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COS 1311/2/5/72

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Ministry of Defence

Chief of the Defence Staff
Chief of the Naval Staff
Chief of the General Staff
Chief of the Air Staff

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COS Restricted List

PROBABLE NUCLEAR TARGETS IN THE UNITED KINGDOM
ASSUMPTIONS FOR PLANNING

1. You will be aware (1) that the list of probable nuclear targets in the United Kingdom is reviewed annually by the Machinery of Government in War Sub-Committee. This year's review has now been completed and I attach at Annex A a revised list of probable nuclear targets that incorporates amendments proposed by the Ministry of Defence.

2. As a result of a Home Office query that challenged the previous assessments of yields allocated to targets, the method of expressing these figures has been changed. The new assessments, attached at Annex B, are less rigid and, in general, indicate that larger yields might be expected.

3. The list at Annex A only includes targets that lie within the categories suggested in the JIC(A) assessment (2) that I earlier circulated for you to take note. Therefore, it is not a comprehensive list of all targets likely to be attacked in the event of General War. I am informed that the United Kingdom Commanders-in-Chief Committee (Home) fully appreciate this point and wish to use the list solely as a convenient guide to targets which are almost certain to be attacked.

4. Since 1967 it has been necessary for you to endorse the list before it can be used for military planning purposes (3)(4). Accordingly, I request that you take note of Annexes A and B

Notes:

1. COS 1454/20/7/71.
2. JIC(A) (72) 17.
3. CA 62 JIC(67) 6th Meeting held on 9 February 1967.
4. Cabinet Office J318/2 dated 10 March 1967.

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and approve their use for planning purposes and, unless I hear to the contrary by noon on Monday 15 May, I will assume that you have done so.

2 May 1972

B G T STANBRIDGE
Air Commodore
Secretary
Chiefs of Staff Committee

Annex:

A. Probable Nuclear Targets in the United Kingdom - Assumptions for Planning. (3 pages)
B. Weapon Yield to Target. (6 pages)

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ANNEX A TO
COS 1311/2/5/72

PROBABLE NUCLEAR TARGETS IN THE UNITED KINGDOM: ASSUMPTIONS FOR PLANNING

Note: Figures in brackets denote total targets in each category

1. TARGETS RELATED TO ALLIED NUCLEAR STRIKE CAPABILITY (67)

a. CENTRES OF CONTROL ETC (21)

i. Government - Central (2)

Central London
Cheltenham

- ex-Regional (12)

Catterick	former RSG sites	These are considered to be possible, rather than probable targets
York		
Preston		
Cambridge		
Dover		
Reading		
Salcombe		
Brecon		
Kidderminster		
Armagh		
Edinburgh		See also paragraph 2
Nottingham		

ii. Military - Maritime (4)

Northwood (HQ, CINCHAN/CINCEASTLANT
Plymouth (HQ, COMCENTLANT)
Pitreavie (HQ, COMNORLANT)
Fort Southwick (HQ, C-in-C Naval Home Command

- Air (3)

High Wycombe (HQ, Strike Command)
Ruislip (HQ, 3rd US Air Force)
Bawtry (HQ, 1(Bomber) Group, Strike Command

b. BOMBER BASES (including dispersal recovery and flight-refuelling bases) (33)

i. RAF (22)

Scampton
Waddington
Honington
Wittering
Marham
Coningsby
Lossiemouth
Finningley
Bedford
Kinloss +
Manston +
Wattisham +
Cottesmore
Wyton
St Mawgan +
Machrihanish +
Leeming +
Valley +
Brawdy +
Coltishall +
Yeovilton +
Leuchars +

+ Dispersals at these stations have been temporarily de-activated and HQ Strike Command will give 3 months notice of intention to re-activate.

