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RECORD OF A MEETING BETWEEN THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS AND THE DANISH FOREIGN MINISTER AT CHRISTIANSBORG CASTLE ON 17 MAY AT 9.15AM

Present:

The Rt Hon  
The Lord Carrington PC  
HE Miss A M Warburton  
Mr M J E Fretwell  
Mr G G H Walden  
Mr D J E Ratford

Mr Henning Christophersen  
Ambassador Eigil Jørgensen  
Mrs Lise Østergaard  
Ambassador Niels Ersbøll  
Ambassador Ole Bierring  
Ambassador Jens Christensen  
Ambassador Peter Dyvig  
Mr C Bo Bramsen  
Mr H Schmiegelow

DEFENCE

1. Mr Christophersen said that he would like to mention the defence situation in the Nordic area. The Danes normally spoke of the "Nordic balance". But public opinion in a number of European and NATO countries was becoming preoccupied with the military situation, for example, in Northern Norway, and with the increasing Soviet military activity in that part of the Atlantic. Norway herself was concerned about the Soviet military build-up. This had been going on for some time in the Baltic too, and the Danes were naturally anxious. They understood that increased Soviet military activity in the Baltic was related to the development of the USSR as a global sea power. But they had mentioned their anxieties to the Russians many times in the last three or four years. Mr Christophersen had raised the subject with Mr Gromyko in New York last autumn, during a discussion on disarmament. He had advised Mr Gromyko to reduce Soviet military activities in the Baltic if the Russians wished to promote better relations between the two peoples. But this had not made much impression on Mr Gromyko.

2. All Nordic countries shared Danish concerns to some degree. But the Danes themselves would not change their defence policy, eg by accepting Finnish proposals for a new Nordic policy. Denmark had rejected these because of the problems they would create for the NATO Alliance. But discussion of the Finnish proposals would continue in the area.

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3. In response to a question from Lord Carrington, Mr Jørgensen said that increased Soviet activity had begun about five or seven years ago, though it had been less marked in the last two years. The Russians had been more active in the air as well as on the sea, and the result was that the warning time for Denmark had been reduced. The Danes felt more exposed than before, though they realised that these activities were not aimed specifically at them, but were part of a more general military build-up in the area. These developments were beginning to have their affect on public opinion.
4. Lord Carrington said he was puzzled by the Soviet attitude towards defence expenditure. It was odd that the Russians did not realise that enough was enough. Although this may seem a heretical thought, he himself suspected that pressures for increased military spending were built into the Soviet system, which was highly bureaucratized in this as in other areas. This was not to say that the situation described by the Danes did not have its dangers. Miss Warburton pointed out that it could also pay dividends by making public opinion more aware of the need to accept defence spending. Mr Christophersen confirmed this: public opinion polls on NATO were taken several times a year in Denmark, and the percentage favouring NATO membership had increased during the last two years for the first time since the early 1950s.
5. Lord Carrington said it had been suggested that Soviet actions may be in some measure a response to NATO's own attempts to repair its fences in the north, though he himself doubted this theory. He asked whether the Russians were trying to woo Norway away from NATO. Mr Christophersen said that they would not succeed in doing this. Norwegian public opinion was even more concerned than Danish opinion. The Norwegians had also been negotiating directly with the Canadians and the UK about earmarking more troops for Norway. Mr Jørgensen said that Soviet moves in the north were part of a wider pattern of attempts to divide Europe from the United States. He also speculated that the Kekkonen plan may have been genuinely Finnish and not necessarily inspired directly by the Russians.
6. Mrs Østergaard said that she was interested in Lord Carrington's remarks on the dynamics behind Soviet policy. The Soviet leaders were elderly and suspicious men. Soviet actions in the Nordic area should also be seen in the context of their world strategy. They were more active in Africa, the Middle East, the Far East and South East Asia, and were taking a more difficult line in East/West Relations. Lord Carrington agreed, but said that the Soviet leaders were cautious as well as old. When Mr Brezhnev disappeared, some of the younger people who might replace him could be more hawkish. There was something to be said for cautious old gentlemen.
7. Mr Christophersen agreed that the Soviet leaders were cautious, but thought that they were also prepared to be more hawkish if necessary. The Finns tended to anticipate Soviet pressures in their proposals and speeches. It was very important that the balance should not be upset by changes in Norwegian or Danish policy. Denmark

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was firmly opposed to special treaties or Kekkonen plans on nuclear weapons. They wished to keep a clear, sharp picture of their defence and foreign policy. The Swedes had a slightly different attitude but even they had been reluctant to respond to Finnish proposals. He thought that the military situation in the Nordic area would be discussed increasingly frequently in NATO and elsewhere.

8. On TNF modernisation, Mr Christophersen said that because of democratic pressures, Western Europe had failed to maintain a balance of conventional forces with the East. Instead, the West had tried to maintain superiority in strategic weapons, and by maintaining a high level of theatre nuclear weapons. If the Russians modernised their own theatre nuclear weapons, NATO would need to respond. He therefore understood the need to discuss eventual modernisation. But discussions on TNF arms control should proceed at the same time.

9. Lord Carrington said that it was difficult to discuss the control of weapons we did not yet possess. He also wished to say, for the Danes' ears only, that he thought the Americans were in danger of attaching disproportionate importance to SALT II. We were called upon to give a greater degree of support than the terms of the agreement warranted. But this in itself was a compulsion to support the treaty. His own view of SALT I was that it had been disadvantageous to the Americans, since it had allowed the Russians to catch up more quickly than they would otherwise have done. But he thought that SALT II would allow the Americans to take any necessary measures to maintain the effectiveness of their strategic nuclear deterrent. Our own main interest lay in cruise missiles and the transfer of nuclear technology, and we would be discussing this with the Americans. We must support SALT II though we would need to look closely at the terms of reference for SALT III. This was infinitely more important for Europe, and affected the modernisation of TNF. In this regard he hoped that the High Level Group would report soon.

10. Mr Christophersen said that when he had spoken of the importance of the arms control aspect of TNF, he had meant that we should consider carefully what the consequences of any decision on TNF modernisation would be for our arms control policy. If NATO decided to modernise TNF, it would be useful to be able to have an agreed line on arms control to put to the Russians. He asked whether it would be easier for the American Congress to ratify SALT if early decisions were taken on TNF modernisation? Lord Carrington said he doubted whether the timescale would fit. Mr Christophersen asked whether the UK foresaw the stationing of any modernised TNF on UK territory. Lord Carrington said that the stationing of nuclear weapons in the UK would be nothing new; we already had eg Vulcan bombers. Much would also depend on whether the new TNF were seaborne or airborne. But he would guess that the Germans would not consider the stationing of new TNF on UK soil as a sufficient incentive for them to agree to stationing in Germany. They wanted to share the burden with eg Belgium and Holland.

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