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NOTE FOR THE RECORD

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NOTE OF A MEETING BETWEEN THE DEFENCE
SECRETARY AND THE US SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
HELD IN THE US DELEGATION OFFICES, NATO
HEADQUARTERS AT 9 AM ON WEDNESDAY
16TH MAY 1979

Present:

The Hon Harold Brown
Secretary of Defense

The Rt Hon Francis Pym MP
Secretary of State for
Defence

The Hon Tapley Bennett
US Permanent Represen-
tative to NATO

His Excellency Sir John Killick
UK Permanent Representative
to NATO

The Hon David E McGiffert
Assistant Secretary for
International Security
Affairs

Marshal of the Royal Air Force
Sir Neil Cameron
Chief of the Defence Staff

Ambassador Robert W Komer
Special Adviser on
NATO Affairs

Mr M E Quinlan
Deputy Under Secretary of
State (Policy and Programmes)

Mr James Siena
Department of Defense, ISA

Mr R L L Facer
PS/S of S

Mr Larry Legere
Defense Counsellor, US
Delegation to NATO

Rear Admiral Carl T Hanson
Executive Assistant to
the Secretary of Defense

Ms Lynn Davis
Department of Defense, ISA

/ Nuclear ...

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Nuclear Matters

The Secretary of State said that he had noted President Carter's description of the SALT II Agreement as the greatest event in foreign affairs we were likely to see in our life-time. Dr Brown said that was an exaggeration. Additional strategic nuclear forces were required to preserve Western security. The Agreement allowed this, but did not ensure that the will to expand these forces existed. He hoped that the British Government would continue to support the SALT II Agreement publicly. One of the arguments which members of the Senate were using against it was that America's allies, despite what they said, did not really approve of it.

2. Dr Brown said that political problems would loom larger the higher the level at which the subject of TNF modernisation was considered in Governments. President Carter had pressed him to be more cautious and to distinguish between what Allied Defence Ministers might say and what their Heads of Government might be prepared to agree at the point of decision. But he felt there was general support for TNF modernisation. The German position was the key: if the Germans did not agree there would be severe risks for their relationship with the Alliance, since it would be apparent that they had retreated under Soviet pressure. S of S said that Chancellor Schmidt was sensitive about the basing of new weapons on German soil. Would seaborne systems be easier for the Germans to accept? Dr Brown said that if it were proposed to place the weapons on US ships with US crews, there would be no connection with Germany: the question only arose if it were proposed to put US-manned weapons on German ships. He thought the Italians might accept new systems provided they were not required to pay for them. S of S asked whether we could put a specific proposal to the Alliance. Dr Brown said that progress was being made with the hardware specification, and Mr McGiffert said that they had discussed with the Dutch military authorities, without commitment, specific locations for ground-launched cruise missiles.

/ Dr Brown ...



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3. Dr Brown asked about the Conservative Government's policy on a successor to Polaris. S of S said that the modernisation programme for Polaris would enable the force to remain effective for at least 10 years. A decision on a successor was therefore less urgent than decisions about TNF. Dr Brown said that there were a number of options other than submarine-launched ballistic missiles. Air-launched cruise missiles were possible, though they ran the risk of destruction before launch. Ground-launched cruise missiles would be effective if we were prepared to move them about in peacetime, though if we expected that there would be strategic warning time we could leave them inside bases and move them around the countryside only in a crisis. S of S said that in his personal view it would be better to avoid having new bases for our nuclear weapons.

Armaments Co-operation

4. Dr Brown commented that armaments co-operation was a rocky road because of industrial pressures on both sides of the Atlantic, but it was necessary to try to make it work since it would improve efficiency. S of S said that it was clearly hard to achieve results but he was nevertheless in favour of pursuing it vigorously.

Middle East

5. Dr Brown said that the British presence in Oman served a useful purpose and he hoped that it could be maintained. He asked whether HMG was re-examining the question of a possible British Naval presence in the Indian Ocean. S of S said that our presence in Oman was very modest. He asked whether the United States was making a new assessment of the situation following the events in Iran. We would very much like to examine any assessment with the United States to see how best we could protect Western interests. The Government had taken no decision about possible military deployments in the region, and against the background of our limited resources we would not do so except in the context of a fresh political

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assessment. Dr Brown said that they were considering the possibility of making contingency arrangements for bases in countries such as Egypt so that forces could be deployed there in an emergency. He hoped to discuss the Middle East further with the Secretary of State in July, when the US assessment would be ready and their ideas about Naval deployments and the possible use of Masirah for P3 surveillance flights were clearer.

Arms Sales to China

6. Dr Brown said that the US Administration had made its views clear to the previous British Government. The United States did not intend to sell defence equipment to China but would neither approve nor disapprove of sales of defensive equipment by her allies, though she did not wish her views to be represented by her allies in COCOM. The US Government would not act as the agent of the Soviet Union in any blockade of China, but the Administration hoped that their allies would think carefully before approving any particular sale. Problems had, however, arisen on occasion through the practice of approaching the Administration at too low a level such as the European desk at the State Department. Any approaches should be made through Mr Vance or the Assistant Secretary for Far Eastern Affairs, Mr Holbrook, or by the Secretary of State personally to himself. S of S said that he thought that British defence equipment sales to China would be comparatively modest.

7. Dr Brown invited S of S to visit Washington in early July, which S of S accepted.

8. The meeting ended at 9.35 am.

Secretary of State's Office

16th May 1979

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