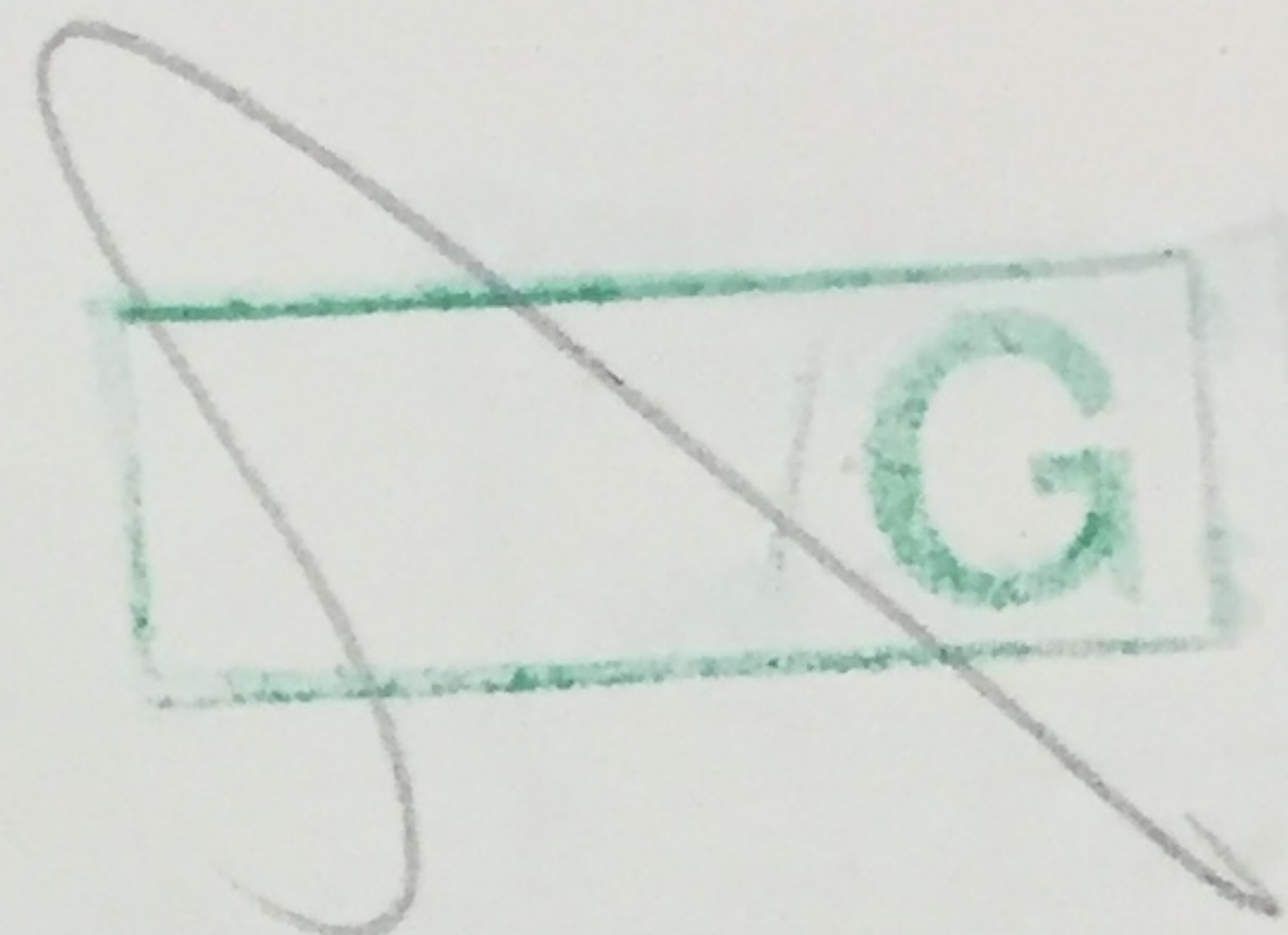


(NS 1052/6G)

TOP SECRET



I attach a copy of the draft paper on "Soviet Reactions to Western Pressure on 'Sore Spots'", which has been revised in the light of the comments made when it was discussed in the Russia Committee on the 5th February. Sir William Strang will call a meeting of Under-Secretaries in the next few days to consider the revised draft.

