

SUBJECT

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RECORD OF A MEETING BETWEEN THE PRIME MINISTER AND THE U.S. SECRETARY FOR DEFENSE, MR. CASPAR WEINBERGER, AT THE PENTAGON AT 1500 HOURS ON FRIDAY 27 FEBRUARY 1981

Present

Prime Minister	The Hon. Caspar Weinberger
Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary	The Hon. Frank Carlucci
HE Sir Nicholas Henderson, KCMG	Dr. Fred C. Ikle
Sir Robert Armstrong, KCB, CVO	Mr. Francis J. West
Sir Michael Palliser, GCMG	Brig. Gen. Carl Smith
Sir Frank Cooper, GCB, CMG	Mr. Ed Streator
Mr. Julian Bullard, CMG	Mr. James Timberlake
Mr. Bernard Ingham	
Mr. Michael Alexander	
Mr. George Walden, CMG	
Air Marshal Sir Roy Austen-Smith	
Mr. E. Benn	
Mr. P.J. Weston	

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Mr. Weinberger, welcoming the Prime Minister, said the special relationship had been very evident at dinner the preceding evening, which had been a warm and happy event. He was not aware of any differences between our two countries. He had just come from a meeting with the President to discuss the draft defence budget. The expected cost of their defence systems had risen by some \$40 billion more than they had anticipated three months ago because it turned out that the inflation estimates for defence spending had been wrong for the past two years. Nevertheless they had found some \$3.6b worth of savings which they would otherwise have had to request beyond what was already being asked for.

The Prime Minister said there would next week be a major debate in the House of Commons centering on Britain's strategic nuclear deterrent. What were the new Administration's plans for strategic nuclear weapons? Trident was absolutely vital for Britain, which intended to stay in the independent deterrent

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business (Mr. Weinberger indicated assent). Then there were cruise missiles and the neutron bomb - a term she wished had never been invented (Mr. Weinberger said his term for it was the low blast weapon). All these things involved difficult decisions. The Russians concentrated a tremendous amount of effort and research and it would be frightening if they were ever to get ahead with some new breakthrough, e.g. in ballistic missile defence.

Mr. Weinberger agreed the prospect was worrying. That was why the United States intended to spend a lot more over the next five years in central strategic systems, in general purpose forces, and in readiness. They needed a stronger ground-based missile. The currently proposed basing system for the MX involved 4,600 shelters and would cost \$34b in current dollars. They certainly needed a new missile with enhanced accuracy and ten re-entry vehicles. The present basing for ICBMs was some 85 per cent vulnerable now to first strike. There were some seven different possible basing modes, all of them mobile. He personally was attracted to putting the new missiles on old surface ships which could move around and from which they could be put off and launched. He had asked a group of scientists headed by a Nobel Prize winner to report by June/July on alternatives. He hoped they might be able to come up with a less difficult and less costly solution which could be constructed more quickly. Meanwhile the programme for the missile itself would proceed: the commissioning of the report would involve no additional delay.

Dr. Ikle referred to land-basing. Perhaps the answer was to settle for one solution for the first few years which could be followed up later and if necessary with a difference approach. Referring to high-energy beam technology, he said there was no near-term breakthrough that was likely to frighten them. He was optimistic that they could come up with a mixed solution which would be less costly in money and environmental terms.

/ Mr. Weinberger

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Mr. Weinberger said it was important to find a less controversial solution because lawyers could very easily exploit environmental objections in order to delay things. He was also looking at improved SLBMs, and ABM defences would have to be considered. The ABM treaty was up for review in 1982. He did not know whether they would proceed under that or not, but it would be one way of getting the necessary protection. He also referred to a new manned bomber. The B-1 was reasonably well designed, but there was also the possibility of a new high technology bomber which would be very much better. The problem was whether to fund the B-1 now or to wait for something better to come along. Thus they were looking for improvements in all legs of the strategic triad in order to redress the imbalance.

