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RECORD OF A BREAKFAST MEETING BETWEEN THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS AND THE MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY AT THE CARLTON TOWERS HOTEL ON FRIDAY 11 MAY AT 8.30 AM

Present:

The Rt Hon The Lord Carrington PC	His Excellency Herr Hans-Dietrich Genscher
Mr G H Walden	Mr H-G Petersmann
	Interpreter

SALT/MBFR/TNF

1. Herr Genscher emphasised the importance of the SALT Agreement. The effect on East/West relations if it were rejected by Congress would be very bad. We should help the Americans to secure ratification of the Treaty. We were all free to comment, as Congress would, on certain aspects of SALT II, but our overall interest lay in detente. What was important was to ensure that special European interests were taken into account in SALT III.
2. In the MBFR negotiations one of the main Eastern motives was to impose an inferior status on German forces. Given the role of the Bundeswehr in the defence of Western Europe, its numerical strength, and the strategic position of Germany, this was not only a matter for the Germans, but for the Alliance as a whole. It was vital to preserve the principle of collectivity and of parity. In Vienna we would need stamina and perseverance. There were voices in Germany and in Western Europe as a whole who were constantly urging the injection of new ideas into the negotiations. This only encouraged the Russians to play it long. For that reason he felt it was important to work out a common alliance position in the negotiations. He gathered that the Americans and Russians would discuss MBFR during their Summit, in the hope of giving the negotiations a new impulse. The Western position must be coordinated before the Summit. We should also take account of the French who remained adamantly opposed to MBFR.
3. Reverting to SALT, Lord Carrington asked whether the Germans thought that the terms of the Agreement were equitable. Herr Genscher said that he thought they were. On SALT III Lord Carrington said that the Americans seemed to want to retain the right to keep the negotiations bilateral. Herr Genscher said that this was not exactly his impression. The Americans wanted to preserve a certain exclusivity in SALT, but the European interest was being increasingly recognised. Lord Carrington said that he did not think that the Americans were neglecting our interests, but that they would not want us in the negotiations.

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4. Herr Genscher said that the British and German situations were different, in that the United Kingdom was a nuclear power. But our basic interests were the same. He attached great importance to the new Special Group set up within NATO on the arms control aspects of theatre nuclear forces (TNF). The purpose of this group was to ensure that arms control initiatives on grey areas could proceed in parallel to studies on TNF modernisation. The High Level Group on TNF modernisation was proceeding well. The problem was that the basic Soviet position was that, wherever they felt inferior they tried to establish parity and to push negotiations ahead. In fields where they were superior, however, they wanted to freeze the situation and play it long. Lord Carrington agreed. In MBFR, while we must clearly be seen to be trying to achieve progress, we must retain our sense of reality. Herr Genscher said that he was sometimes accused of being a disenchanting idealist. If this meant that he had learned from experience, he was not sorry to have had these experiences.

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