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NOTE FOR THE RECORD

RECORD OF A MEETING BETWEEN THE DEFENCE SECRETARY AND  
DR MANFRED WOERNER ON FRIDAY 22ND APRIL AT 10a.m.

## Present:

The Rt Hon Michael Heseltine MP  
Secretary of State for Defence\*

Dr Manfred Woerner  
German Minister of Defence\*

Mr Clive Whitmore  
Permanent Under Secretary of State

Dr L Ruehl  
State Secretary

Air Chief Marshal Sir Douglas Lowe  
Chief of Defence Procurement

Dr H Ruehle  
Director, Planning Staff

Mr J N H Blelloch  
Deputy Under Secretary (Policy and  
Programmes)

Major General P Tandecki  
Vice Chief of Defence Staff  
for Politico-Military Affairs

Rear Admiral J J R Oswald  
Assistant Chief of Defence Staff  
(Programmes)

Colonel J Schoenbohm  
PSO to the Minister

(From the Embassy)

Mr N J Beaumont  
Head of Defence Secretariat 12

Rear Admiral Dr K Fischer  
Defence Attache

Mr R C Mottram  
Private Secretary/Secretary of  
State\*

\* Present for tête-à-tête discussion

Sale of Tornado Aircraft

1. The Secretary of State asked where matters stood on the sale of Tornado aircraft. Dr Woerner said that, at a meeting of the Federal Security Council held earlier in the week, it had been agreed that the proposed MOU on defence sales should be accepted and applied to the Tornado. Once the MOU was in force the British Government





could apply under its terms to sell Tornado to Oman. While the Government of the Federal Republic was likely to ask for certain conditions to be observed in such a sale, he was confident that it would be agreed. The Secretary of State said that he was most grateful to Dr Woerner for his assistance over this.

#### Spanish Membership of NATO

2. Dr Woerner said that he would be meeting within a few weeks his Spanish opposite number, and before doing so he would like to know the British attitude to Spanish membership of NATO. The Secretary of State said that Britain supported Spanish membership of the Alliance in view of the substantial forces she could contribute. There had been recent Spanish objections to Exercise SPRING TRAIN but the exercise was a routine one and the objections were probably for domestic consumption.

#### Franco-German Co-operation

3. Dr Woerner referred to the announcement of the five-year plan for the French defence programme on which M. Hernu had been in touch with him. Although there would be cuts in French conventional forces, he had been assured that French forces in Germany would not be affected and there were indeed signs of an increasing French willingness to participate in NATO's strategy of flexible response. The Secretary of State commented that he hoped that tri-lateral co-operation could be developed more. He understood that there had been a practice of tri-lateral Ministerial meetings but that there had been a long gap since the last one with the initiative with M. Hernu to convene the next meeting. It might be possible to develop tri-national collaboration over, for example, a future combat aircraft on which we had launched our experimental aircraft programme. Dr Woerner said that he was not aware of the arrangements for tri-lateral meetings but he would certainly be happy to attend them. It would be important to avoid offending other smaller NATO countries. He would raise the matter with M. Hernu when they met on 16th/17th May. If equipment collaboration was to be pursued the important point was to be clear in advance that countries had a common operational requirement. In the case of the combat aircraft, Germany's requirement was for an air superiority fighter and they could not afford providing for other roles except in a marginal way. It was crucial to keep the cost of the project down but he was willing to co-operate with anyone as long as the programme was not over-complicated.

#### Arms Sales to Argentina

4. The Secretary of State said that he wanted to have a private word about the problem of arms sales to Argentina which was a matter of continuing concern to the British Government. He referred to a particular item which Dr Woerner agreed to investigate. He also handed over a list of specific categories of equipment which we regarded as sensitive.\* Dr Woerner noted this and asked if the British

\* attached





Government was taking a similar line with the French over the question of arms sales to Argentina. The Secretary of State said that we had indeed been in close touch with the French Government during the Falklands war and they were well aware of our concern over this matter.