Lord Carrington asked whether there was any intention to alter the TNF modernisation decision. Mr. Weinberger said the Administration endorsed the December 1979 decision and did not wish to change it. But NATO now needed a stronger anti-tank weapon on the central front, when one considered that the Warsaw Pact had 47,000 tanks ranged against 12-13,000 on our side. Thus ERW was a possibility, since it was very effective. But this was not an issue within the Administration at the moment. He recognised that everyone was very nervous on this subject. The Prime Minister said that was because the Russians had won a propaganda battle. Lord Carrington said it was rather because the West had lost that battle. Mr. Weinberger said France supported ERW though the Netherlands and the Scandinavians did not. It was a much more effective anti-tank weapon than any that NATO now had. He would of course consult fully beforehand but in his opinion one ought to think about using it. President Carter's retreat had been "unbelievably unfortunate". The Prime Minister said that President Carter had got no help from Europe. A difficult argument that had to be faced over ERW was the claim that it lowered the nuclear threshold. Lord Carrington said the real problem was that it was regarded (and he meant this quite seriously) as "unsporting" to kill people but not damage property. Mr. Weinberger said one of the

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advantages of ERW was that one's own troops could move in safely behind it after use, much more quickly than they could do after ordinary fission weapons had been employed.

Sir Frank Cooper said one of the difficulties about the idea of putting MX to sea was the risk that it would rebound on the TNF decision and give people an excuse for claiming that there need be no land basing of new deployments in Europe. The United States and the UK knew this was a false analogy, but elsewhere the point would have force. Mr. Weinberger said he knew the argument and he was aware of the edginess about the December 1979 decision and the attempts in Europe to escape from it. The Prime Minister said she would put it rather differently. Most people in Europe knew that one had to have the TNF deployments. The important thing was to make it easier for European politicians to uphold this decision in public. She referred to the trend toward "nuclear pacifism"; people like Schmidt, Forlani, Cossiga had shown political courage over the decision and they would hold to it provided things were made easier for them e.g. by not introducing the complication of ERW.

Lord Carrington said that the arms control component of the December 1979 decision also mattered, not so much for the UK, but certainly for the FRG, Belgium and the Netherlands. He did not have any particular date in mind for talks, but they had to be undertaken sometime or the whole decision would come unstuck. It was for that reason that he had the same morning suggested to Secretary Haig that it would be reassuring to have an early meeting of the Special Consultative Group in NATO. Mr. Weinberger said that at his confirmation hearings he had explained why the Administration did not intend to be rushed into SALT negotiations immediately after 20 January as Senator Percy had suggested during his visit to Moscow. The Administration needed to get across to the Russians the message that there was a new approach. It was not a question of abandoning hopes for arms control negotiations but of acting from a position of strength. Lord Carrington said he realised that SALT negotiations on central strategic systems were for a longer timescale but he thought some move on TNF arms control would provide a tangible sign for the future. This would

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be done in a number of ways. President Brezhnev's speech was, in some ways, encouraging. Mr. Weinberger said he agreed. In a sense he had been both surprised and pleased by Brezhnev's references to a possible summit. There should indeed be some signal of the fact that it was a two-track decision.

Referring to an earlier conversation with Sir Nicholas Henderson about the two-way street, Mr. Weinberger said he had a list of items to refer to. He would be strongly recommending to Congress to restore the funding for JP233. Rapier of course had been a success. The Administration were also going to buy AV8B. Mr. Carlucci observed that HMG too had a decision to make. Sir Frank Cooper asked whether the American decision was to fund AV8B for production (this appeared to evince signs of assent). Mr. Weinberger said Congress would ^{himself} decide on the new budget between now and October. He/would be testifying on the Hill next week. The changes involved would be in effect make it a new draft defence budget. Mr. Carlucci said there should be no problem with AV8B but JP233 might be more difficult. Mr. Weinberger said he would testify that the Administration regarded it as a very effective system, but he had given up trying to explain the actions of Congress. JP233 was a very good weapon.