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1. TARGETS RELATED TO ALLIED NUCLEAR STRIKE CAPABILITY (67) (Cont'd)

b. BOMBER BASES (including dispersal recovery and flight-refuelling bases) (33) (Cont'd)

ii. USAF (11)

- Alconbury
- Bentwaters
- Woodbridge
- Wethersfield
- Lakenheath
- Upper Hayford
- Elvington ⁄
- Fairford ⁄
- Boscombe Down ⁄
- Pershore ⁄
- Laconfield ⁄
- Coltishall ⁄ *
- Yeovilton ⁄ *

c. BASES ETC FOR SEABORNE NUCLEAR STRIKE FORCES (13)

i. Bases (6)

- Faslane, Coulport, Holy Loch, Rosyth (SSBN Refitting Base) — Polaris
- Portsmouth, Devonport — Carrier

ii. Communications Installations (7)

- VLF: Rugby, Criggion, Anthorn (NATO)
- LF: Inskip, New Waltham, Londonderry, Thurso — US Navy

2. MAJOR CITIES AND TOWNS (27)

- Inner London
- Glasgow
- Birmingham
- Liverpool
- Cardiff
- Manchester
- Southampton
- Leeds
- Newcastle/Gateshead
- Bristol
- Sheffield
- Swansea
- Hull

⁄ These airfields have been offered to US 3rd Air Force for use as dispersal bases from which they are expected in due course to select 7 only for use.

* Also shown under i. above as Strike Command dispersals temporarily de-activated.

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2. MAJOR CITIES AND TOWNS (27) (Cont'd)

Teeside
Coventry
Wolverhampton
Leicester
Stoke-on-Trent
Belfast
Edinburgh
Nottingham
Huddersfield
Sunderland
Gillingham
Rochester
Chatham
Maidstone

3. TARGETS RELATING TO AIR DEFENCE (15)

a.	CONTROL CENTRES (1)	West Drayton (Southern Joint Control Centre)
b.	FIGHTER BASES (4)	Leuchars * Wattisham ϕ Binbrook Coltishall * Z
c.	BMEWS (1)	Fylingdales
d.	RADAR STATIONS (9)	Boulmer (Master) Patrington (Master) Bawdsay (Master) Neatished (Master, being rebuilt) Buchan (Master) Saxavord (Satellite) Staxton Wold (Radar site for Patrington) Feltwell (Over-the-horizon radar) Orfordness (Over-the-horizon radar)

* De-activate Strike Command dispersal airfield.

ϕ Current Strike Command dispersal airfield.

Z Offered to US 3rd Air Force for use as a dispersal airfield.

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ANNEX B TO
COS 1311/2/5/72

WEAPON YIELD TO TARGET

A. ESTIMATED RUSSIAN WEAPON CAPABILITY

Any estimate of Russian weapon capability must take the following into account -

1. The Russians are estimated as having sufficient nuclear missiles available to cover targets of consequence throughout Europe. The policy on the allocation of warheads to targets will depend on their immediate aims and they are unlikely to be inhibited by the question of "over kill" except where they have an early use for the area in question.

2. The Russians would probably take advantage of the surprise which could be achieved by initiating an attack from submarines but at present there is no intelligence on which to base an estimate of the size of such an attack.

3. The Joint Intelligence Committee's (JIC) latest assessment (JIC(A)(72) 17) estimates that approximately 150 land based ballistic missiles might "impact" on the United Kingdom in an initial nuclear strike, although these figures take no account of any loss through Allied action.

4. The list at Appendix I shows the Soviet nuclear delivery by type, range, accuracy and yield. The yields shown are the theoretical maximum as it is not possible to estimate the actual yields which would be selected for operational purposes.

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B. THEORETICAL CHOICES OF WEAPON YIELD RELATED TO "TYPICAL" TARGETS

1. By applying the information contained in JIC(A)(72) 17 to the lists of potential targets at Annex A and using similar planning assumptions to those which we ourselves might use, it is feasible to suggest a possible scale of Soviet strikes against particular categories of target. Thus, it is likely that the enemy would aim to achieve a minimum of 50 per cent damage expectancy with a 90 per cent or more assurance factor. The former would be obtained from an appropriate yield warhead and fusing option (ground or airbust depending on the characteristics of the target) and, for large area targets, multiple Desired Ground Zeros (DGZs). The latter would depend on aircraft missile reliability and survivability, and would always require the planning of multiple strikes against each DGZ.