19th February, 1952. . H. A. F. HOHLER.

Mr. F. K. Roberts *any*
Mr. P. Mason ✓
Mr. R. H. Scott *any*
Mr. D. P. Reilly ✓
Mr. J. W. Nicholls ✓
Mr. G. W. Harrison ✓

+ *Hohler*
J. Allen

Copy to

Sir William Strang.

A meeting was held in Sir W. Strang's room on the 22nd February to discuss the paper on Soviet Reactions to Western Pressure on "Sore Spots."

The following were present:

- Sir W. Strang
- Mr. P. Mason
- Mr. Reilly
- Mr. Nicholls
- Mr. Harrison
- Mr. Allen
- Mr. Hohler

Mr. Mason explained that the purpose of the paper was to fill a gap in the material sent to Washington. One of the annexes of the P.U.S.C. paper on "Future Policy towards Soviet Russia" was a paper on "Sore Spots" which had been prepared in Northern Department in January, 1952. This paper had been revised in the light of the re-assessment of policy which the P.U.S.C. paper represented and had been discussed by the Russia Committee which had suggested a number of amendments. These had been incorporated in a revised draft which, Mr. Mason suggested, might, when approved, be sent to the Chiefs of Staff. If they in turn approved the paper it could be sent to Washington as part of the briefing of the Foreign Office representatives who were going to have talks there about policy towards the satellites.

Sir William Strang said that the Secretary of State had been most reluctant to accept the conclusions of the P.U.S.C. paper since he feared that this might increase the risk of war with the Soviet Union.

After discussion it was agreed that what was needed was high level politico-military talks with the Americans on the lines already suggested in Sir W. Strang's letter to Sir O. Franks. It was first necessary, however, that we should reach agreement among ourselves and it seemed that psychological warfare offered a better alternative than the policy of forcing the issue with the satellites.

Mr. Harrison said that, as it stood at present, the Sore Spots memorandum was too optimistic. The problem had to be considered as a whole and, if applied to individual sore spots the memorandum became a purely academic exercise.

Sir William Strang said that the sense of the paper should be to warn the Chiefs of Staff of specific danger points but it should not in fact contain any references to general subjects such as psychological warfare.

A re-draft of the paper is circulated for consideration.

1st March,
~~26th February~~ 1952.

I believe Sir P. Mason has commented on this. Any way do we want the (Sore Spots) word? It is surely better to use "Sore Spots" phrase. It is a bit of a pity and - not of "Sore Spots" but "Sore Spots" can be used as a - information?

[P.U.S.C.(51)
16(Final)]

*P.U.S.C. (51) 16 (Final)
prepared as a*

*I
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w
C
A
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ai
to
[etc]
in
en
g
to
ma*

*I will look at the
memorandum for all
the (Sore Spots) points
and suggest changes*

Objects of this study.

It is expected that before long the Western Powers will possess the strength, [and feel the need,] to embark on a more forward policy against the Soviet bloc. The United States Government are likely to take the lead, and it will be prudent, in advance of any Anglo-American discussions, to work out a clear United Kingdom view of the implications of such a policy. Meanwhile, in the process of building up their strength, the Western Powers have in general kept within the limits of defensive and non-aggressive policies. They have, in particular, exercised caution as regards their policy in areas which may be regarded as specially sensitive from the Soviet standpoint. [The] U.K. brief for the Washington talks, gave a list (in Annex A) of such "sore spots" of the Soviet bloc. To be effective, however, a more forward Western policy cannot avoid these "sore spots" altogether. Moreover, as the West's military strength grows and confronts the Soviet Union with an increasing deterrent to general war, the need for special caution regarding such areas may be thought to diminish. Accordingly, ~~the~~ the present paper is intended to consider:-

(i) Whether any form (having regard to timing) of Western policy in regard to the various "sore spots" might provoke the Soviet Government to forcible counter-action, and how far such counter-action might go.

