Conclusions of the Cabinet meeting regarding defence, 15 January 1951

SECRET

[…]

(d) It would be useful if the Prime Minister could make plain the reality of the Russian threat to world peace. He might with advantage make more widely known the information which the Minister of Defence had already given to Parliament about the strength of the Russian forces now in being, the up-to-date weapons with which they were equipped, and the extent to which the Soviet Government has reorganised the industrial war potential of their satellites in Europe.

(e) It would also be useful if something could be said to restrain public criticism of United States policies. While we should continue to do all we could to prevent the adoption of provocative policies by the United States Government, it was important to avoid any public rift in Anglo-American solidarity at this time. Western Europe could not be successfully defended without American military strength.

(f) There was some danger that the latest proposals for a settlement in Korea might have led the public to take an over-optimistic view of the world situation. An early speech by the Prime Minister could correct that tendency. The need for accelerating our defence preparations arose, not from the situation in the Far East, but rather from the Russian threat to our more vital interests in Europe.

[…]

[TNA, CAB 128/3/3]

Keywords: Great – power relations, military threat