieve evenly across the Alliance, and our approach has been to question whether the UK and NATO are getting the maximum value for the already substantial resources deployed. Could the Alliance undertake its conventional roles more rationally - eg by role specialisation among nations, and by increasing the volume of efficient equipment collaboration? And how should the Alliance balance its various needs for powerful land forces against the equally strong claims for air defence and a strong maritime capability?

21. A separate but related issue is whether it is in NATO's interest, given the geopolitical compromises and subliminal tensions inherent in flexible response, to seek to enhance conventional capabilities to make it possible to fight an extended conventional war. Would it actually be preferable to relying on early use of nuclear weapons? Would this be likely to increase the risk of

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war - either by appearing to threaten the Soviet Union or by making the nuclear element less credible? It is at least arguable that excessive reliance on conventional capabilities could appear to demonstrate that the West had lost its resolve to escalate to nuclear weapons, and therefore that the Soviet Union could expect to be able to wage a conventional war in Europe without the threat of nuclear attacks against its homeland. It is also possible to argue that such a strengthening of NATO's conventional forces, especially if matched by the Soviet Union, would not necessarily extend the period of conventional hostilities, but merely increase its intensity. War fighting capabilities would be enhanced, but should deterrence fail, early recourse to nuclear weapons might still be needed.

22. Evidently there is a balance to be struck here - but, equally, it is a matter of judgement whether overall, despite all the criticisms, NATO's conventional forces are excessively weak (though see 23 below). There are plainly many areas, such as sustainability and interoperability, where NATO can and must do much better. But we must not assume that NATO's conventional defences would be a push-over for the Soviets. If the present levels of expenditure on nuclear systems were used to bolster conventional forces, the switch would produce only relatively modest enhancements in our conventional capabilities. At the same time the UK would be denuded of her ultimate national retaliatory capability.

23. The principal criticisms of theatre nuclear weapons are based on doubts, as expressed for example by McNamara, on the utility of very short range or

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battlefield systems. Although many studies have been undertaken, and the issues aired thoroughly, no adequate alternative in terms of deterrence to NATO's possession of some battlefield nuclear weapons has been advanced. There has been a gradual reduction in such weapons in Europe in recent years, and this will increase in pace over the next few years. But in considering the role of battlefield weapons it is important to identify likely Soviet perceptions. The removal of the short range nuclear threat would allow the WP to mass conventional forces for attack with relative impunity, while NATO forces would still be at risk from comparable Soviet systems. Whilst there is a case for further reductions in such systems it has not been demonstrated that it would be to NATO's advantage to renounce such a capability in its entirety.

24. There are wide disparities between the different NATO regions in terms of force levels, equipment standards, and overall defensive posture. It must follow from this that those areas which are weakest - notably North Norway and Eastern Turkey - could present comparatively easy targets should the Soviet Union wish to test NATO cohesion and the level of response. This is an acute difficulty for NATO, and it could present serious difficulties for the Alliance should the Soviets seek to probe Alliance resolve. Would it be credible for NATO to make a major military response in another theatre to, say, a Soviet incursion into Finnmark? Should NATO plan to seize a 'countervailing' area of strategic interest to the Soviet Union, or take appropriate measures at sea? Could NATO take any credible military measures in such circumstances? Is it possible to

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rectify the regional imbalances? How should Norway's defences be strengthened? Should the Alliance provide additional military aid to Turkey? The questions can be easily posed, although there are no straightforward answers. However, it is important that NATO should maintain its ability to deploy specialist reinforcement forces as a tangible demonstration of politico-military cohesion and its will to give effect to Article 5.

25. Two further areas need to be addressed: NATO's stance on out of area matters and burden-sharing.

26. The threat to Alliance interests outside the NATO area is acknowledged by NATO. However, it has no adequate collective mechanism for handling such crises as Afghanistan. This places the Alliance at a disadvantage in that it presents options for the Soviet Union to test Western resolve without running the risk of a united NATO response. Thus the responsibility for any military action will remain with those Allies who are able to respond to a crisis out of area in consultation with other friendly powers, leaving NATO, EEC and other fora to consider what collective political support can be given. Nevertheless, the potential drawdown of reinforcement forces (particularly the US RDF) faces the Alliance with an acute dilemma in crises out of area.

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27. There is growing evidence that the Alliance collectively needs to devote greater efforts to ensuring that the risks and burdens (as well as the benefits) of membership are shared equally between members. There are obvious transatlantic ramifications to this as manifested by the Nunn/Cohen resolutions; it is also an intra European problem. The political, military and resource implications are considerable.

CONCLUSION

28. Analysts, both serious and mischievous, enjoy writing obituaries about NATO's strategy. None has yet, however, advanced any credible alternative to the strategy of flexible response. This is no surprise: flexible response is designed to provide as many options as possible to the defender, and every alternative that has yet been propounded would reduce flexibility in varying measures. Most efforts to debunk flexible response misunderstand the fundamentals of the strategy: it does not commit NATO to a preordained sequence of responses, conventional to nuclear, and it does not require NATO to match the WP system for system at every level. Above all, there is no absolute nuclear threshold. Flexible Response provides NATO commanders and political authorities with a wide range of options for response to aggression. Clearly, the stronger and more enduring the conventional leg, the longer the time available to NATO to consider other (especially nuclear) options: but paradoxically there is a danger that over reliance on increased conventional forces could also weaken deterrence because the Soviets might assume NATO was losing the will to resort to nuclear weapons if necessary.

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29. Given that NATO's objectives are to deter aggression, there is no empirically verifiable formula which will guarantee that the Alliance's success over the last 35 years will be replicated in the next 35 years. But, two key points stand out from our analysis which point the way ahead. In order to preserve its political and military credibility NATO must preserve and nourish the two primary links on which the Alliance is founded: the political links between Europe and the USA (and within Europe) and the military links between conventional and nuclear capabilities. The efforts made by the Soviet Union to de-couple Europe from the USA by attempting to block INF modernisation vividly demonstrates that their own analysis has identified the same key elements in NATO's future posture.

Finale. "Take but degree away, untune that string and hark what discord follows."

30. The credibility of the strategy of flexible response depends crucially on convincing the Soviet Union.

- that NATO has sufficient material resources to respond to attack, to go on responding, and to raise the stakes if necessary.

- that NATO has the political will to use the formidable military assets at its disposal.

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In these circumstances, NATO can therefore ensure that, as the IISS judges "military aggression (would be) a highly risky undertaking the consequences for an attacker would be unpredictable, and the risks, particularly of nuclear escalation, incalculable".(1)

31. The Chiefs of Staff recently reaffirmed that in their judgement no credible alternative to flexible response exists, but acknowledged that there were a number of weaknesses in its implementation which detract from the inherent flexibility required which needed to be addressed and overcome; these included sustainability, and mobilisation and reinforcement measures.