The Prime Minister referred to Searchwater and to Britain's technological expertise. Mr. Weinberger said that he realised that Britain was paying a large amount for Trident. The Prime Minister said we now had to earn the money to pay for it. She asked about 81mm mortar. Sir Frank Cooper explained this in greater detail. He thought it was a case of the "not invented here" syndrome. He urged that another look be taken at it. The UK had done a very good development programme which could save the Americans from having to reinvent it. Mr. Weinberger said his brief contained no reference to 81mm mortar. Mr. West said his impression was it was a problem of over-regulation. The army surgeon general had pronounced that the overblast was too great. But Mr. West added that "I think we can be positive". The Prime Minister referred in quick succession to Searchwater, Wavell, Giant Viper and ship stabilisers and Sir Frank Cooper added detail, emphasising that in Searchwater we were well ahead of Americans. The Prime Minister

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raised Stingray which she said had been very expensive in R & D. Sir Frank Cooper said this was going well. Some parts of the Stingray programme would be worth the Americans having a look at, in particular the head of Stingray. There ought to be a basis for collaboration in torpedoes. The Prime Minister referred to the Scorpion light tank. Sir Frank Cooper said there was an unresolved difference between the US army with its preference for wheeled vehicles and the British army with its preference for track vehicles to operate in difficult country. The Prime Minister raised the Hawk jet trainer. Mr. Weinberger said he understood the necessity for trying to equalise purchases. The Prime Minister spoke of the need to avoid overlap and duplication in defence R & D. The UK was really doing more such R & D than we ought to or could afford. She hated to raise a whole shopping list but sales would help us all.

After a reference to the 3 per cent real increase (which she emphasised Britain would be exceeding this year), the Prime Minister turned to the question of getting value for money in Alliance defence equipment. She was worried about this and did not quite know how to open up the subject. When she had broached the matter some months earlier with Helmut Schmidt he had misunderstood her to be describing an argument for spending less on defence. This was not her objective at all. She remained of the view that one ought to take a look at this. Britain for example was rather good at both naval and air tasks and also made a great effort on the central front. The whole subject was very complicated because the politics of it were that one had to keep considerable forces in the FRG. But because Britain had put so much into forward defence on the central front, we would stand to lose a lot if the Russians came across there. The question arose whether there would then be enough to cover the UK. Should one therefore put more into defence of the home base? In naval terms Britain contributed 30 per cent of the ships under SACLANT's command. She was unsure how this whole discussion should be brought out, but we ought to take a look at it. Her impression was that NATO looked better than the detailed reality would justify.

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Mr. Weinberger said the US faced the same problem in competing demand between its own three armed services. One should make every effort to urge the virtues of standardisation, rationalisation and interoperability. Lord Carrington said NATO countries together contributed greater resources to defence than the Warsaw Pact and yet seemed to get quite a lot less out of it. This was because everybody wanted to do everything. He agreed with the Prime Minister that now might not be the right time to raise it, but if we continued to avoid addressing the question seriously the Alliance would be in danger of lacking credibility. The Prime Minister said that she agreed that the matter needed careful handling but it must be addressed somehow. Mr. Weinberger said his hope was that if the United States under the new Administration could show itself a stronger, more dependable and more consistent ally, this would improve the overall state of affairs, and gradually people would come round to understanding the need for greater effort in defence. He agreed that nuclear pacifism was a worry. Sir Frank Cooper referred to collaboration in air-to-air missiles. The package concept made a lot of sense, saved money and brought people together in a fruitful way. Mr. Weinberger agreeing, referred to his forthcoming attendance at the Nuclear Planning Group and Defence Planning Committee and expressed the wish that there be further consultation before then with UK officials. He was glad that Mr. Nott would soon be visiting Washington.

The Prime Minister referred to the Rapid Deployment Force. Britain committed almost all her resources to NATO, unlike the French who as a result had added flexibility. How was US thinking progressing? Mr. Weinberger said he had spent a good deal of time looking at this whole subject with Mr. Carlucci. He was not very satisfied with the previous Administration's exposition of the concept. He certainly agreed that the US needed the capability to project force. So far as concerned South West Asia, he thought it essential that the US and the UK should act in concert as far as possible. There were some details that needed to be resolved e.g. the command question for the RDF - should it be assigned to

