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10 May 1973

E.R.

EO 13526 3.3(b)(1)>25Yrs

EO 13526 3.3(b)(6)>25Yrs

BRITISH STRATEGIC NUCLEAR DETERRENTRussian ABM Defence

1. The British Government wish to be clear that there is no difference

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per 3.3(b)(1)(v)

of the relative effectiveness of British Mark II and United States Mark III warheads against such a defence.

2. The British Government have so far been informed that there is no evidence that the Russians are developing terminal (endo-atmospheric) defences around Moscow. Dr Schlesinger is, however, understood to have said that he feared the configuration of the STAG or SUPER ANTELOPE warhead would lack credibility in three to four years and that he was impressed by the superiority of the United States Mark III warhead, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] His remarks have been taken to imply that, in his opinion, Russian terminal ABM defences with a missile of the capability of the United States SPRINT [REDACTED]

3. [REDACTED]

4. It is understood that the United States has taken 12 years to progress from the first test firing of the missile to the current stage where the SPRINT system is only nearing completion around one of the United States MINUTEMAN silo locations. It is believed that, if the Russians were to develop a similar system, they would be unlikely to be able to do so in a significantly shorter time. [REDACTED]

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E.O. 13526, Section 3.5

per 3.3(b)(1)(2)(4)(5)(6) HP 3/23/16

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10 May 1973

BRITISH STRATEGIC NUCLEAR DETERRENTRussian ABM Defence

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Per Sec 3.3(b)(1) &
3.3(b)(4)

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E.O. 12958, as amended, Sect 3.5

N/A 82-84 / 15 HP Sec 3.3(b)(1) 3.3(b)(6) per Sec 4/1/10

By JMR NARA Date 5/4/11
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per 3.3(b)(1)(b) It is believed, therefore, that the earliest that such a system could appear would be around 1980, though this would require the Russians to have taken a decision some time ago to deploy and develop it; and that a more realistic date might be several years later.

5. Even within the constraints of the ABM Treaty future Russian development of the present ABM area defences centred on Moscow is a matter of speculation. On the one hand the Russians could rest entirely on improvements to the present system to extend its coverage to nearly all the cities of Western Russia including Leningrad and Kiev. On the other hand, they could partially replace the present system by a terminal defence, which would only protect a very limited area around central Moscow. There is no basis for reaching a judgment on what the Russians will actually do.

6.

7.

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per 3.3(b)(2)(4)(5)
(6)

the reason being that for not very much greater cost than for STAG POSEIDON/Mark III provides an automatic insurance against possible future Russian terminal defences, whereas to provide such a capability in STAG would require a costly and time consuming extra development programme.

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IS. 3.3(b)(1)(b)

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Re Sec. 3.3(b)(1)(b)
3.3(b)(4)

7. Neither the configuration of the United Kingdom warheads nor the higher speed during re-entry of the United States Mark III warhead are believed to be relevant. experts agree that the only way to be sure of penetrating defences is by exhaustion; that is, by providing more incoming warheads than the number of available defensive missiles.

that two SPRINT type missiles could counter any incoming warhead whether it was SUPER ANTELOPE, STAG or United States Mark III. The superiority of the Mark III against SPRINT type terminal defences derives from the fact that within the atmosphere the incoming missile has ten warheads rather than two in the case of SUPER ANTELOPE and STAG. This is the background to the British understanding that the American side consider the United States Mark III warhead on a de-MIRVed POSEIDON missile to be a much more cost effective solution for the United Kingdom than STAG (i.e. a SUPER ANTELOPE warhead on a de-MIRVed POSEIDON missile); the reason being that for not very much greater cost than for STAG POSEIDON/Mark III provides an automatic insurance against possible future Russian terminal defences, whereas to provide such a capability in STAG would require a costly and time consuming extra development programme.

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Maintenance Support for POLARIS and POSEIDON Missiles

8. An important factor in assessing the relative costs of SUPER ANTELOPE and POSEIDON/Mark III has been the question of logistic support for American missiles. In the case of SUPER ANTELOPE we have assumed that the POLARIS A3T missile will be phased out of United States Navy service by about 1983, but that thereafter we shall be able to obtain, with United States help, continuing logistic support for the missile at a cost which would naturally be increased by the fact that the necessary facilities would be kept going uniquely for our purposes. In the case of POSEIDON/Mark III, we have assumed that we can rely on keeping POSEIDON C3 in service up till about 1994 without having to incur any special costs on account of uniqueness. It would be very helpful for us to know whether these assumptions are broadly consistent with current American plans for the in-service life in the United States Navy of POLARIS A3T and POSEIDON C3 respectively.

9. [redacted] British officials raised the question of the contractual arrangements under which the British Government might purchase POSEIDON C3 missiles. [redacted] indicated that it would be wholly consistent with the manner in which the President had asked for the discussions with the White House to be handled that he should prefer to avoid a new Sales Agreement, and thus to use the existing PSA (which the British Government would also prefer). It would be helpful if this could be confirmed.

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per 3.3(b)(1)(v)

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~~TOP SECRET~~Maintenance Support for POLARIS and POSEIDON Missiles

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per Sec. 3.3(b)(1)(v) &
3.3(b)(2)

NLN-12 5/1/88

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