32. In sum, there is no reason to judge that, in Soviet eyes, flexible response has ceased to be credible: but, equally, we must not be complacent about the present state of NATO's defences and we must continue to give priority to areas such as sustainability, interoperability, efficient use of NATO's resources and effective equipment collaboration to ensure that NATO's posture remains as credible to the Soviet Union in the next decades as it evidently has been until now.

(1) Military Balance 83/84.

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ISSUES FOR DISCUSSION

1. In what way (if any) are the circumstances surrounding conventional, theatre nuclear and strategic forces in 1984 different from 1967?
2. Is Flexible Response the right strategy; are there any credible alternatives given the geo-political realities? Are there any lessons to be learnt from French strategic and nuclear thinking?
3. Is there any evidence that Soviet perceptions of NATO's credibility have changed? What is their likely risk analysis?
4. Is it necessary to undertake further conventional improvements in Europe to maintain credibility of Flexible Response?
5. Is NATO's political solidarity under threat from the weaker members? If so how can this division be countered both politically and militarily?
6. Are NATO governments doing enough to reassure publics of the viability of NATO strategy?
7. Is NATO doing enough to maintain the primary linkages both between Europe and USA and between conventional and nuclear response?

SEMINAR ON NATO STRATEGY

Official participants

The Prime Minister
Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary
Secretary of State for Defence
Mr. Richard Luce, Minister of State, FCO
The Rt. Hon. John Stanley, Minister of
State for the Armed Forces
Mr. Geoffrey Pattie, Minister of State
for Defence Procurement
Sir Antony Acland
Sir Clive Whitmore
Chief of the Defence Staff
Sir Percy Cradock
Sir John Graham
Mr. Bryan Cartledge
Mr. Charles Powell

Non-official participants

Professor Lawrence Freedman
Professor Sir Hermann Bondi
Sir Arthur Hockaday
Dr. Robert O'Neill
Admiral Sir James Eberle
Professor Peter Nailor
Professor Laurence Martin
Lord Cameron of Balhousie
Sir Clive Rose



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MO 9/13

1st August 1984

New Charter,

FOREIGN POLICY: NATO STRATEGY

In your letter of 19th June to Peter Ricketts, you asked for a short paper to serve as a framework for discussion at a seminar on NATO strategy to be held by the Prime Minister at Chequers.

I attach a short paper prepared by officials here which addresses the issues referred to in your letter and, as you requested, poses questions as much as attempting to answer them. Also enclosed is a copy of the text of the key NATO document on the meaning of flexible response (MC14/3) which the Prime Minister might find of interest but which, because of its classification, we would not propose to circulate to the outside participants at the seminar itself. The Defence Secretary has already separately forwarded to the Prime Minister a more extensive and wider ranging paper by the Chiefs of Staff which addresses these issues.

The Defence Secretary will wish himself to give further thought to these problems in the Autumn in the run-up to the publication of next year's Statement on the Defence Estimates in which he would intend to include a full discussion of the basis of our present defence policy and its continuing relevance for the future. Given the Prime Minister's wish to have papers for the Chequers seminar before the Summer break, I am, as we discussed, forwarding the attachments to you now: the Defence Secretary may wish to add to them in due course prior to the seminar itself.

You also asked for advice about outside experts who might participate in this session. We and the FCO would suggest the following:

Professor Michael Howard Regius Professor of Modern History and Fellow of Oriel College, Oxford and leading authority on military history and strategy;

Charles Powell Esq



Professor Lawrence Freedman Professor of War Studies,
King's College, London and perhaps Britain's foremost
authority on nuclear strategy;

Professor Sir Hermann Bondi Chairman of the Natural
Environment Research Council, Master of Churchill College,
Cambridge and a former Chief Scientific Adviser, MOD;

Sir Arthur Hockaday 2nd PUS, MOD 1973-76. As Assistant
Secretary General of Defence Planning and Policy, NATO in
the mid 60s, Sir Arthur played a central role in the
preparation of MC 14/3, the basic flexible response document;

Dr Robert O'Neill Director, International Institute for
Strategic Studies.

I am copying this letter and the attachments to Len Appleyard (FCO).

Yours etc.

Richard Mottram

(R C MOTTRAM)
Private Secretary

F P Strategy Pt 2



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POINTS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Is Flexible Response the right strategy: are there any credible alternatives given the geo-political realities?
2. In what way (if any) are the circumstances surrounding conventional, theatre nuclear and strategic forces in 1984 different from 1967?
3. Is there any evidence that Soviet perceptions of NATO's credibility have changed? What is their likely risk analysis?
4. Is it necessary to undertake further conventional improvements in Europe to maintain credibility of Flexible Response?
5. Is NATO's political solidarity under threat from the weaker members? If so how can this division be countered both politically and militarily?
6. Are NATO governments doing enough to reassure publics of the viability of NATO strategy?
7. Is NATO doing enough to maintain the primary linkages both between Europe and USA and between conventional and nuclear response?

1. The Intellectual Foundation of Flexible Response.

NATO security policy is based on deterrence and defence and is essentially reactive. Unlike Soviet doctrine it has no concept of pre-emption or of seizing the military initiative in a crisis. Prime aim is to prevent war; secondary aim, should aggression occur, is to restore deterrence short of an all out nuclear war.

The North Atlantic Treaty limits the Alliance to operations within a defined geographic area. The threat to Alliance interests outside the NATO area is acknowledged by NATO, but the responsibility for any military action remains with the individual members of the Alliance who have the military capacity to intervene.

The strategy of flexible response (set out in MC14/3 attached) was adopted in 1967. It replaced the "tripwire" doctrine of massive nuclear retaliation in response to aggression which had ceased to be credible with attainment of strategic parity by the Soviets. At that time, there was also a theatre nuclear and conventional imbalance in the Soviet's favour. Parallels with 1984 are striking; in neither year could the Alliance claim that it had escalation dominance. (ie. the higher up the 'ladder' of escalation, the stronger NATO's military position becomes.) The strategy contains some important compromises (see 5 below) resulting from geo-political realities but its adoption followed searching public enquiry and intensive strategic analysis. That process of analysis has continued, most recently in a major review this year by the Chiefs of Staff of the UK's contribution to, and strategy within, NATO.

