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NOTE BY THE PRIME MINISTER OF A MEETING AT 10 DOWNING STREET WITH
PRESIDENT GISCARD, PRESIDENT CARTER AND CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT ON
MONDAY, 9 MAY, 1977, FROM 1000 TO 1230

Berlin

We began with a short discussion on Berlin, during which President Giscard complained that we were not as firm on Berlin as he was. I said I was not aware of that. We had a public opinion here about Hess, but I did not think that that had any impact. Perhaps the source of the complaint was that we were more pragmatic in dealing with problems that arose between East and West Berlin than the French, who seemed to me to take a more legalistic view? Herr Schmidt said that he thought the question was really directed at him, and he agreed with me. He thought it was right that the French should take a legalistic point of view because this was their way of thinking. But there were practical problems, and the British seemed to take a practical approach to them. They had to be solved. Germany had still not regained a feeling of national identity. German nationalism could still arise and indeed might do so fairly quickly (he mentioned two years). President Giscard said that the Russians were always asking him to be wary of the Germans and not to take too much for granted with them.

MBFR and Europe

Herr Schmidt said that MBFR was a necessary condition for him, and that we should be in earnest about this. There was a desultory conversation about Europe, in which President Giscard and I differed. He said that he was more of a European than the British were. I said that the only difference was that he expressed himself more cleverly than we did. He said he would genuinely go for a Confederation of Europe, but did not spell out what he meant. We later reverted to MBFR, and discussed the possible transfer of information on force levels. President Giscard said that he would not object to publication in some form, provided a distinction was drawn between integrated and non-integrated forces. He was in agreement that we should not depart from our present posture of reductions to the same level, as opposed to percentage reductions. Nor should we allow a

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ceiling to be imposed on any national force. He was despondent about our capacity to resist the Russian attack. He thought that in reality the forces now in the field would be all we could rely on, and that there would be very few resources to call up, whereas the Russians would have many more they could fall back on.

US/Soviet Relations and SALT

President Carter then took up the question of SALT and the Soviet Union. He said that he wished genuinely to establish ties of trust and friendship with them, but he was not sure that they trusted him. President Giscard said that one trouble was that President Carter had broken the code. He had attacked them publicly and it would take some time for them to get over this. He had gone outside the rules of the game; they were a very conservative people, and would not understand this. President Carter said that he had been surprised that all the Human Rights issues had been focussed on the Soviet Union, but he did not regret it. After Vietnam and Nixon, it was necessary that there should be something clean for the United States to latch on to, because their honour had been besmirched. By what he had said, he had managed to do this. But he would like President Giscard, when Brezhnev visited Paris in June (President Giscard had mentioned this visit to me earlier) to tell Brezhnev about the reasons for his stand on human rights.

As regards SALT, etc., President Carter said that he wanted us to be clear that the will was there to use nuclear weapons if necessary. It was a new experience to him to have the Russians reject his original offer outright: he would have expected some negotiation. However, he had now reached an agreement with them under which they would both privately think out loud to each other rather than stating positions. Dobrynin was fulfilling that role for the Soviets, and in his view could be more important than Gromyko.

He then went into some technical details that I do not wholly recall, but for testing missiles I understand that the United States had proposed six tests a year. The Soviet Union wanted 30 to 40 tests, and he thought they might agree on about 12.

/As regards launchers,

As regards launchers, he was ready to reduce the number from 2,400 to 2,300 or even 2,200 and the MIRV'd vehicles from 1,320 to 1,200. He thought they would probably get a modest temporary agreement which would include both Backfire and Cruise Missiles. He was proposing that Backfire should not be used below 63 degrees of latitude or in war games, and he mentioned something about a limit of 600 kilometres.

As regards Cruise Missiles, because of some temporary restraint on development, he was quite confident that in this field the Americans were years ahead of the Soviet Union because of miniaturisation of components.

President Carter had with him a very full brief with photographs, of details of Soviet weapons, and explained this to President Giscard. It was familiar material to me, and I am sure to Herr Schmidt, but I gather President Giscard had not seen it before and Herr Schmidt suggested that President Giscard should be given a briefing on the degree of surveillance that can be mounted, and the accuracy of it. This point arose out of a discussion on the calling up of Russian reserves. President Carter said that he was confident that they would know if reserves were being called up, and produced these photographs as evidence that they could count each individual tank. He said that the Russians were very punctilious in keeping their agreements. When they found last year that they would not be able to destroy all the military silos by the first of June that they had undertaken to do, they telephoned the Americans and apologised and said that they would be clear by 20 June. Whether he was quoting exact dates or not, I do not know, or whether it was an illustration. He said that he and Brezhnev were exchanging correspondence now.