(ii) Where the United States estimate may differ from our own.

I believe Sir P. Dixon has commented on this. Anyway, do we want the bracketed words? It'll surely depend on circs. There's precious little sign of our (officially) feeling such a need at present! ~~And~~ Indeed, how can we, till we have "worked out... the implications"?

PUSC (51) 16 (final), prepared as a

I wd like to put in here that we shd. also consider (not for US consumption)

(Sig) *[Signature]*

/Assumptions

Assumptions of the study.

2. This paper assumes, in accordance with the current United Kingdom estimate (JIC(51)10/), that the Soviet Government do not want a total war in the period covered by this study (up to the end of 1954), but might go to war, or go over to a policy of preparing for a war definitely foreseen, if they were seriously enough provoked.

3. The official United States estimate of the likelihood of war, set out in NIE-48 of the 3rd January, 1952, is very similar to ours and would require the same assumption as in the preceding paragraph. But Her Majesty's Embassy, Washington, report that senior American officials are by no means unanimous in their views: the most influential opinion seems to be that the Soviet Government will not allow themselves to be diverted from their planned strategy (which the Americans also believe to exclude total war) by any provocation short of a general Western attack. It may be assumed, at least, that the Americans are likely in general to estimate the safe degree of Western action considerably higher than we do.

4. It is assumed that action affecting the "sore spots" by the West might risk provoking one of the following Soviet reactions:-

- (a) local action, involving the use of armed force, but not ^{expected by the S.G.} considered likely to lead to general war;
- (b) a conviction that, since general war is inevitable, the Soviet Union must make ready to launch a preventive war at the most advantageous moment in the future.
- (c) action intended, or likely, to lead to

?omit. Or, if you mean "considered by the Soviets", make this clear. (I did not so read it at first.)

(c) action intended, or likely, to lead to the immediate outbreak of a future general war. (These

Surely "(a) or (b)"?
I suppose Korea has led to (a) - but not as a result of Western provocation. The Americans might misunderstand here.
(Place the New Statesman).

Don't this lie right place (as well as the penult. page) for a caveat about "cumulative" provocation?

(These possibilities will be referred to in the rest of this paper as "reaction (a)", "reaction (b)", etc.). Both the United Kingdom and United States appreciations referred to in paragraphs 2 and 3 above conclude that the West has not already provoked reaction (b) but there is no definite evidence in support of this view.

The "sore spots."

5. No significance attaches to the order in which the "sore spots" are listed below.
6. SCANDINAVIA - the Soviet Government have shown themselves particularly sensitive to Western defence preparations in countries having a common frontier with the Soviet Union. Norway's participation in N.A.T.O. has been qualified by the Norwegian assurance that no foreign military bases will be established upon Norwegian territory in time of peace; nevertheless, it has provoked a series of Soviet diplomatic protests directed particularly against this point of foreign bases and also against the alleged re-militarisation of Spitsbergen. Thus the establishment of United States air bases, manned and ready for long-range bombing, in ^{mainland} Norway or Spitsbergen would at any time be a serious provocation to the Soviet Government. So also, to a less extent, would the establishment of ^{stationing} United States Naval forces.

7. Both for strategic reasons and from the constant trend of Soviet propaganda it is clear that the Soviet Government feel a major interest in keeping Sweden neutral. Her entry into N.A.T.O. and, still more, the establishment of foreign bases on her territory would be a very serious provocation to the Soviet Government, who would probably feel some immediate, visible

in the Russian

Is it technically an
occup: now? They're
at peace. ? delib
"all".

But might
not the
Russians
regard this
as step (c)?