2. Strategic Objectives of Flexible Response.

Aim is preserve peace and provide for security of NATO area by a credible deterrence, effected by persuading the potential aggressor that the risks he would run from his aggression would be far greater than anything he could hope to gain from it. This means confronting any possible, threatened or actual aggression ranging from covert operations to all out nuclear war, with adequate NATO forces. Three key principles:

- a. manifest determination to act jointly and defend NATO area against all forms of aggression;
- b. a recognisable Alliance capability to respond effectively regardless of level of aggression;
- c. a flexibility which will prevent potential aggressors predicting with confidence NATO's specific response to aggression, and which will lead him to conclude that an unacceptable degree of risk would be involved regardless of nature of the attack.

These represent a coalescence of political will and military capability. Both elements are critical; both must be declaratory and credible to East (deterrent) and West (public reassurance).

3. Military Posture.

There are three components to NATO's military posture:

- a. Conventional forces: to deter and counter as far as possible any Soviet non-nuclear attack by direct defence and threat of escalation to nuclear war;

- b. theatre nuclear forces; to provide an additional deterrent to conventional attacks and a deterrent to Soviet use of theatre nuclear forces and to provide NATO with a range of options for the use of nuclear weapons short of the ultimate strategic exchange.
- c. strategic nuclear forces; to be able to inflict unacceptable damage on the Soviet Union even after a pre-emptive Soviet first strike.

All three components are crucially inter-linked; and for flexible response to remain credible, each level must be capable of fulfilling its required role. If one component (eg. theatre nuclear forces) is ineffective, the credibility of both conventional defence, with its implicit threat of escalation, and strategic nuclear forces, which are of their nature ultimate weapons, is eroded to dangerous levels. The Chiefs of Staff strategic review reaffirmed the importance to deterrence of the UK's contribution to all three components.

4. Political Will.

It is implicit in the nature of the Alliance that all members participate on an equal basis in the process of decision making. Equally, it is essential for the Alliance to make a clear demonstration, as an unmistakable signal to the Soviet Union, of:

- political cohesion
- burden sharing
- risk sharing and
- the will to mount direct conventional defence and the preparedness to continue to escalate NATO's response to the strategic level. Internally the Alliance must show its member states that the same political determination can be maintained in times of crisis.

5. Compromises implicit in Flexible Response.

There are a number of compromises in flexible response drawn from geo-political realities and concerns as valid for the foreseeable future as they were in 1967:

- a. Given Soviet strategic nuclear parity, the US would not accept a strategy which immediately risked the US homeland in the event of a limited conventional assault; moreover, such a strategy would be militarily and politically incredible and morally repugnant;
- b. Forward defence reflects continental European, especially FRG, concerns that there cannot be any "disposable" or "vassal" Western states acting as a buffer between super-powers;
- c. The concept of possible escalation by NATO to the first use of nuclear weapons reflects the fact that Alliance members have never been willing to provide the resources needed to mount a full conventional defence to a major Soviet attack;

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d. MC14/3 never defines the length of any phase of NATO's response. There is an underlying tension between at one extreme the US, who would wish to delay nuclear exchanges for as long as possible (hence their emphasis on building up stocks of conventional weapons in Europe and on the need to be able to reinforce), and at the other, the Europeans, especially the FRG, who would not wish to see a prolonged conventional war in Europe (although they equally fear a nuclear war limited to Europe). There are options between these two extremes which reflect the need to fight a conventional battle long enough to make rational decisions about escalation.

6. Has Flexible Response ceased to be credible?

There is widespread concern that the tenets of Flexible Response - notably the conventional element of the triad of forces - no longer constitute a realistic defence posture, and that it has reverted to something akin to an extended "tripwire". Much of the debate has focussed on the 1979 decision to modernise NATO's Long Range Theatre Nuclear Forces, as well as US (and UK) Strategic modernisation programmes, and an inchoate feeling that Arms Control is not being pursued adequately by the Alliance.

Although public opinion in Western democracies cannot be dismissed (indeed, it is necessary for it to be reassured), the aim of a deterrent strategy is to influence decisively and positively the calculations of the Soviet Union. In analysing, however, how the Soviet Union might address such a calculation, three factors are relevant:

a. flexible response caters for a wide range of contingencies ranging from a minor incursion involving conventional forces only, to an overwhelming attack leading very rapidly to the need for resort to a strategic exchange. Where NATO stands in its ability to respond effectively to any of these options is a function of the relationship between NATO and Warsaw Pact forces, and not just NATO in isolation.

b. flexible response does not require a specific pre-ordained graduated (or inflexible) response; it does not of itself commit NATO to using any particular weapon system (especially nuclear) at any given stage; and it does not require NATO to match every WP system with an equivalent Western counterpart. This implies;

c. flexible response has no "nuclear threshold" as such. Instead, it presents NATO's military and political authorities with a range of options. The stronger and more enduring NATO's conventional capability, the longer the time that is then available to the Alliance for it to decide whether or not to exercise any nuclear options. Excessive concern in the West about the "nuclear threshold" could lead Soviet analysts to calculate that NATO's deterrent options had been circumscribed to the point of incredibility; on the other hand, dismissal of conventional effort is a step back to the notion of "tripwire".

7. Soviet analysis would need to question the same areas that have been scrutinised in the current Western debate. Taking each "leg" of NATO's force structure, the main questions that need to be addressed are:

a. Conventional Forces:

- Are NATO's conventional forces strong enough to make direct defence feasible? (Assessing the Military Balance is a complex task; see extract from SDE 84 at Annex. Whilst a potential aggressor could achieve local superiority there is no reason to believe that the Soviets perceive, in terms of the broader calculus, the present balance as giving them a certainty of success, nor that NATO would easily succumb to a conventional attack, even on a massive scale).
- If they are, how far does that depend upon timely reinforcement and how confident can we be that these reserves are adequate and that necessary decisions will be taken to despatch reinforcements when they are needed?
- If direct defence does not look feasible and if early recourse to nuclear weapons is not an option that can be publicly sustained what can be done to strengthen the Alliance's conventional capability?
- The questions above notwithstanding, is there a danger that over-emphasis on strengthening conventional capability will actually weaken deterrence because the Soviets will assume that the Alliance is losing the will to resort to nuclear weapons if necessary?

b. Theatre Nuclear Forces.

- What role is there for battlefield nuclear systems? Are they credible?
- Whatever the answer on battlefield nuclear systems does it matter that there should be a very large numerical discrepancy between Soviet and NATO theatre nuclear forces? Does such disparity suggest that escalation is an unreal concept because at each stage the Russians could still hit NATO harder than NATO could hit the Russians?
- If the disparity doesn't matter, well and good. But if it does, and if the answer is to build up NATO theatre nuclear forces, then is there a danger of weakening deterrence through the suggestion that some kind of balance between European based nuclear forces is being sought and the importance of US strategic forces can be correspondingly reduced?

c. Strategic Forces.

