

SECRET
AND PERSONAL

JES
3



10 Downing Street
Whitehall

File

19 November 1975

cc Sir J Hunt.

Meeting of the Heads of Government at
Rambouillet on Monday 17 November

As you know, the Heads of Government at Rambouillet met for about an hour and a half at 10.00 a.m. on Monday 17 November, without any other Ministers or officials being present. The Prime Minister has prepared the enclosed note of this meeting, which, as you will see, he has specifically asked to be given very limited circulation and on no account to be discussed with others, including officials of the countries represented at Rambouillet.

You will see that the discussion includes a reference to Spain, and that the Prime Minister mentioned to his colleagues that he had already asked the Danish Prime Minister to put Spain high on the agenda of the Copenhagen Socialist Leaders' Meeting in January. So far as I know, this has not yet been done, since we had taken the view that any notification to the Danes about the agenda should await a final decision on whether the Prime Minister and the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary will themselves be attending the meeting. Perhaps we could have a word about this as soon as possible.

The Prime Minister told me that President Ford had expressed to him considerable interest in the discussion on Spain, and that the Prime Minister had undertaken to send President Ford a follow-up message on how we saw the likely development of events in Spain, following General Franco's death. I should be grateful if you would consider this proposal, and if you could let me have, subject to the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary's views, a suitable draft for the purpose.

I am sending a copy of this letter and of the enclosure, on a personal basis, to Sir John Hunt.

R. H. WRIGHT

Ewen Fergusson, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

SECRET
AND PERSONAL

SECRET

NOTE OF AN INFORMAL MEETING OF HEADS OF GOVERNMENT - RAMBOUILLET
MONDAY 17 NOVEMBER 1975

NOTE: THIS NOTE IS FOR VERY LIMITED CIRCULATION AND NO
RECIPIENTS SHOULD REFER TO IT IN INTERNATIONAL DISCUSSIONS,
INCLUDING DISCUSSIONS WITH OFFICIALS OF THE COUNTRIES WHOSE
HEADS OF GOVERNMENT PARTICIPATED IN THE TALKS

The meeting began with a series of travelogues.

SCHMIDT reported on his visit to China. He had had 2 hours with Mao, who he said was extremely frail physically; on a long table in his room were drugs and medical and surgical equipment covered by a cloth. The whole of the talk was about the Soviet Union. Schmidt said Mao was obsessed with the U.S.S.R., and on everything discussed had paused to ask whether this or that development would be advantageous to the U.S.S.R. or not.

Mao said that first Khrushchev, and then Kosygin and Brezhnev, were traitors to the inheritance of Lenin and Stalin. He was obsessed with the inevitability of a world war started by the U.S.S.R.

The in-word was hegemonism which was not only used by all the Chinese Leaders, but appeared in all the Press headlines.

When Schmidt asked Mao whether he thought there would be changes when a new generation took over in Moscow, Mao said it would not make any difference: they were all indoctrinated by the Brezhnev heresy. He had gone on to say that the United States was fundamentally weak and irresolute, and would not stand up to the Soviet Union.

Schmidt emphasised the high average age level of the Chinese Leaders, one of whom, still active, is 90. Mao is physically almost totally disabled and "grovels like a dog in a corner".

/However

SECRET

However eminent the member of the Administration present with Mao, in this case the Foreign Minister, he remained totally silent throughout; as did other officials, when Schmidt had met the Foreign Minister.

GISCARD then described his visit to Moscow. He went to great pains to say there were no differences between himself and the Russians, nor any snags or slights. It was Brezhnev's illness: he had 'flu. Brezhnev was now working a very short day, 4.00-6.00 p.m. roughly. He had wanted control over the Administration (I said we already knew that Kosygin was in complete control of the Government machine, the harvests, industry, relations with the Supreme Soviet, etc., and foreign and military policy). Schmidt and Giscard both said that Gromyko had advanced to a much greater control over foreign and military matters, though it was here where Brezhnev was still supreme. I confirmed that this was also my view on Gromyko who, in the early 1960s, had been no more than an apparatchik and who at that time had admitted to me he was not a member of the Government, but an expert. It was the general view of all of us that Gromyko was taking a much harder line than some of the others in a field where his influence has greatly grown. Giscard said that one had to remember that Gromyko was younger and had to think about the new Soviet leadership; he might well feel that the military pressures might be decisive on the choice of the new leadership, even to the point where a military man dominated the new leadership. Gromyko would want to remain in such a situation, and was therefore reflecting more and more that kind of line.

FORD then addressed us on SALT. The negotiations, he said, were dead centre (which to me sounded a bit like deadlocked). He kept using the phrase, but did not explain it. He is quite sure there will be no meeting with Brezhnev this year, but, when asked by Schmidt about the feasibility of a meeting in the spring or summer, i.e., whether this would be ruled out on campaigning grounds, Ford said "no"; he thought that next year at almost any time would be feasible.

/The two

The two sticking points on SALT were "back-fire", and "cruise missiles". The Americans were attaching more and more importance to cruise missiles which were in fact pilotless planes capable of an almost indefinite range, and, since they were not on a fixed trajectory like ballistic missiles, could not be attacked and destroyed in the same way. Clearly, the longer the range of those aircraft, the smaller the pay load, but they were producing them with some variety of range/pay load.

Giscard asked why the Americans should not include their cruise missiles with the ballistic missiles in the balance that was being sought. Ford said that cruise missiles were not verifiable in number and it would be easy for the Russians to embark on a big programme, and thus cheat in agreements.