Not v. clear to the
unlearned.

reactions affecting ✓

8. It seems unlikely that any of the fore-
going developments would in themselves be
enough to provoke reaction (c). Any of them,
however, might well provoke reaction (b), and
there is the possibility of reaction (a) in
the shape of a Soviet military occupation of all
Finland and the establishment of a Communist
Government there. Such a step would be of
primarily political significance, since it
would give the Soviet Government little extra
strategic advantage. The Soviet Union already
possesses base facilities in Finland, and
she could probably ^{obtain increased} extend her facilities for
early warning of air attack without a full occu-
pation. Moreover, a full occupation would
meet a fair amount of Finnish resistance and
of itself considerably increase the risk of
war. But fear of Soviet [repercussions on]
Finland is one of the main reasons that the
Swedish Government advance for continuing to
avoid direct association with N.A.T.O. The
Soviet Government will certainly use the threat
of occupying Finland to keep Sweden neutral;
were Sweden nevertheless to join N.A.T.O., the
Soviet Government might well carry out this
threat, both for reasons of prestige and to
frighten Sweden out of effective participation
in N.A.T.O. defence. The establishment of very
considerable foreign N.A.T.O. forces in Norway
might have the same effect.

9. Conclusion - the establishment of manned
United States air or Naval bases in ^{mainland} Norway or
Spitsbergen might lead to reaction (b). The
establishment of large N.A.T.O. forces in Norway,
or Sweden's entry into N.A.T.O., would be likely
to provoke reaction (b), and probably also (a)

is in the Russian

extract from
Sore Spitz paper
Return to Holder

in the shape of Soviet occupation of Finland.
Any other form of reaction (a), such as Soviet
military action against Norway (or Sweden if
in N.A.T.O) would bring the North Atlantic
Treaty into operation and so turn into reaction
(c), which seems unlikely on Scandinavian con-
siderations alone.

? forces of NATO
members

10. GERMANY - In view of the Allied guarantee
of the German Federal Republic and Berlin and
of the presence of [N.A.T.O. forces] in these
territories, ^{Soviet} military counter-action against the
West could not be limited to Germany. Reaction
(a) is therefore ruled out. It is unlikely
that any particular event or stage in the
integration of the Federal Republic into the
political and military structure of the Atlantic
area could of itself ^{decide} determine the Soviet
Government to engineer the outbreak of a general
preventive war. Such a ^{decision} course is only likely
to be [^{taken} determined on the wider general con-
sideration of the whole trend of Western policy.]

? launch

I don't understand this.
? "determined on in the
light of all aspects of
Western policy, not
merely those affecting
Germany". [If you
really think so] And
continue: "As far as
G'y is concerned, the
aims of W. policy are
to secure the addition
[etc] and, more
important still, to
ensure the availability
of W.g. for some years
to come as a
marshalling g^d [etc]."

So far as Germany is concerned, this policy
will not only effect the addition of German
military strength to the forces under American
control but, even more important, it will ensure
Western Germany for a long time to come as a
[reliable] marshalling ground for the armies
of the Western world stationed on the western
fringe of the Soviet orbit, a marshalling ground
which the allies would be hard put to find any-
where else in Europe. ^{to it} Against this background
The Soviet Government
must therefore decide whether, taking into
account, e.g. U.S. policy and German territorial

claims in the East, these two factors will
war appears inevitable
inevitably lead to war and, if so, whether in

? delete

/circumstances

2809
ref

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and
2/2/50

circumstances which make a Russian defeat more problematical later on than earlier. An assessment on these lines must presumably have been made when [this apparently irreversible process] was first started by the North Atlantic Council's decisions at Washington and Brussels in 1950, and again when it was made effective by the Ottawa decisions ^{in ... 1951.} The next stages on their own can scarcely alter the Soviet Government's appreciation as to whether allied German policy justifies a Soviet preventive war. If, however, they consider that, in the context of general Western policy, it does, then the moment of launching is likely to be determined finally by estimates of the relation between Soviet military power and that of all the Western countries combined, or the relative advantage to either side of the atomic ^{hydrogen} bombs, rather than by ~~reaching~~ some long foreseen stage such as the call-up of the first German conscript or the inclusion of the Federal Republic as a full member of N.A.T.O. ^{having reached} Any danger of provoking the Russians to preventive counter-action will be further reduced if these stages are taken gradually and successively.