- does the lack of US strategic superiority undermine flexible response (even though achievement of parity by Soviets made tripwire incredible)?
- are strategic forces adequately linked by credible conventional and theatre nuclear forces to the overall NATO military posture?
- is the USA prepared to use its strategic nuclear forces, and risk reprisals, to defend Europe?
- How do UK and French strategic forces complicate Soviet analysis?

The Chiefs of Staff concluded from their review that flexible response is still valid, will continue to be so for the foreseeable future and that no credible alternative is foreseen. They recognised weaknesses in all NATO regions and identified ways in which they might be overcome. However we have no reason to judge that, in Soviet eyes, flexible response has ceased to be credible but equally we cannot afford to be complacent.

d. There is a need for public reassurance on this score but public and official concern about credibility and role of nuclear weapons is not new. Interesting that SDE 1966 states: "Until progress is made towards disarmament, the only alternative to NATO's present dependence on nuclear weapons would be a massive build up of its conventional forces in Western Europe. Even if Britain, were prepared to face the heavy economic cost of this alternative, NATO as a whole is not willing to do so. A decision by NATO to increase its conventional forces in this way could in any case stimulate an arms race in Europe, since the Warsaw Pact powers would probably follow suit. It would provide no protection if the aggressor himself decided to use nuclear weapons first." Plus ca change, plus c'est la meme chose.

- in face of Soviet strategic/INF systems does NATO have any alternative to maintaining similar capabilities? What effect will SDI and other developments in space have on the strategic balance and the concept of flexible response in the longer term?

8. Chemical Warfare

NATO relies on its conventional and nuclear (and very limited US national CW) forces to deter a CW attack. CW, however, presents special problems in terms of flexible response because of the wide span of the threats it encompasses - ranging from a small local attack (to which a nuclear response would hardly be credible) to a massive CW strike (to which a nuclear response could well be appropriate). MC 14/3 calls for passive defensive measures against CW; and for a limited retaliatory CW capability. The key question is whether NATO's current posture is credible, or whether a more potent CW capability to respond to any CW attack is needed.

9. Political Analysis.

Underpinning the analysis of NATO's conventional and nuclear military capabilities, the Soviet Union must make an overall assessment of NATO's political will to reinforce, to resist, to escalate, and ultimately to threaten Armageddon. NATO must, to remain credible at all levels, demonstrate its political unity in its defence posture:

- failure to maintain political solidarity at a time of crisis would be tantamount to defeat, as NATO would be unable to mount a credible conventional or nuclear defence.

- in this context the derogation by some Allies of their nuclear responsibilities, especially LRTNF, and unwillingness to share in some nuclear tasks is disturbing.

- every effort must be made to re-emphasise political solidarity of Alliance.

10. Linkage.

Such analysis leads to the inescapable conclusion that NATO must nourish and maintain as central to its survival, two primary linkages:

- political: between Europe and the USA (and within Europe)
- military: between conventional and nuclear capabilities.

The efforts made by the Soviet Union to de-couple Europe from the USA over LRTNF modernisation demonstrate vividly that their own analysis has reached identical conclusions.

11. Alternative to Flexible Response. A number of analysts have put forward some alternative defence concepts and strategies. The main ones are briefly criticised below against the key criteria for strategic viability:

a. Nuclear Weapon Free Zone/Unilateral Nuclear Disarmament.

- commits NATO vastly to increasing the level of its conventional forces (and to prospect of equally devastating conventional war in Europe); with unrealistic resource costs.

- no guarantee the other side would not cheat;
 - Soviet homeland is only put at risk from US strategic systems;
 - it offers no defence against nuclear blackmail or even massive conventional threat.
- b. No first use of Nuclear Weapons/"Just Defence"
- again, commits NATO to increasing the size of its conventional forces;
 - does not avoid the need to retain nuclear weapons (for use in response);
 - impossible to verify an opponent's intention.
- c. Emerging Technology/New Tactical Concepts.

Technology can help improve conventional posture and might reduce role of battlefield nuclear weapons. Essential value of new tactical concepts is to enhance conventional element in flexible response. But:

- does not subsume strategic or LRTNF balance;
- does not provide a defence alone against nuclear threat.

The key question to ask is: would the Soviet Union feel more comfortable with any of these postures than with flexible response, and if so, why?

11. Current work in NATO to enhance Flexible Response.

NATO is in the process of modernising all three elements of its triad of forces. In the strategic nuclear area the US MX and the US/UK Trident II programmes will contribute to preserving Alliance/WP strategic parity. The Alliance has also successfully begun to deploy its new theatre nuclear weapons (GLCMs and Pershing IIs). Against this background, particular attention is being paid to improving NATO's conventional posture through:

- a. looking at potential for sensible and affordable exploitation of Emerging Technologies. A further report will be submitted to NATO Ministers in December;
- b. new tactical concepts are under development; and NATO's Military Authorities are preparing a 'conceptual framework' to meld new concepts and long term procurement plans into a cohesive whole against clear priorities;
- c. improvements are being made to the coordination and forward projection of defence planning as part of NATO's continuing efforts to improve output and value for money;

d. following the UK initiative on armaments cooperation, nations are seeking to enhance the harmonisation of operational requirements and to extend the scope of equipment collaboration through the IEPG and Eurogroup. The EFA is an instance of the potential for collaboration.

12. Conclusions.

a. Flexible response is only as flexible as its military and political contributory elements allow. It is threatened or becomes invalid in one or more of four circumstances:

a. a collapse of the strategic balance;

b. NATO's theatre nuclear capabilities cease to provide a spectrum of options for deterrence and credible linkage between the conventional and strategic nuclear forces;

c. a major conventional reduction in Europe, which would put at risk direct defence and coupling;

d. evidence that NATO's political cohesion would collapse in face of conventional attack.

b. Of these four circumstances, (b) above has come closest to threatening the credibility of flexible response in recent years; and that is being rectified by NATO's deployment of Pershing II and cruise missiles. Barring successful congressional pressure to withdraw US troops from Europe, we do not face the danger of a, b or c in the foreseeable future.

But the Alliance's conventional effort has come under increasing scrutiny in recent months; and we must guard against the danger that lack of confidence by the Alliance in the credibility of its conventional defence will lead to an erosion of political will and cohesion and allow the Russians to calculate that a conventional attack will not carry with it a major risk of escalation.

There would also be dangers in the combined effect of a little of each of the three circumstances at a, b and c above: significant Soviet strategic superiority, major Soviet superiority in TNF and some reduction in conventional forces in Europe. The combined effect could again be to undermine the political will and cohesion of the NATO Governments. The credibility of the strategy of flexible response depends on convincing the Soviet Union of two things:

- that NATO has sufficient material resources to respond to attack, to go on responding, and to raise the stakes if necessary;

- that NATO has the political will to use the men and equipment at its disposal.