5. The tête-à-tête discussion ended at 1030 a.m.

6. Opening the plenary session, the Secretary of State said that it was a tribute to close UK/German defence relations that there were no major issues between us. It was gratifying to learn that Germany could now agree to an MOU to cover not only future overseas sales of collaborative projects, but also current sales. This would help very much in respect of Tornado sales, and hopefully officials could finalise the MOU very quickly, so that it would provide the basis for UK/German discussions on specific sales.

#### UK/German/French Trilateral

7. The Secretary of State said that he and Dr Woerner agreed that an early tri-lateral meeting with M. Hernu was desirable. Dr Woerner explained that he would raise this when he saw M. Hernu in mid-May and explain that Mr Heseltine would also welcome such a meeting. He agreed that the meeting could usefully extend beyond equipment cooperation subjects, and he would also raise this possibility with M. Hernu.

#### Two-Way Street

8. Dr Woerner said that he was very unhappy with the continuing restrictions caused by the Specialty Metal clause. He understood the US Administration was attempting to secure a compromise solution, but there could be no certainty that the Senate and Congress would agree to it. His Government was therefore working hard to convince appropriate senators and congressmen, and he hoped the UK would make similar efforts. Sir Douglas Lowe noted that Mr Pattie had pressed this issue very strongly during his visit to the United States and had been in touch by telephone with Mr Addabo. Dr Woerner said the restriction was very damaging: he had threatened Mr Weinberger that Germany would buy only European in future, although there were some areas where this was in fact impossible. The Secretary of State said he was to visit the US in mid-May and would certainly pursue this issue with Mr Weinberger and those involved in Congress. He would also be raising the restrictions on British-owned US firms from bidding for American defence contracts.

#### US Rapid Deployment Force

9. Dr Woerner said that he was concerned about the work in NATO on the implications for the Alliance of the US Rapid Deployment Force. The Americans had prevailed upon their allies at the December 1982





Defence Planning Committee meeting to accept more strongly binding communique language. But now they were producing many ideas and demands that went much further than Germany could accept. The Secretary of State said that Britain accepted the importance of threats to Western security beyond the NATO area, but the major difficulty was how to compensate for a seven division draw-down in US forces in Europe. Mr Whitmore noted that we were still very unclear as to what the US Government had in mind. They were very slow in providing information.

10. Dr Woerner expressed concern at the slow progress of the NMA's "Impact Study". General Tandecki noted the NATO Military Authorities and the allies' wish to consider a range of RDF options, but the US had resisted this. Nor had there been any thorough analysis of the out of area threat. But the US would continue to kick at a NATO process which they regarded as too slow. Mr Blelloch agreed that the Americans would continue to press for European support because they wanted Congressional approval to fund the seven division RDF plan, and needed to demonstrate their allies' solidarity. Dr Woerner identified two dangers - that the US would over-estimate European capabilities to compensate for the RDF draw-down (a possible requirement for an additional 70,000 personnel in the German case); and that the US would neglect the European dimension in possible out of area crises. In the event of a crisis in say the Middle East, there would most likely be a rise in tension in Europe, and the diversion of US forces out of area could greatly increase the Soviet threat in Europe. There must be a careful analysis of scenarios.

11. The Secretary of State referred to the possible divisiveness of this issue within the Alliance. From a US viewpoint it was right to ask what Europe would do in a Middle East crisis that affected her at least as much as the US. Dr Woerner agreed. Mr Whitmore noted that the US took the view that we were more dependent on oil supplies than they were but unfortunately the US had not felt able to engage the allies in discussion of scenarios, and had apparently formed their RDF plans first and then their rationale. No detailed analysis of scenarios was available. The Secretary of State said that we would be pursuing these issues at politico-military talks next month and in his meeting with Mr Weinberger. The British and German Governments should keep in close touch.

