

Record of Mtg. of Foreign Ministers

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Preliminary unedited
version

TIME: 8:15 a.m.
DATE: July 17, 1978
PLACE: Chancellery Building
Bonn

PARTICIPANTS

FRG

Hans-Dietrich Genscher
Foreign Minister
Dr. Klaus Blech,
Political Director

UK

David Owen, Foreign and
Commonwealth Secretary
Sir Michael Palliser
Permanent Under Secretary

France

Louis de Guiringaud
Foreign Minister
Jean-Marie Merillon
Political Director

US

Secretary Vance
Assistant Secretary Vest
John Kornblum (notetaker)

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Berlin

As Chairman of the Bonn Group, Merillon presented the attached report on interruption of transit traffic to and from West Berlin by GDR authorities.

After listening to the report, de Guiringaud said he did not agree with the sentence which stated that the decision to interrupt traffic had been taken at "relatively low levels" on the GDR side. Vance agreed and Owen added that it should be assumed that the decision had been taken at a high level. Vance said that the Allies should protest the GDR action by sending to the Soviets the note recommended by the Bonn Group. Genscher agreed with this recommendation, noting that the FRG had already protested the interruption through the Inner-German Transit Commission which had been established under terms of the Quadripartite Agreement. Blech said that the FRG had also raised the matter with the GDR Charge in Bonn and through the GDR Foreign Ministry in East Berlin. Genscher noted that the FRG had also made a public statement on the matter.

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It was agreed that the note recommended by the Bonn Group should be delivered to the Soviet Embassy in East Berlin at the Political Adviser level and that the press should be informed of the Allied action. The text of the note is attached.

Cyprus

Genscher recalled that a course of action on Cyprus had been agreed during discussions the previous evening. He asked if there were any further remarks.

Owen said the most important remaining question was that of machinery. It was extremely important that Allied efforts be kept secret. This created the question of how the Canadians should be involved. The meetings of the Four Power Political Directors were very private and this forum should probably be used for preliminary discussions if the Canadians would not be offended. Owen said he wanted to give the question of machinery some thought. If the US Congressional vote on the Turkish Defense Cooperation Agreement were to take place before the end of the month, Cyprus could be added to the agenda of the five-power meeting on Namibia, which might take place in New York at the end of July.

Vance thought this was a good idea. He said the Turkish vote in Congress would probable come on July 27 or 28. Owen said the UK had done some preliminary work which it would submit beforehand. Vance said the US had also done a good deal of work which he would be glad to share with his colleagues. As for the discussions themselves, Owen thought that a contact group was the best idea. All of the countries involved had people stationed in Cyprus who could do the job. Genscher and de Guiringaud agreed that the New York meeting would provide good cover for a discussion of Cyprus. Owen suggested that after the five power meeting the plan should be explained to Waldheim so that he would not feel upstaged. The other Ministers agreed with this course of action.

UN Security Council

Genscher recalled that on the previous evening he had mentioned the names of various countries interested in the two Western seats coming open on the UN Security Council. Several good friends were interested in membership and Genscher thought it would be important to think carefully about whom should be supported.

Vance asked for the names of the countries which had applied. Blech listed them as Norway, Italy, Turkey, Greece, Malta and Portugal. He noted that Greece and Turkey had each applied to neutralize the other. If their candidacies were left aside, there were three Mediterranean countries and one Northern country for the two vacancies. This suggested that the West should choose one Mediterranean and one Northern country.

Vance said that Norway would be a good member of the Security Council and his colleagues agreed.

De Guiringaud said that the choice of the Mediterranean country then seemed to center on either Portugal or Italy. Owen said that his first inclination was to prefer Italy which had already served on the Security Council several times before. Vance wondered if Portugal would not be a good candidate in light of the continuing discussion of problems in Southern Africa. He also noted that Italy had been a member of the Security Council several times and this in itself could create problems. In response to a question from de Guiringaud, Blech said that Italy had been a member of the Security Council three times, and that its last term had ended in 1976.

Owen said that on this basis he also tended to prefer Portugal. He pointed out that Portugal would not be the free agent which some might expect. It was proceeding with its application for EC membership and in this status would want to take account of decisions by the EC Political Committee on UN matters. There was a developing tendency of applicant countries to begin early to align their policies with those of the EC and Portugal would not be totally free-swinging. It was also possible that the responsibility of Security Council membership would help support the development of democracy in Portugal. A further factor was that the new Portuguese Foreign Minister was a very able man. Genscher said that if the decision was to support Portugal the Italians should be informed soon. De Guiringaud said that they could be told that since they had last left in 1976, it would be difficult to reenter only three years later.