If the NATO governments can demonstrate that they could and would respond, and that they have the forces to do so, NATO can ensure that:

c. The Russians must continue to conclude, as the IISS judges, that "military aggression (would be) a highly risky undertaking the consequences for an attacker would be unpredictable, and the risks, particularly of nuclear escalation, incalculable" (Military Balance 83/1

The Chiefs of Staff concluded from their review that flexible response is still valid, will continue to be so for the foreseeable future and that no credible alternative is foreseen. They recognised weaknesses in all NATO regions and identified ways in which they might be overcome. However we have no reason to judge that, in Soviet eyes, flexible response has ceased to be credible but equally we cannot afford to be complacent.

d. There is a need for public reassurance on this score but public and official concern about credibility and role of nuclear weapons is not new. Interesting that SDE 1966 states: "Until progress is made towards disarmament, the only alternative to NATO's present dependence on nuclear weapons would be a massive build up of its conventional forces in Western Europe. Even if Britain, were prepared to face the heavy economic cost of this alternative, NATO as a whole is not willing to do so. A decision by NATO to increase its conventional forces in this way could in any case stimulate an arms race in Europe, since the Warsaw Pact powers would probably follow suit. It would provide no protection if the aggressor himself decided to use nuclear weapons first." Plus ca change, plus c'est la meme chose.

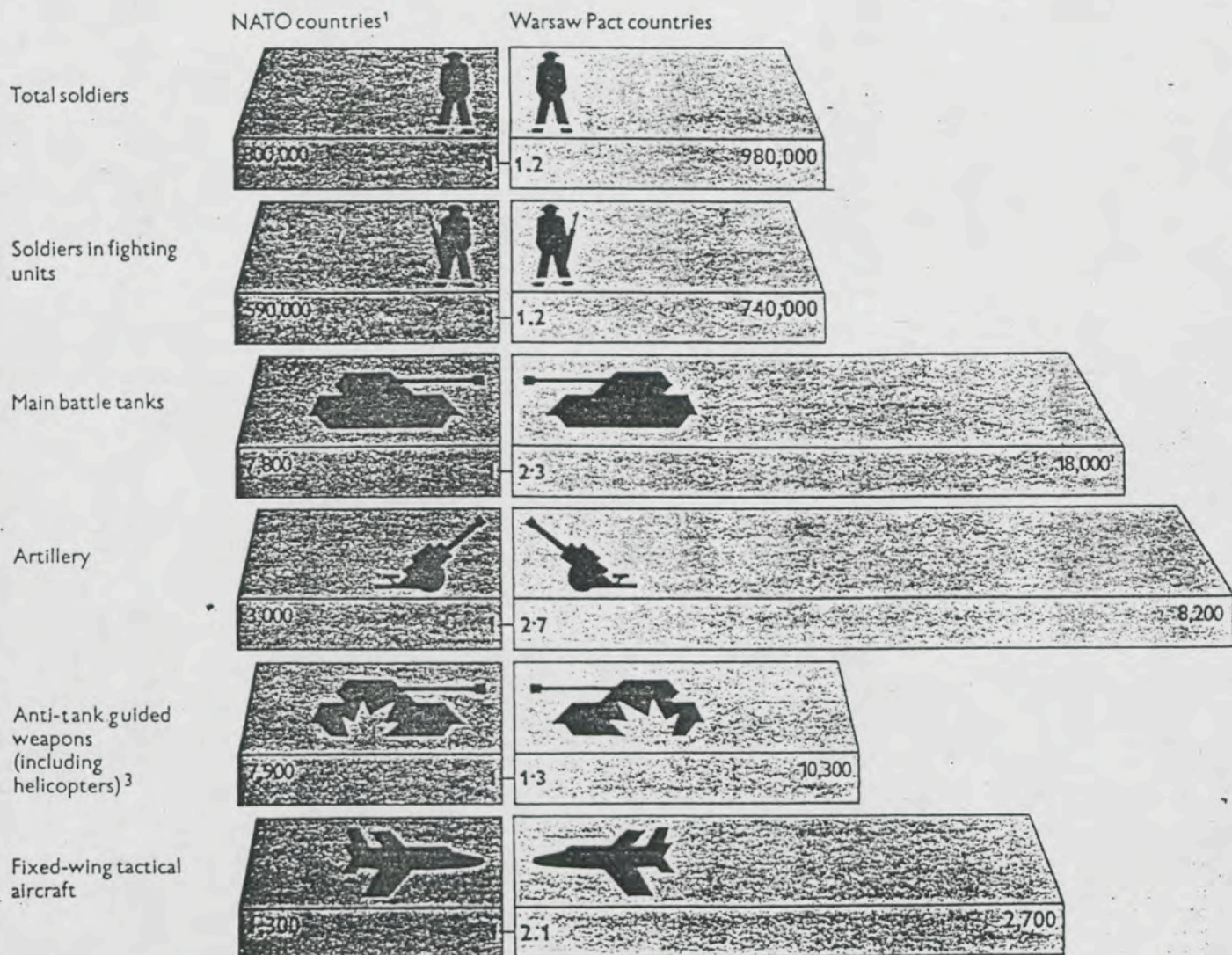
Annex A

The Balance of Forces Between East and West

1. Drawing up an accurate picture of the military balance between the Warsaw Pact and NATO is a complex matter. A complete assessment of the global power balance would involve taking into account forces deployed worldwide; both the United States and the Soviet Union, for example, maintain substantial forces in Asia whose existence and roles are of indirect but nonetheless considerable importance to the military situation in Europe. Even if attention is confined to the European theatre, a numerical comparison of forces can never constitute a complete assessment of the military balance. Many other factors can affect NATO's capability to deter and defend, or

conversely the Soviet leadership's assessment of the strength of NATO's forces. The quality of men — their morale and motivation, their standard of training, the way they are led — is both crucial and unquantifiable. Equally important is the quality of the equipments they use; factors such as range, reliability, technical sophistication and age can count for much more than bare numbers. In the case of Soviet dual-capable nuclear delivery systems, it is impossible to determine precisely what proportions might be used in the conventional and nuclear roles. A further consideration is the ability to sustain a conflict, which covers a spectrum of concerns from spares and stocks at the front to the underlying

Figure 9 The Balance of Forces on the Central Front



¹Including French Forces in the Federal Republic of Germany but excluding the Berlin garrison, which is not declared to NATO

²Includes some Warsaw Pact tanks in training units and storage which would be available for operational use

³Only weapons which are, or have the capability of being, vehicle or helicopter mounted are included

national economic and industrial base. Geography, too, cannot be ignored. The Soviet Navy has to face the handicap of widely dispersed bases and restricted egress to the high seas. Conversely, short lines of supply and reinforcement would give the Soviet Union and her Warsaw Pact allies an enormous advantage in any conflict on the continent of Europe. Finally, in any land conflict the attacker, despite the advantage of surprise, would normally require considerable local numerical superiority over the defender, whilst at sea it is the defender who needs the advantage of numbers. These qualifications and limitations must be borne in mind when considering the following summary of the numerical balance of forces between NATO and the Warsaw Pact.

