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INTERAGENCY SECURITY CLASSIFICATION APPEALS PANEL,
E.O. 13526, SECTION 5.3(b)(3)

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DECLASSIFICATION DATE: October 14, 2015

4 May 1961

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: George BLAKE

1. Over a period of many years, counterintelligence has been received indicating that the Soviets had a possible penetration into British intelligence. These leads provoked a continuous but unfruitful security investigation by British authorities. In the spring of 1960,

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enabled the British to narrow their field of investigation to one of their staff officers, George BLAKE.

2. BLAKE's period of service dates from 1944 when he worked for British intelligence in Holland and Germany. In October 1948 he was sent to Seoul, Korea, where he was later captured by the Communists. Following his repatriation to the United Kingdom via the USSR, he was assigned to British intelligence headquarters in London, and subsequently he served for four years in their operational mission

in Berlin. In May of 1959 he returned to his London headquarters where he worked on Middle East affairs for a period of one month. Given his expertise in the Russian language, he was given an important assignment in the British intelligence operational station in London where he was charged with activity directed against Soviet targets. He remained at this post until September 1960 when he was sent by the Service to the Middle East Center in Beirut, Lebanon, to study Arabic and to prepare for his next position.

3. At the conclusion of the British security investigation, BLAKE was recalled to London on a pretext from Lebanon at the end of March 1961 for detailed investigation. The encounter with BLAKE began unsuccessfully. As the hours of his interrogation dragged on, BLAKE showed no indication of weakening. It began to appear that the effort to break him would be unsuccessful. The carefully prepared ammunition had been largely shot away without breaching his defense. The prospect of his getting away with his denials loomed ominously until the last trump card was played by the British interrogators. It is the view of the Chief of the British Service that it was not only the nature of the material but the timing of the play which achieved the result.

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When faced with this evidence and asked to explain how it had come into the possession of the Soviet intelligence, BLAKE broke. From that moment on, he began to cooperate with the interrogators and seemingly has answered their questions with a remarkable degree of openness.

4. An intensive investigation has been underway since the beginning of April to ascertain the extent of BLAKE's compromise to the Soviets of intelligence information. To date, BLAKE has confessed to having disclosed to the Soviets the following operations

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a) The Berlin tunnel. BLAKE states that he passed to the Soviets all the technical papers bearing on the operation which included the identity of underground cables which were to be attacked, the method to be employed, and the route of the proposed tunnel.

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c) At an unspecified time in Berlin BLAKE states that he passed to the Soviets information regarding a

highly placed Russian agent who was eventually arrested and liquidated in Moscow. It is yet to be established whether the information available to him was sufficient for the Soviets to have taken such counteraction on the basis of his intelligence alone.

d) BLAKE passed to the RIS memoranda dealing with British operational projects affecting the British and American intelligence operations against Russian targets. These projects included a joint British-American telephone tap operation directed against the Polish Military Mission in Berlin, a telephone tap operation directed against the Yugoslav Mission in Berlin, and similar targets.

5. In their current analysis the British intelligence express the belief that BLAKE was ideologically motivated and that he had refused sums of money amounting to thousands of pounds, in his conviction that Communism was the best doctrine for humanity. He is described to be unrepentant and is professed to have no regrets for what he has done.

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6. [] British intelligence in assessing the area of damage to intelligence operations. This [] analysis

is essential if the areas of operational activity believed to have been contaminated by BLAKE's treachery are to be repaired or subject to surgery.

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BLAKE did not have access to scientific secrets involving secret weapons or nuclear or atomic arms. It is evident, however, that the scope of his espionage activity will not be known for a considerable period inasmuch as he was an active agent of the Soviet Intelligence Service for more than nine years.

8. The BLAKE case represents a most serious and damaging compromise of Allied intelligence activity directed against the Soviet.