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the European command, or would this cause alarm? He was not of course suggesting that the job be done by NATO as such. The French had expressed a great readiness to act outside Europe. It was important to get a suitable and effective command to facilitate the projection of US and other forces. Lord Carrington said that it was easy for the French since their forces were not assigned to NATO. One way to make it possible for the UK to contribute would be to get the Federal Republic and others to accept that if for example the UK were to earmark some of its forces for use elsewhere, they themselves would have to make good the gap. Mr. Weinberger agreeing, said the United States did not formally assign or draw down NATO forces for the RDF but gave the forces in question specialist training and the necessary command structure. Mr. Carlucci said he was in favour of a broader collaboration taking place between the US and its Allies in the out-of-area region itself. Mr. Weinberger said it was important to keep the Gulf area friendly and free from Soviet interference. If some such agreement could be worked out with the FRG, that would be very helpful. As he had recently observed for himself the troop readiness of the RDF was high, although airlift was not as strong as it should be. He favoured taking UK/US co-ordination further and quickly.

The Prime Minister said the need for quick action was brought out by the suddenness of the Iraq/Iran war which so far as she knew had not been foreseen in any of the available intelligence. She recalled that three days had been spent trying to stop that war from spreading when Lord Carrington was last in Washington. Mr. Weinberger said he assumed that no such intelligence had been available. Lord Carrington said when he had been Defence Secretary in 1970 he had commissioned an inquiry into the 54 occasions since World War II in which there had been a need to use British troops. Only one of these had been foreseen. The Prime Minister asked whether the US was seeking a permanent presence in the area. Mr. Weinberger said he favoured some kind of permanent presence if it could be made locally acceptable. Oman was a start. There was of course Diego Garcia but this was a long way off. The F15 enhancement for the Saudis was intended to make Saudi Arabia more amenable. There was not yet a US military presence as such in

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Saudi Arabia, though the AWACS had been one step. Prepositioning could help but not as much as a good solid base. Or should he say facilities? Lord Carrington said bases were a different matter. Mr. Weinberger said he was talking about a place where one could land and operate and get troops and ships in. This would offer a reassurance against further adventurism from the Soviet quarter. The Prime Minister said that if local resolution were not to be weakened she was inclined to agree that nothing short of a permanent presence would do. Mr. Weinberger referred to US acquiescence over Angola and Ethiopia, the comparatively limited response to Afghanistan and now the threat to Poland and El Salvador. He hoped the message would be getting across to the Russians. The Administration would be out to raise two additional carrier battle groups. Sir Frank Cooper stressed the need for continuing bilateral contacts. Mr. Weinberger concurred and repeated that he had always been an advocate of the special relationship. He was delighted with Britain's efforts and wished others would follow the British example. The Prime Minister said we were very grateful about the Trident deal which was absolutely vital. One piece of evidence for growing awareness of the threat in the UK was the demand to spend more on civil defence. Mr. Carlucci said if the debate shifted from deterrence to war fighting and emphasis on civil defence, we would be in for trouble. The Prime Minister referred to the immoral attitude of those in the Netherlands who wished to withdraw from the responsibility of making their own defence efforts. Mr. Weinberger said America too had been through its bouts of isolation. He hoped they would never go back to that. He looked forward greatly to visiting London probably in connection with his visit to the NPG in April.

The meeting ended at 1600 hours.

2 March 1981

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*Between the Prime Minister & the U.S. Secretary for Defence,
Type 1 + Mr Caspar Weinberger,*Registry
No.

DRAFT RECORD OF A MEETING/AT THE

SECURITY CLASSIFICATION

PENTAGON AT 3 PM on FRIDAY

From

Top Secret.
Secret.
Confidential
Restricted.
Unclassified.

To:- 27 FEBRUARY 1981

Telephone No. Ext.

Department

PRIVACY MARKING

.....In Confidence

Present:

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1. Mr Weinberger welcoming the Prime Minister said the special relationship had been very evident at dinner the preceding evening, which had been a warm and happy event. He was not aware of any differences between our two countries. He had just come from meeting with the President to discuss the draft defence budget. The expected cost of their defence systems had risen by some \$40 billion more than they had anticipated three months ago because it turned out that the inflation estimates for defence spending had been wrong for the past two years. Nevertheless they had found some \$3.6b worth of savings which they would otherwise have had to request beyond what was already being asked for.