THE CONVENTIONAL BALANCE

Land/Air Forces

2. Figure 9 shows the balance of conventional forces at the end of 1983 on the Central Front. Among the major developments in Warsaw Pact forces, an improved tank has recently appeared with the Soviet forces in Eastern Europe with enhanced firepower and protection. Most Soviet units in Eastern Europe are now equipped with T64 or T72 tanks, and the latter are also starting to appear in the non-Soviet Warsaw Pact inventories. New self-propelled artillery pieces are being introduced to the forward area. There has been a significant increase in the number of airborne and

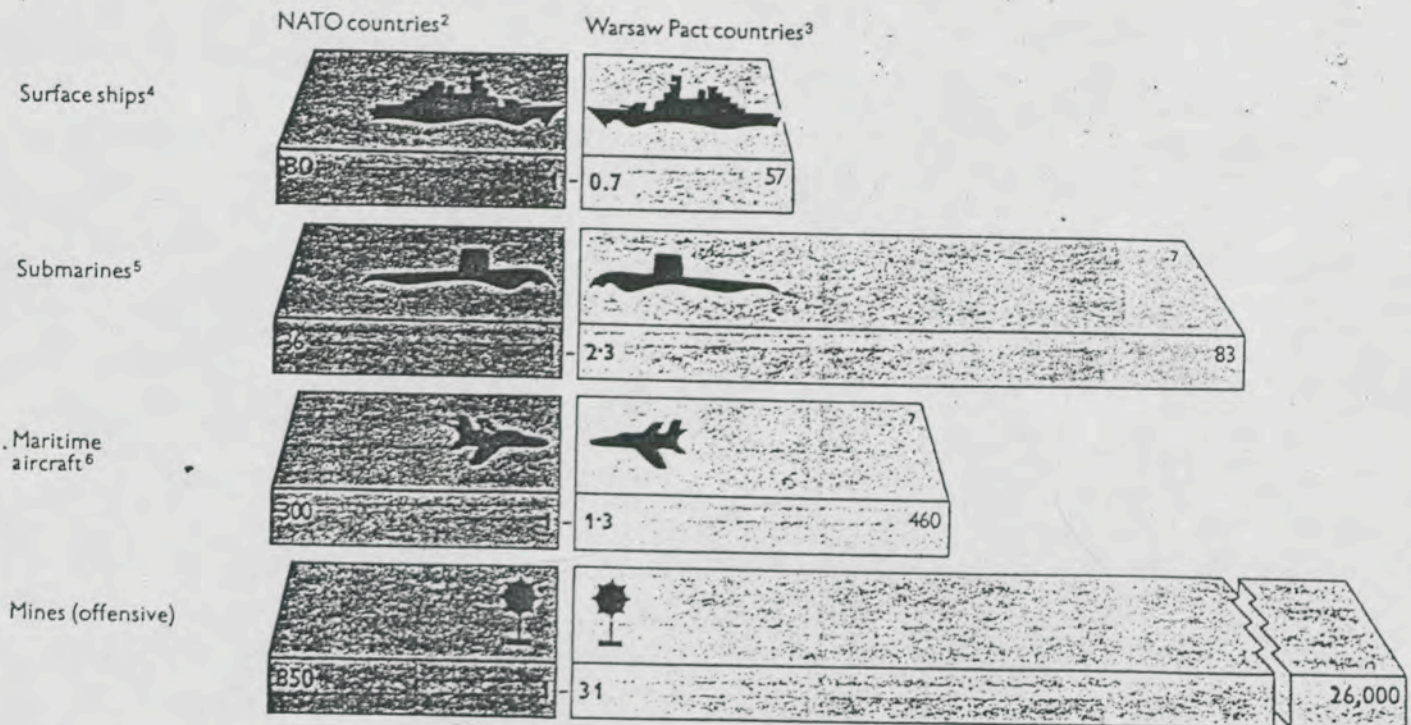
parachute troops available for operations behind NATO lines, with a doubling in the last four years to 500 of the number of attack helicopters facing NATO in the Central Region. In the area of air power, current generation tactical aircraft have increased range, improved avionics and weapons and better performance and all-weather capabilities than previous models. Two new fighter aircraft have been developed, Fulcrum and Flanker, which have added improvements in range, thrust-to-weight ratio, manoeuvrability and avionics and represent a major step in closing the technological gap with the West. The overall picture remains of a significant numerical advantage to the Warsaw Pact in all major aspects of conventional arms.

3. To the main categories of armaments should be added chemical weapons. The Soviet Union has a major capability in this field. Continuing research and development and production of chemical weapons is adding to their stock-pile, already assessed to include over 300,000 tons of nerve agent. Moreover, Soviet forces are comprehensively equipped and trained to operate in a contaminated environment. Among NATO members only the United States has chemical weapons; but its stocks are much smaller, ageing and not declared to NATO.

Maritime Forces

4. Figure 10 illustrates the balance of ready maritime forces in the Eastern Atlantic. Warsaw Pact forces comprise

Figure 10 The Balance of Ready Maritime Forces in the Eastern Atlantic⁽¹⁾



Notes

¹For the purposes of this diagram the Eastern Atlantic comprises the NATO command areas CHANNEL, EASTLANT and IBERLANT. British Forces normally operate in CHANNEL and EASTLANT but also on occasion in the more southerly IBERLANT

²Includes French maritime Forces

³Warsaw Pact Forces comprise Northern Fleet surface ships, submarines and maritime aircraft and Baltic Fleet maritime aircraft

⁴Surface ships of frigate size and above

⁵Excludes SSBNs and certain submarines not formally committed to the Eastern Atlantic

⁶Includes helicopters

⁷The threat to NATO is increased by the Warsaw Pact's capability to deploy a total of 350 anti-ship missiles with a range of over 200 km in its ready maritime forces. NATO has no equivalent capability

Northern Fleet surface ships, submarines and maritime aircraft and Baltic Fleet maritime aircraft. The figures for NATO include French forces but exclude US Navy ships from the Strike Fleet Atlantic because their availability in the Eastern Atlantic cannot be assumed at the outbreak of hostilities. NATO retains a small numerical superiority in major surface combatants over the Soviet Union in this area. But this advantage, already off-set by Soviet superiority in submarine numbers, is being eroded by the rate of Soviet naval production.