Genscher noted that in the Asian Group the two leading candidacies were Bangladesh and Japan. De Guiringaud thought that the West should be cautious and should not get involved in a choice between the two. The decision should be left to the Asian Group. In any case, Japan would campaign energetically, offering loans and other forms of economic support. By the fall the majority of Asian members would support them. He added that if the West departed from its position of allowing the geographic groups to choose their

candidates, it would become involved in the internal competition of the Africans and others. Furthermore, most Asians would resent Western support of Japan. The best way to undermine the Japanese candidacy would probably be to come out openly in their favor. Owen agreed with this analysis.

Afghanistan and Pakistan

Vance said he would like to touch briefly on the situation in Afghanistan and Pakistan. US Deputy Under Secretary Newson was in the area at the moment and would be back in Washington at the end of the week. He was now in Afghanistan and then would go to India. He would present a full report upon his return to Washington which Vance promised to send to each of his colleagues so they could also share in his conclusions. Vance said he continued to worry about the situation in the area, especially in Pakistan. He thought the West should keep a close eye on the matter. Blech noted that there was already agreement among the Political Directors to study the subject. It was on the agenda for the September meeting and in the meantime the Directors were preparing analyses of the situation.

Owen said that if events moved more rapidly this subject could also be discussed at the five-power meeting in New York. He thought that Vance was right to be concerned about the situation. He knew too that the US was worried about the possible sale of Jaguar aircraft to India. Owen noted that to maintain a balance in the area, the UK had agreed to supply the aircraft to both Pakistan and India. It was clear, however, that the Pakistanis did not want the Jaguar. The matter had been under discussion for years and the UK had discussed it very openly with the Pakistanis to ensure that they knew what was going on. Owen doubted that a decision would be made in the next couple of months but agreed that public presentation of the possible sale was important so that it be seen as a tilt against the Pakistanis. Owen added that he had raised the Jaguar sale with the Iranians during the UN Special Session on Disarmament. He thought that the Shah had been helpful in the matter. He had taken a measured attitude with the Pakistanis in attempting to convince them that a sale of Jaguars to India did not represent a tilt against Pakistan. On balance, Owen did not think that a Jaguar sale would be harmful to the situation in the area.

Vance asked his colleagues how they read the appointment of two of the most influential members of the Afghanistan

Cabinet to Ambassadorships, especially the fact that the man with close ties to the Soviets was to be Ambassador to the United States. Vance said US experts were baffled by the move. De Guiringaud said that some of his people had read it as a move to give the regime in Kabul a more moderate appearance and to make it possible to play the non-aligned card. Owen said he thought the Pakistanis would also like to have a more non-aligned attitude but noted that General Ziaul was at the same time even talking about rejoining the Commonwealth. Palliser noted that there had also recently been a meeting between Pakistan and Turkey where there had been a good deal of talk about non-alignment. Owen added that an important factor in Pakistan was the aid it received from Iran. He didn't think that the Pakistanis wanted to lose this support. De Guiringaud understood that Iran was now in fact withholding further aid until they got a better idea of what Ziaul was up to. Owen added that he had heard rumors that the Iranians might be willing to accept Bhutto and provide him with a place to live with appropriate security safeguards.

Pakistani Interest in French Reprocessing Plant

De Guiringaud stated that on an extremely confidential basis he wished to bring his colleagues up to date on French discussions with the Pakistanis on the reprocessing plant sale. A French representative had gone to Pakistan this week to suggest a delay in the sale. The French had wanted to send the representative ten days ago but the Pakistanis had delayed the visit and it was not yet clear how the talks would come out. The choice being offered was either to delay the sale, in which case the French would offer additional compensation to Pakistan or to have an open disagreement between France and Pakistan. De Guiringaud noted that Ziaul had recently been quoted by an Arab newspaper to the effect that there was no reason why the Moslem people should not have atomic weapons and that Pakistan intended to develop them. The statement had been presented clearly in the newspaper. De Guiringaud said that this interview had been disquieting but in exposing the Pakistani position to the public it had also made it easier for the French to seek a delay in the sale. Vance noted that the Saudis and the Iranians had also urged the Pakistanis not to build a nuclear weapon. Owen asked de Guiringaud how he thought the Chinese would react to the French statement to the Pakistanis. De Guiringaud thought that they would criticize the move. Their view continued to be

that all countries should have nuclear weapons. He said that this, of course, was a theoretically position which the Chinese would change if there were ever a chance of the Vietnamese having an atomic bomb. De Guiringaud stressed that the French discussions with Pakistan were still very secret and he asked that his colleagues hold the information tightly until it had been released publicly, perhaps at the end of the week.