#### INF Deployment

12. The Secretary of State said that the British Government remained firmly committed to the INF deployment programme but was in close touch with the US Government over the timing of the arrival of individual equipment items. Dr Woerner said the German position was the same. In his view, the Russians would not move on arms control until the 11th hour and would continue to test the West's resolve. He thought deployment would have to go ahead. Germany was interested in serious arms control negotiations, but the West must not change its position again. We must stand firm on President Reagan's proposed interim agreement. He had no objection to the US





proposing numbers at the negotiating table, but did not want any new formula to be produced publicly.

13. The Secretary of State said that there had been a debate within the British Government about whether figures should have been included in the Reagan proposal. He was inclined to agree with Dr Woerner's view. He wondered whether, if he were a Russian, he would be willing to negotiate separately on INF? Dr Woerner replied that he would negotiate on as many fronts as possible, pressing on with negotiations and deployments, and keeping the categories separate. By pursuing separate negotiations the Russians had a chance to split the West. General Tandecki commented that if the Soviets were to change their objective now, it would weaken their position.

14. Dr Woerner said that his Government rejected Soviet attempts to include French and UK systems in the INF negotiations. In June 1980 the Russians had told Chancellor Schmidt they would not insist on this point - now they had changed their position for tactical reasons. The Secretary of State stressed that UK systems must be excluded, and he had made this clear in an interview recorded for German television the previous day.

15. Dr Woerner referred to the importance of INF deployment in the UK and Germany keeping in step and not appearing to pre-empt arms control possibilities. Mr Blelloch said that it had earlier been agreed to manage deployment timings both to take account of domestic political considerations and to reflect German concerns. If the domestic political constraint no longer applied, this would not affect the plan for a slow build-up of deployment towards the end of 1983 that would not pre-empt the arms control negotiations. The Secretary of State said that no sensitive or emotive equipments would arrive until towards the end of the year.

16. The Secretary of State referred to the recent press visit to Greenham Common. Dr Woerner said that the German Government did not confirm or deny their INF sites. At first he had favoured publicity, but now he was against it. Nuclear weapons sites were so numerous in Germany - more than 100 - and to confirm one must increase pressure to divulge more, possibly including Chemical Weapon sites. It would only whet the appetite of the anti-nuclear movement. But those who wanted to find out the locations could do so easily. The Secretary of State commented that in Britain there was constant interest in the number of US bases. The local population at Greenham Common was only concerned to get rid of the demonstrators. Mr Whitmore commented that we too did not confirm or deny the presence of nuclear weapons at a particular site.

#### Ballistic Missile Defence

17. The Secretary of State said that President Reagan's "Star Wars" speech was clearly aimed at an American domestic audience and the impact on informed European public opinion had been completely





overlooked. The absence of consultation in advance of the statement was most damaging, since it cast doubt on our line that the US will consult its allies in an emergency. Dr Woerner said he had to defend the INF deployment on the grounds that NATO's defence strategy rested on the ultimate threat of nuclear retaliation. It was not helpful for the US President now to say that this strategy was not moral!

#### Equipment Collaboration

18. The Secretary of State suggested that the armaments directors should provide a report on equipment collaboration prior to each summit meeting to provide a focus for Ministerial discussion. Dr Woerner said he would not object to this but he believed that the important prior step was to establish a shared need before attention was focussed on a particular equipment. He had learned this lesson from the Franco/German tank project. Franco/German co-operation arrangements now included a group to examine requirements for subsequent Ministerial consideration. Sir Douglas Lowe said that he envisaged a pragmatic approach; the objective would be to ensure that equipment issues were more closely considered at the political level.

19. The Secretary of State suggested that future combat aircraft were a case in point. Evidently Germany was interested, but not in anything like another Tornado; France was interested; and there might be the possibility of a genuine European venture. Dr Woerner said that this was certainly a subject for discussion with the French, though M. Hernu's options must be restricted, following the reductions in French conventional programmes.

Ministry of Defence

26th April 1983

*Rcm.*