2. Thus, the following are suggested categories of target and the possible weight of attack which might be planned against each category:

Target Category	Possible Planned Strikes
a. London (for obvious reasons, a special target in its own right).	3x1-5 MT (airburst) against each of at least 2 and possibly 4 DGZs.
b. Other Large Cities (pop 1 mill plus).	3x1-5 MT (airburst) against each of 1 or 2 DGZs.
c. Medium Cities (pop ½-1 mill).	3x1-5 MT (airburst).
d. Small Cities (pop less than ½ mill).	3x1 MT (airburst).
e. Known or Suspected Military HQ (with underground COCs HQSTC, Northwood etc).	3x1 MT (ground burst).

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f. Special (Soft) Military Installations (Fylingdales, West Drayton, Naval Dockyards etc).	3x1 MT (airburst).*
g. Airfields with Known Nuclear Capability (Scampton, Waddington etc).	3x1 MT (ground burst).*
h. Other Airfields	3x1 MT (airburst).*

3. The actual number of nuclear bursts on a particular target will of course vary depending on the effective reliability of the missiles and the tactics adopted by manned aircraft to counter the air defences. Thus, it could be expected that all targets in the Soviet strike plan would receive at least one strike and some 2 or 3 strikes.

4. In a separate category, is the possibility that the enemy may precede the execution of any strike plan with a very high altitude (exo-atmospheric) high yield airburst to disrupt communications and electronic equipment at a crucial stage. The enemy is certainly capable of delivering this type of strike and it would be prudent to assume that his knowlege of electro-magnetic pulse (EMP) effects is at least equal to our own. Typical peak intensities of the order of 50 kv/metre could be expected over a range of 50 kilometres with intensity decreasing to 10 kv/m at ranges of about 1000 kilometres.

*This target could be "taken out" by a weapon of a considerably lower yield. However since we have no information indicating the availability of weapons with such small yields an arbitary allocation of yield at the bottom of the megaton range has been made.

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5. The enemy would probably plan for a number of options with a target priority list for each option - the priorities being dictated by the political/military aims to be achieved. Thus, in a strictly military plan, our nuclear strike airfields and associated installations would have highest priority since they offer the greatest threat. Headquarters and other military control centres would also be included but (perhaps with the exception of Inner London) few, if any cities would be included. On the other hand, a politically motivated plan might give a higher priority to some cities than military targets which have no connection with our nuclear capability.

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PROBABLE NUCLEAR TARGETS IN THE UNITED KINGDOM
ASSUMPTIONS FOR PLANNING

Reference: A. COS 1311/2/5/72.

In taking note of Annexes A and B to Reference A on behalf of CAS, VCAS observes that the detail contained in Annex A in respect of the USAF is now out of date because of recent changes in operational plans. VCAS therefore proposes that the target list should be amended to date before being authorised for military planning purposes. The details in respect of the USAF are as follows.

2. Para 1.a.ii.-Air The Headquarters 3rd US Air Force at Ruislip is scheduled to close in December of this year and the majority of its elements will have moved to Mildenhall in July. For military planning purposes this target should be annotated "Until December 1972".

3. Para 1.b.ii.-USAF The USAF have made proposals for additional airfields for use by extra augmentation forces which are now being negotiated with Air Force Department staff. Meanwhile the current list of USAF 'Bomber bases' should read as follows:

"Alconbury	Greenham Common		
Bentwaters	Fairford	≠	
Woodbridge	Boscombe Down	≠	
Lakenheath	Pershore	≠	
Upper Heyford	Coltishall	≠	+
Mildenhall	Yeovilton	≠	+
Wethersfield	Cranwell	≠	
Sculthorpe	Lyneham	≠	"

The second line of the footnote symbol ≠ on page A-2 should be deleted.

R. Gwilliams

(R. GWILLIAMS)
PS to VCAS

15th May 1972

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