On MBFR, Ford thought that any agreement might lead to a reduction in both Soviet and US troops - not European troops in the border areas - with particular reference to the two Germanies. Some of what he and Schmidt called "theatre" missiles were not "terribly effective", and he would be very willing to see a trade-off between such missiles as against a withdrawal of a tank division from East Germany. Schmidt was obviously content with this.

Schmidt did warn against premature and haphazard withdrawals, even by the East Germans as part of any deal with them, since withdrawals of East German troops would lead to political pressure in West Germany for a run-down of their own troops.

Ford said it was his understanding that the NATO Staffs and National Representatives were approaching an agreement on the lines of Option III.

Giscard surprisingly expressed anxiety about the creation of a neutral belt in Central Europe if things went too far. Referring to Austria as well as one or two areas where withdrawals might take place, I said I thought it was inconceivable that either West Germany or East Germany would feature as part of
/a neutral

SECRET

- 4 -

a neutral belt. Giscard throughout was taking a rather strong NATO line. He referred to French distancing from NATO but sounded much more concerned about NATO effectiveness than I would have thought.

I raised the question of the Middle East. I said that we must get together with France on supplies to Egypt and indeed other Arab countries, particularly on Jaguar. We must not appear to be, or in reality be, in competition on Jaguar exports. I said that we had kept in close touch with Kissinger on Middle East arms supplies, and Ford confirmed this. The Americans were now supplying the whole of the Israelis' arms requirements, not merely supplying the arms physically, but picking up the bill. He also confirmed this. I said I was anxious to avoid creating an arms race in the Middle East, and for that reason was keeping in close touch with Kissinger as to the quantity, value and quality of arms shipments to avoid forcing the Israelis into counter-escalation. I said it was well-known that I was strongly pro-Israeli, but that our relations with Sadat and Prince Fahd had improved out of all recognition, and that we took the view - and had explained this to the Israeli Ambassador a year earlier - that there was value to be had in making the Egyptians less dependent, indeed no longer dependent, on Soviet arms supplies.

Ford and Schmidt strongly endorsed this, and Giscard said that this was in his mind equally. The notes I made on arms supplies to certain Arab countries - I specifically excluded Libya and a few others, amid general laughter - read "Ford responded very favourably".

Giscard raised the question of Spain, and the ceremonies for the funeral and the accession of the King. I expressed the view that Franco fully intended to attend the funerals of all the six of us, and I asked whether there was any possibility of the accession preceding the funeral. Giscard, who clearly knew what he was talking about, said "no - the accession will be four or five days after the funeral".

/I mentioned

SECRET

SECRET

- 5 -

I mentioned my talk with Fraga. Giscard said he would not get the premiership. I think he was talking with knowledge. He thinks as I do that he is more likely to be the Foreign Minister. I mentioned the idea of preserving stability by keeping the Upper House, representing syndicates and corporations, in an atmosphere of continuity, while democratic elections might be held for the Lower House. Schmidt thought that the socialists would get some 50 per cent of the votes. Giscard violently disagreed, and said that the right wing would win easily; the socialists would get 25-30 per cent. I referred to Fraga's anxieties about divisions between the three Democratic Socialist Parties, and suggested to Schmidt that European Socialist leaders should use their good offices to bring the three together - probably through the Party machines rather than through Governments. I said I had asked Joergensen to put Spain high on the agenda of the Copenhagen Socialist Leaders' meeting in January.

Giscard agreed with my view that the Spanish Communist Party, which he thought would get a higher percentage vote than either Schmidt and myself (or Fraga) thought, was not an Orthodox Russian Party, but rather more Romanian-orientated with strong Chinese connections. He thought that for various reasons, which he and I agreed, we might not see the same degree of ultra-left parties which existed in Portugal, but nevertheless he felt that Spain could easily dissolve into turmoil - even more than Portugal. Portugal, he said, was traditionally a peaceful country; Spain had always been a violent country. Despite his obvious friendship with certain elements in Spain, he thought that we should be very slow to bring them into communion with EEC, or for that matter NATO. He thought they might have a relatively peaceful and apparently democratic period for 18 months or two years, after which all hell would break loose, and where should we be then if they were integrated into some Western organisation?

/Schmidt

SECRET

SECRET

- 6 -

Schmidt said there were many difficulties about Spain in relation to EEC, despite the warm initiative taken by EEC two or three weeks ago. He thought that in some countries there would be violent reactions by the Social Democratic and Communist Left, and expressed his traditional allergy towards raising funds to subsidise Spain. I said I thought EEC would not be very keen to move very fast, since Spain's products would compete partly with those of France and certainly with those of Italy at a time when we are finding it difficult to assimilate imports from Greece and possibly later Turkey. They agreed, particularly Giscard, and Schmidt said very strongly that if there was to be a move on Spain, it should certainly be on NATO, and we might want them in. I supported this, particularly, as I said, because of our anxiety on other parts of the southern flank, particularly Greece, Turkey and Yugoslavia. I was too tactful to mention Italy at that time, though Moro was asleep anyway.

Ford pressed, and there seemed general agreement, that we ought very quickly to begin to bring the Spaniards into the NATO Councils, though there was the anxiety which Giscard had mentioned about the breakdown of law and order in 18 months or two years' time.

Schmidt and Ford raised press reports - I think they were referring to the Guardian - about further major cuts in our defence expenditure. They both expressed themselves strongly on this; the key word was "horrified".

The rest of the discussion was mainly procedural, in relation to the concluding stages of the Rambouillet Conference.

H.W.

17 November 1975

SECRET