11. Apart from such reasoned considerations of policy there is, of course, always the danger of pressure on the Russians leading to some unforeseen incident and the unexpected outbreak of war. This would be unlikely to happen in Berlin since there the Western Allies are on the defensive; it is the Russians themselves who will be tempted to apply the pressure and the allies who must decide whether

it is in the Russian interest to have it sooner rather than later.

"the process of military integration of Germany with the West"

Why not? It might depend on how effective our rearmt of G's looks to them.

If this assessment has resulted in the conclusion that, in the context of general Western policy allied German policy justifies a Soviet preventive war, then the answer

the mere fact of

Government. The risk should, however, be a diminishing one, as Western defence grows stronger.

17. The establishment of manned Western military or air bases in Yugoslavia would be a considerably more serious provocation. It would greatly increase tension between Yugoslavia and her Satellite neighbours and might precipitate a Soviet-sponsored Satellite attack.

18. The United States would probably regard large-scale Western armament of Yugoslavia as an acceptable risk by the time it becomes practical to carry^{ble} it^{it} out, probably not before 1953. Since the United States still [appreciates] a Satellite attack upon Yugoslavia as possible, though unlikely, the Americans would probably agree that the establishment of Allied military bases might be enough to bring it about.

19. Conclusion - Yugoslavia would not be more than a contributory cause of reaction (b) or, still more, of (c). There is a risk of ^{at least} reaction (a), in the shape of a Satellite attack, if the West builds up Yugoslavia too rapidly and particularly if Western military bases are established there.

20. ALBANIA - Albania's value to the Soviet Government is mainly a matter of prestige, and she is clearly even less likely than Yugoslavia to play any great part in provoking reaction (b) or (c). Soviet prestige is sufficiently involved, however, to make it unlikely that the Soviet Government would remain inactive in the face of any determined attempt to detach Albania from the Orbit. If, for instance, the West organised a major rebellion with outside assistance to overthrow the

/Communist

? regards

? in present circs.

wd this, or not, be expected to lead to general war (a) in our view, (b) in the Soviets' view? The present draft seems to imply either that we wd. not stand by YS or that the Rs. wd. not expect us to. Is either true? ^{and} do we wish to beg these qns?

? overt

Communist régime, it would probably provoke the Soviet Government into reaction (a), e.g. the despatch of Soviet or Satellite airborne troops, since there would be ^a good prospect of keeping the resultant fighting localised.

21. TURKEY - The remarks above about the possible consequences of the establishment of United States air bases in Norway apply also to Turkey, but with greater force, since Turkey not only lies within ~~the~~ close range of vital Soviet military areas and the Caucasian oil-fields, but also lies across the Soviet path of access to the Middle East and the exit from the Black Sea. The establishment of any large American bombing force in Turkey would be one of the most likely developments to convince the Soviet Government that war with the West was inevitable.

22. The Americans may well differ with us about this and consider that a display of American strength in Turkey would intimidate rather than provoke the Kremlin.

23. Conclusion. Turkey's membership of N.A.T.O. will rule out reaction (a), but the establishment of manned Western bases might well do much to cause reaction (b).

24. PERSIA - The Soviet Government ^{must} undoubtedly regard the deteriorating situation in Persia as a strong card in their favour. If a point came where American or British forces were sent in to prevent a collapse of the régime and [re-] establish a Government favourable to the West, the Soviet Government might well [try to] anticipate us by occupying Persian Azerbaijan or putting the Tudeh Party in power by a coup d'état

? omit!

"

/in

(W.D. Allen)

1952.

NOTHING TO BE WRITTEN

18-5-50