Comprehensive Test Ban and NATO

President Carter said that he would go for a Comprehensive Test Ban treaty, although his military did not agree; but he would follow this up seriously. In an interposition, he said that the days were over when the Secretary of State could make foreign policy. He was responsible to the American people, and he would do it. I did not want to go into details on our position on the

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Comprehensive Test Ban in front of President Giscard and Chancellor Schmidt; so I merely interposed that this was a matter that I would want to raise with him separately, including the consequences for us, which he acknowledged.

As regards NATO, President Carter said that he intended to outline tomorrow his readiness to continue full support. There would be no Mansfield proposals for withdrawal. Indeed, if necessary, he would strengthen United States forces here. He had no obligation to the military complex in the United States, and did not intend to incur any. He would also speak of the build-up of Soviet forces, although he was confident that we could more than hold our own.

President Carter said that he did not want to see Europe dependent on a United States/Federal Republic of Germany military force. We all agreed that this would be dangerous and would arouse Soviet suspicions, which were already intense.

US Relations with China and the Far East

President Carter said that he would like to restore diplomatic relations with China. Mr. Vance would be visiting there in the early future. He would be ready to give up his treaty with Taiwan, in exchange for an undertaking from the Chinese that they would settle for a peaceful resolution to the problem.

President Carter said that he had notified President Park that he intended to withdraw all the 43,000 troops from South Korea (including his nuclear forces) and that they would be based in Guam, although he proposed to leave 8,000 air-force

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personnel there (whether with planes or not, I do not know). Mr. Fukuda was very opposed to this, and believed that it would have political repercussions; his military were also very antagonistic to the idea.

Conventional Arms Supplies

On arms supplies, President Carter said that he was circulating an internal directive, which he showed us, calling on all Agencies in the United States to reduce the thrust of arms sales. This would not apply to countries with whom they had treaty obligations, and they would need to fulfil existing contracts. But they would seek to reduce those contracts, and he said he had had conversations with the Iranians. The Shah had told him that he would like to reduce purchases. The policy would also apply to Israel, and would also affect supplies of components and spare parts. He would be happy to arrange for Mr. Vance to go over this with us, although it was a unilateral decision on his part. He had informed the Soviet Union, who had said they would go along with it, but did not want a bilateral agreement.

On arms procurment, he said he genuinely wanted more two-way traffic, and again repeated that he had no obligations to the military complex in the United States.

Middle East

On the Middle East, President Carter covered a lot of familiar history about the call by Israel for a peace settlement, the future of the borders, and the future of the Palestinians. There was nothing new in this. After the end of this month, Mr. Vance would make a tour of the Middle East and, following his return, he would make up his mind about further negotiations: whether he should return to Geneva, what support Europe might be asked to give after full consultation, etc. From his point of view, he would make a major effort this year because he thought that after this year there could be serious trouble. But 1977 was the year, and he was not looking to 1978.

He said that President Sadat would like a mutual defence agreement, but he did not want to enter into one, although he would be willing to do so under certain conditions.

President Giscard made an extreme, pro-Arab analysis, the burden of which was that Israel must be told straightaway that she had to go back to the 1967 borders; that she could not enforce peace; that there was no security for Israel in the present situation, etc. He was corrected by President Carter, who said that he had agreed with what I had to say about the matter. I took a much more balanced view.

Africa

On Africa, President Giscard went over his case for another Marshall Plan, and suggested that President Carter should invite President Houphuet-Boigny as the elder statesman. Herr Schmidt asked my view about President Kaunda. President Carter said that he thought Nigeria was developing into the most important state.

Comment

I have not put into these notes what I myself said, because that would really not add to what is already known: but two points occurred to me. The first was that, as regards the Middle East, the problem will not go away, and President Carter will have it on his plate, even if he has not solved it this year, although he seemed not to anticipate that. The second point is that I was astonished (and I think the others were) at the number and importance of decisions that he has already made. I find myself wondering whether they will all stick when he comes up against difficulties.

11 May, 1977.

cc: S of S.F.C.D.
Extract: Defence, ^{June} July 74
(M.B.F.R., SALT II)
: NATO, Feb 77
: Middle East, 866
situation
: Defence, May 77
conventional arms transfers.