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2. The Prime Minister said there would be a major debate in the House of Commons centering on Britain's strategic nuclear deterrent. What were the new Administration's plans for strategic nuclear weapons? Trident was absolutely vital for Britain, which intended to stay in the independent deterrent business (Mr Weinberger indicated assent). Then there were cruise missiles and the neutron bomb - a term she wished had never been invented (Mr Weinberger said his term for it was the low blast weapon). All these things involved difficult decisions. The Russians concentrated a tremendous amount of effort and research and it would be frightening if they were ever to get ahead with some new breakthrough eg in ballistic missile defence.

3. Mr Weinberger agreed the prospect was worrying. That was why the United States intended to spend a lot more over the next 5 years in central strategic systems, in general purpose forces, and in readiness. They needed a stronger ground-based missile. The ~~present~~ ^{currently proposed} basing system ^{for the MX} involved 4,600 shelters and would cost \$34b in current dollars. They certainly needed a new missile with an enhanced ^{accuracy} warhead and ten re-entry vehicles. The present basing for ICBMs was some 85% vulnerable now to first strike. There were some 7 different possible basing modes, all of them mobile. He personally was attracted to putting ~~a~~ ^{the} new missiles on old surface ships which could move around and from which they could be put off and launched. He had asked a group of scientists headed by a Nobel Prize winner to report by June/July on alternatives. He hoped they might be able to come up with a less difficult and less costly solution which could be constructed more quickly. Meanwhile the programme for the missile itself would proceed:

4. Dr Iklé referred to land-basing. Perhaps ^{the commissioning of the report} one solution might be to adapt ^{later +} for the first few years which could be followed up ^{with the different alternatives.} with other steps if necessary. Referring to high-energy beam technology, he said there was no near-term breakthrough that was likely to frighten them. He was optimistic that they could come up with a mixed solution which would be less costly in money and environmental terms. ~~It might not look too difficult to us, but it would to the people in Utah.~~

5. Mr Weinberger said it was important to find a less controversial solution because lawyers ^{very early exploit environmental objections in order to} could delay things ~~very~~ easily if they wanted to. He was also looking at improved SLBMs, and ABM defences would have to be considered. The ABM treaty

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6. Lord Carrington asked whether there was any intention to alter the TNF modernisation decision. Mr Weinberger said the Administration endorsed the December 1979 decision and did not wish to change it. But NATO now needed a stronger anti-tank weapon on the central front, when one considered that the Warsaw Pact had 47,000 tanks ranged against 12-13,000 on our side. Thus ERW was a possibility, since it was very effective. But this was not an issue within the Administration at the moment. He recognised that everyone was very nervous on this subject. The Prime Minister said that was because the Russians had won a propaganda battle. Lord Carrington said it was rather because the West had lost that battle. Mr Weinberger said France supported ERW though the Netherlands and the Scandinavians did not. It was a much more effective anti-tank weapon than any that NATO now had. He would of course consult fully beforehand but in his opinion one ought to think about using it. ~~The background~~ ^{threat} of President Carter's experience with the Germans had been ^{unbelievably} ~~very~~ "unfortunate." The Prime Minister said that President Carter had got no help from Europe. A difficult argument that had to be faced over ERW was the claim that it lowered the nuclear threshold. Lord Carrington said the real problem was that ^{it was} ~~people~~ regarded ~~it~~ (and he meant this quite seriously) as "unsporting" to kill people but not damage property. Mr Weinberger said one of the advantages of ERW was that one's own troops could move in safely behind it after use, much more quickly than they could do after ordinary fission weapons had been employed.

7. Sir Frank Cooper said one of the difficulties about the idea of putting MX to sea was the risk that it would rebound on the TNF decision and give people an excuse for claiming that there need be no land basing of new deployments in Europe. The United States and the UK knew this was a false analogy, but elsewhere the point would have force.

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Mr Weinberger said he knew the argument and he was aware of the edginess about the December 1979 decision and the attempts in Europe to escape from it. The Prime Minister said she would put it rather differently. Most people in Europe knew that one had to have the TNF deployments. The important thing was to make it easier for European politicians to uphold this decision in public. She referred to the trend toward "nuclear pacifism"; people like Schmidt, Forlani, Cossiga had shown political courage over the decision and they would hold to it provided things were made eas^{er} for them ^{by} not introducing the complication of ERW.