As a footnote to the discussion, Vance noted that the US had told the Pakistanis that under law it was prohibited from giving economic or military assistance to Pakistan if it went ahead with building the reprocessing plant. It had also been made clear that if Pakistan decided not to build the plant the US would provide additional aid. The Pakistanis must make the choice.

Owen said that he was pleased with the courageous and important French decision to seek a delay in the sale to Pakistan. He said that if the French needed any help in the matter the UK would be glad to be of assistance. Vance said that the US would also be happy to help. De Guiringaud thanked his colleagues and said that he might at some time need their assistance. So far the French were basing the argument on the fact that since Pakistan had no nuclear reactors it did not need a reprocessing plant. Spending the money on a reprocessing plant was wasteful, especially at a time when changes in neighboring countries increased the military threat to Pakistan. De Guiringaud said that France was also ready to help build up the Pakistan forces providing that they delayed building the reprocessing plant. He said that the French were not demanding that the Pakistanis decide the matter in principle. They were instead suggesting that Pakistan had other priorities which were more important at the moment. The French had also pointed out to Pakistan that if they did decide to delay building the reprocessing plant, the French could give the US a signal which would permit Congress to resume aid.

Returning to the possible sale of Jaguar aircraft to India, Owen said that he had described to his colleagues the British point of view on the matter. If there were objections to British policy, he would be happy to consider them.

Genscher said he assumed there was no connection between US views on the possible sale of a reprocessing plant to Pakistan and the German agreement to sell such technology

to Brazil. Owen said he wished to say something on that subject. He said he had never criticized the FRG publicly for the Brazil deal but that he personally thought it was wrong to sell reprocessing technology to the Brazilians. Owen thought it would be beneficial if in light of the French decision on Pakistan the FRG could also reexamine its position on the sale to Brazil.

Genscher said that the decision had already been made and that the FRG would hold to it. He recalled that the FRG had signed the NPT under very clear conditions. The agreement with Brazil was in full accord with the NPT. Genscher said he knew that other governments had other views on the Brazil deal. The FRG had talked many times with its American friends, but continued to believe that it should honor the agreement with Brazil.

Owen said that he respected the German position on the matter but in light of the French action in Pakistan he thought it would be good to at least think about the Brazil deal once again.

Owen said there was another issue that he had nearly raised on the previous day. He thought there was a craziness about the world at the moment. Governments spent hours discussing how to stop the exchange of plutonium and enriched uranium. While at the same time their scientists were each day publishing material in scientific journals which might make it possible for a small group of persons working in a laboratory to make a bomb of their own. Owen said it could of course be argued that scientists should be allowed to go about their work. He wondered, however, if present world leaders would be judged by history as having neglected this major area of leakage in the non-proliferation field.

Vance agreed that a problem existed but wondered what could be done. He noted that two American students had recently written a paper based on published resources found in the Library of Congress which provided the full plans for a crude atomic bomb. Vance said he had talked to their professor who also worked in the field of nuclear weapons and had been told that the paper was superb. Vance thought that the birds had already flown. The information was already in the public domain and that it was difficult to stop people from making a crude atomic bomb. De Guiringaud noted that the real issue was not production

of a large crude atomic bomb but rather to control technology for sophisticated smaller weapons. It was not true that any group of gangsters could put together an atomic bomb. A state could but not a private group. This meant that the way to prevent the spread of atomic weapons was to control supply of fissionable materials. Plutonium was the most dangerous. In that regard de Guiringaud noted that the Pakistanis had been unwise in ordering a reprocessing plant at the very start of their efforts to produce an atomic weapon. This move had heightened opinions about their intentions. It would have been much smarter to begin with construction of a small research reactor from which fissionable material could have been collected over the years.

The meeting concluded at 9:30 a.m. with a call for the Ministers to join the Heads of Government and Chiefs of State.