5. Major Soviet surface warships under construction include four new classes of heavily-armed missile cruisers and destroyers, as well as the Kiev class aircraft carriers. Over the past year a second Kirov class nuclear-powered cruiser and further units of both the Udaloy and Sovremenny class destroyers have put to sea, whilst the first of the latest new cruiser type, the Slava, and the third Kiev class carrier Novorossysk both made their first deployments out of the Black Sea. Several new classes of submarines including a successor to the Victor III class attack submarine are in production and a large, nuclear-powered aircraft carrier capable of operating conventional fixed-wing aircraft is likely to appear later in the decade. Meanwhile, the centrally-controlled Soviet merchant and fishing fleets are being steadily upgraded; they are available to compensate for the Soviet Navy's relative lack of logistic support afloat, as well as for other military roles. The Soviet Navy thus continues to enhance its capability as an offensive force capable of global power projection. In response the US government have embarked upon a shipbuilding programme to increase the strength of the US Navy to over 600 ships.

THE NUCLEAR BALANCE

6. The balance of nuclear forces is shown in Figure 11. While the overall balance is not as heavily weighted against NATO as in the case of conventional forces, there are serious disparities in some areas, and the picture is again one of a steadily adverse trend.

Strategic Forces

7. At the strategic level, the Soviet Union has the advantage in numbers of delivery systems. Soviet systems are generally newer than US systems; and the Soviet Union has a considerable advantage in throw-weight (a measure of destructive potential) and in missile warheads, although the United States retains a small advantage in total warhead numbers. Since 1972 when SALT I was signed the Soviet Union has introduced three new types of inter-continental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) and four new types of submarine launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs). In the same period the US have deployed only one new SLBM and the air-launched cruise missile (ALCM). The MX ICBM which the US is planning to deploy from 1986 as part of the modernisation of its strategic nuclear forces will be its first entirely new ICBM since 1970. Other US modernisation plans include the development of the Trident D5 SLBM and procurement of 100 B1 strategic bombers. Meanwhile, the Soviet Union is continuing to modernise its nuclear forces. Delta class nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarines (SSBNs) equipped with missiles with multiple independently

targetable re-entry vehicles (MIRVs) are still being built and are replacing the older Yankee and Hotel SSBNs which have single-warhead missiles. The Typhoon submarine entered operational service in late 1983 equipped with the new multiple-headed SS-N-20 SLBM. Testing of two new Soviet ICBMs, the SS-X-24 and SS-X-25, is underway. Both could be deployed on mobile launchers. A new strategic bomber, the Blackjack, is also under development. It is similar in configuration to the US B1 bomber but is one-third larger in size.

Cruise Missiles

8. The development and deployment of long-range cruise missiles is one of the more significant developments in the past year. The US are fitting air-launched cruise missiles (ALCMs) on their strategic bombers and deployment of sea-launched cruise missiles (SLCMs) on submarines and surface ships is expected from the middle of this year. The first US ground-launched cruise missiles in Europe have now become operational. Meanwhile, the USSR is actively engaged in a test programme to develop long-range cruise missiles for launch from ground, sea and air platforms. These will be primarily for nuclear strike and have ranges estimated at up to 3000 km. The air- and sea-launched versions have the potential for intercontinental strategic strike, depending on the platforms, while they could all complement Soviet assets in the theatre role. Initial deployments of at least the sea- and air-launched cruise missiles are likely within the next two years. The ALCM will probably be carried initially by a variant of the Bear heavy bomber, followed in the 1990s by Blackjack.

Theatre Nuclear Forces

9. In intermediate-range nuclear forces (INF) there is still a marked imbalance in favour of the Warsaw Pact despite the initial deployment by NATO of ground-launched cruise missiles (GLCMs) and Pershing II. The Soviet Union has revoked its moratorium on SS20 base construction in the Western USSR and is starting to add to the 243 SS20s at present facing Europe. It has also begun forward deployment of the Scaleboard/SS22 in Eastern Europe and of Delta class strategic missile-firing submarines in the Western Atlantic. Construction of new bases has continued in the Far East and the total number of SS20 missiles now operational worldwide is 378, carrying 1134 warheads. The few remaining obsolete SS5 missiles have now been withdrawn from service but it is unclear whether the rundown of the remaining SS4 missiles will resume with new SS20 deployments or whether they will be maintained at their present level. Major improvements are taking place in Soviet shorter-range, dual-capable missile systems, with the SS21, SS22 and SS23 missiles replacing or about to replace the older Frog, Scaleboard and Scud missiles. The new or improved missiles can cover ranges of up to 950km and have greater accuracy, better survivability and shorter reaction time than their predecessors. Improvements are also underway in Soviet battlefield nuclear artillery. 152mm guns, both self-propelled and towed, are adding significantly to this capability, as is the recent formation of additional 203 and 240mm heavy artillery brigades. The recent deployment of nuclear-capable artillery into the Forward Area will considerably increase Soviet short-range nuclear options.

Figure 11. The Balance of Nuclear Forces⁽¹⁾Strategic Systems²

USSR

ICBMs: SS11, 13, 17, 18, 19
 SLBMs: SS-N-5, 6, 8, 17, 18, 20
 Bombers: Bear, Bison,
 Backfire

NATO⁴

ICBMs: Titan II, Minuteman
 2 & 3
 SLBMs: Poseidon, Trident,
 Polaris (UK)
 Bombers: B52, FB111

Longer Range³
INF in Europe

USSR

Aircraft: Badger, Blinder
 Missiles: SS4, SS20

NATO⁴

Aircraft: F111
 Missiles: Pershing II,
 GLCM

Shorter Range³
INF in Europe

Warsaw Pact

Aircraft: Fitter
 Fishbed
 Flogger
 Fencer

Missiles:
 Scaleboard
 SS22
 Scud/SS23

NATO⁴

Aircraft:
 F4 F104
 (Bel, FRG,
 Gr, It, NL,
 Tu)
 F16 (Bel,
 NL, US)
 Buccaneer
 (UK)
 Jaguar (UK)
 Tornado
 (UK, It)

