

C.S. to arrange, M MAF

PRIME MINISTER 131.

Ref: A0119

Should we arrange a date for Ld Z.?

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PRIME MINISTER

Yes - I know him a little & can very well answer what he is a maverick

Lord Zuckerman

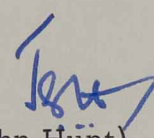
Lord Mountbatten has suggested that you should ask Lord Zuckerman to talk to you about defence nuclear questions. It would be awkward to say no to this; and subject to your diary I see no harm in saying yes. But you will wish to bear in mind the following background points, some or all of which may already be familiar to you:-

- (a) Lord Zuckerman is still (just) on the Government's payroll. From 1960 to 1966 he was Chief Scientific Adviser to the Defence Secretary. From 1964 to 1971 he was Chief Scientific Adviser to the Government, a now defunct post which was based on the Cabinet Office. Since 1971 he has retained an office and a one-day-a-week job in the Cabinet Office. It has been useful to have his views on a number of questions but the main reason for keeping this tenuous connection with him is his close personal friendship with Admiral Rickover: the latter, when his help has been sought on nuclear matters, has often insisted on dealing only with Lord Zuckerman.
- (b) He has a wide and influential circle of friends on both sides of the Atlantic (in the United States he has much better links with the Democrats than with the Republicans and he is a friend of Dr. Harold Brown). He is distrusted by many of his fellow-scientists, partly because of his skill at nobbling the great and partly because "purer" nuclear experts tend to resent competition from one whose original expertise was in zoology. He is certainly an intellectual maverick and a law unto himself. But like many mavericks he is not without flashes of insight.
- (c) He is a member, along with Sir Sam Curran, Sir Sam Edwards and Sir Hans Kornberg of Lord Penney's Nuclear Advisory Panel, whose report on two CTB questions I sent you on 13th July. Indeed one of

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the purposes of setting up that Panel was to try and arrange for some of Lord Zuckerman's more heterodox views to be tested and/or tempered by contact with the best of conventional scientific wisdom.

- (d) You will not like his views on CTB, of which he is a passionate advocate. One element in this is, I think, conscience about mankind's future on the part of one who has spent many years working on weapons of annihilation. But there are other elements too.
- (e) It would be worth probing the view, attributed to him by Lord Mountbatten, that the possession of tactical and theatre (as well as strategic) nuclear weapons constitutes the greatest risk of world nuclear war.
- (f) He is a well-preserved 75, but a bit more given to reminiscing than he was.


(John Hunt)

9th August, 1979