Missiles:
 Pershing I

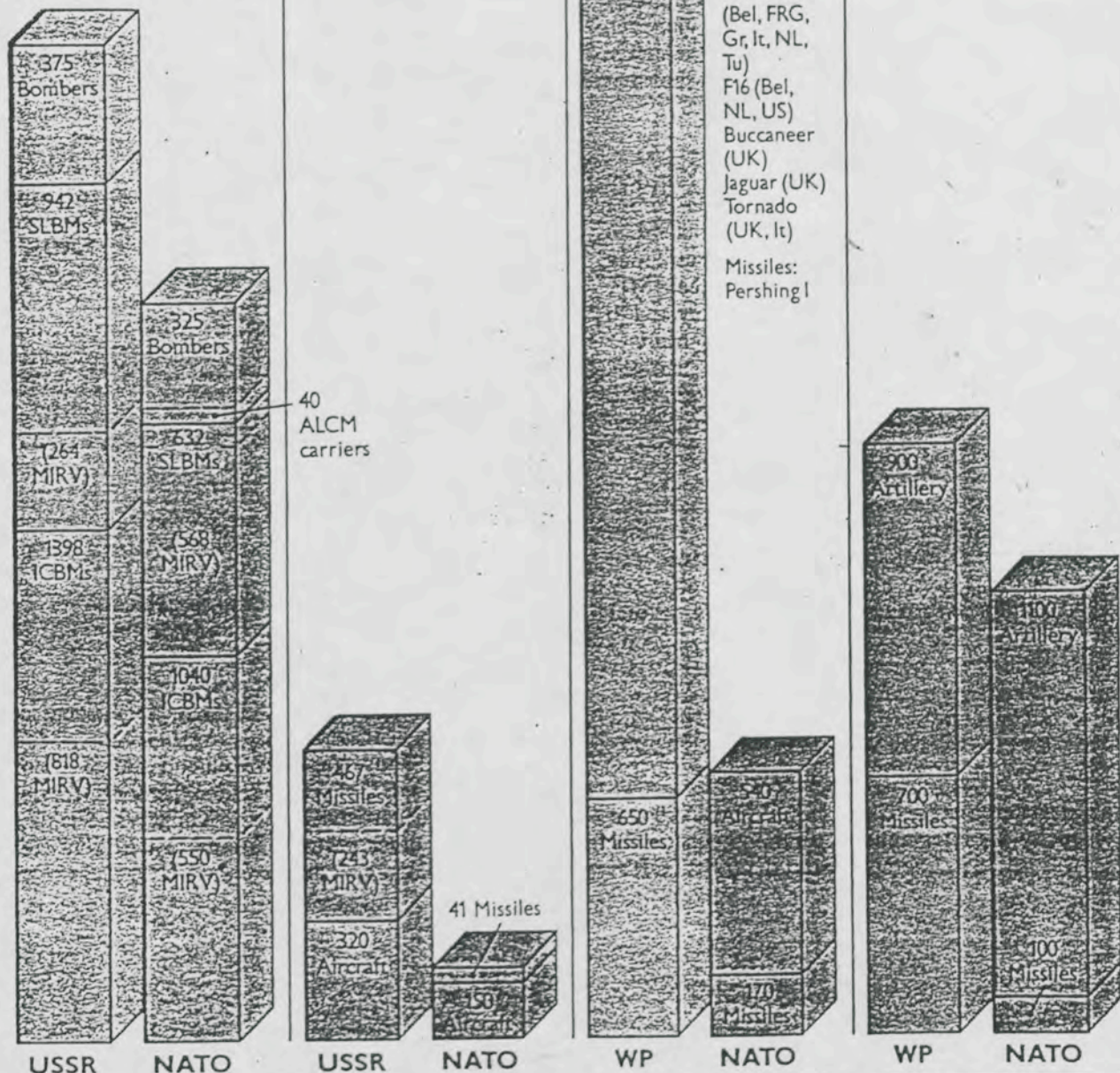
Short Range Forces³
in Europe

Warsaw Pact

Missiles: Frog/SS21
 Artillery: 203/152/240 mm

NATO⁴

Missiles: Lance (Bel, FRG, It,
 NL, UK, US)
 Honest John (Gr, Tu)
 Artillery: 155 mm (Bel, FRG,
 Gr, UK, US)
 8 in (Bel, FRG, Gr,
 It, NL, Tu, UK, US)



Notes 1 French systems are not included in this diagram. They comprise 64 SLBM, 18 SS3 missiles, 36 Mirage IV bombers, shorter range Mirage IIIA and Jaguar aircraft and Pluton missiles. The diagram does not include defensive systems such as ABMs or air defence missiles or aircraft.

2 In accordance with NATO practice, strategic forces include operational systems fully within the definition used within SALT II plus the Soviet Backfire and US FB 111 aircraft which have an inherent inter-continental capability.

3 Intermediate and short-range nuclear forces are land-based systems in Europe from the Urals westward. These figures do not include some 170

aircraft of the Soviet Naval airforce based in the European theatre or some 20 aircraft of NATO airforces which have an anti-ship capability; nor do they include sea-based nuclear capable systems on both sides which are normally deployed in the European theatre and which have a land attack capability, e.g. 18 SS-N-5s on Soviet Golf Class Submarines in the Baltic and about 70 A6 and A7 aircraft on US carriers in the Mediterranean.

4 All NATO systems operated by the US except where shown.

5 Includes additional equipments now assessed to have a nuclear delivery potential.

NATO Document

The NATO document which was enclosed on this file has been removed and destroyed.

Such documents are the responsibility of NATO and as the originators they reserve ownership of the documents they issue. NATO documents are, therefore, not public records even when they are kept in UK government records. When released they will be available in the NATO Archives in Brussels.

Document Reference: MC 14/3 (photocopy of the text of the document)

Document Title: Overall Strategic Concept for the Defence of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation Area

Document Date: Unknown

Destruction Date: 21 June 2013

Signed

J. Gray

Date

21/6/2013

PREM Records Team



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

19 June, 1984

FOREIGN POLICY: NATO STRATEGY

John Coles' letter to you of 1 June said that the Prime Minister intended to hold a seminar at Chequers in September on the broad question of a possible Conflict of Principles in foreign policy. You will have set preparatory work in hand.

The Prime Minister is now thinking in terms of a further seminar, at about the same time, on NATO strategy. The purpose would be to examine some of the points which were touched on in the recent Ministerial discussion (OD(84)7 meeting). The seminar would review the key issues of NATO's military strategy, and in particular flexible response, and consider whether the intellectual foundations of present policy remain valid. It would devote special attention to the significance of technological development for future military strategy, particularly as regards the use of space.

BF || It will be helpful if a short paper could be prepared jointly by the FCO and MOD on these issues by the end of July. The paper should pose questions as much as attempt to answer them. Its purpose will be to serve as a framework for discussion.

It would also be helpful if you could let me have suggestions both from within Whitehall and outside, for people who might be invited to attend the seminar.

One possibility is to hold the two seminars on the same day, devoting half a day to each.

I am copying this letter to Richard Mottram (Ministry of Defence).

(C.D. Powell)

P. Ricketts, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office