8. Lord Carrington said that the arms control component of the December 1979 decision also mattered, not so much for the UK, but certainly for the FRG, Belgium and the Netherlands. He did not have any particular date in mind for talks, but they had to be undertaken sometime or the whole decision would come unstuck. It was for that reason that he had the same morning suggested to Secretary Haig that it would be reassuring to have an early meeting of the Special Consultative Group in NATO. Mr Weinberger said that at his confirmation hearings he had explained why the Administration did not intend to be rushed into Salt negotiations immediately after 20 January as Senator Percy had suggested during his visit to Moscow. The Administration needed to get across to the Russians the message that there was a new approach. It was not a question of abandoning hopes for arms control negotiations but of acting from a position of strength. Lord Carrington said he realised that Salt negotiations on central strategic systems were for a longer timescale but he thought some move on TNF arms control would provide a tangible sign for the future. Mr Weinberger said he agreed. In a sense he had been both surprised and pleased by Brzezhev's references to a possible summit. There should indeed be some signal of the fact that it was a two-track decision.

9. Referring to an earlier conversation with Sir Nicholas Henderson about the two-way street, Mr Weinberger said he had a list of items to refer to. He would be strongly recommending to Congress to restore the funding for JP233. Rapier of course had been a success. The Administration were also going to buy AV8B. Mr Carlucci observed that HMG had a decision to make. Sir Frank Cooper asked whether the American decision was to fund for production (this appeared to evince signs of assent). Mr Weinberger said Congress

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AV8B

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would decide on the new budget between now and October. He would be testifying on the Hill next week. The changes involved would in effect make it a new draft defence budget. Mr Carlucci said there should be no problem with AV8B but JP233 might be more difficult. Mr Weinberger said he would testify that the Administration regarded it as a very effective system, but he had given up trying to explain the actions of Congress. JP233 was a very good weapon.

10. The Prime Minister referred to Searchwater and to Britain's ~~prowess in the realm of smart~~ *technological expertise.* Mr Weinberger said that he realised that Britain was paying a large amount for Trident. The Prime Minister said we now had to earn the money to pay for it. She asked about 81mm mortar. Sir Frank Cooper explained this in greater detail. He thought it was a case of the "not invented here" syndrome. He urged that another look be taken at it. The UK had done a very good development programme which could save the Americans from ^{having to} ~~reinventing~~ it. Mr Weinberger said his brief contained no reference to 81mm mortar, ~~and he was therefore a bit lost.~~ Mr West said his impression was it was a problem of over-regulation. The army ^{surgeon} ~~sergeant~~ general had pronounced that the overblast was too great. *But Mr West added that "I think we can be positive."*

The Prime Minister referred in quick succession to Searchwater, Wavell, Giant Viper and ship stabilizers and Sir Frank Cooper added detail, emphasising that in Searchwater we were well ahead of Americans. The Prime Minister raised Stingray which she said had been very expensive in R & D. Sir Frank Cooper said this was going well. Some parts of the Stingray programme would be worth the Americans having a look at, in particular the Head of Stingray. There ought to be a basis for collaboration in torpedoes. The Prime Minister referred to the Scorpion light tank. Sir Frank Cooper said there was an unresolved difference ^{between} ~~with~~ the US army with its preference for wheeled vehicles and the British army with its preference for track vehicles to operate in a difficult country. The Prime Minister raised the Hawk jet trainer. Mr Weinberger said he ~~can accept~~ ^{was ambivalent} the necessity for trying to equalize purchases. The Prime Minister spoke of the need to avoid overlap and *duplication* in defence R & D. The UK was really doing more such R & D than we ought to or could afford. She hated to raise a whole shopping list but sales would help us all.

11. After a reference to the 3% real increase ~~question~~ (which she emphasised Britain would be exceeding this year), the Prime Minister turned to the question of getting ~~best~~ value for money in Alliance defence expenditure. She was worried about this and did not quite know how to open up the subject. When she had broached the matter some months earlier with Helmut Schmidt he had misunderstood her to be describing an argument for spending less on defence. This was not her objective at all. She remained of the view that one ought to take a look at this. Britain for example was rather good at both naval and air tasks and also made a great effort on the central front. The whole subject was very complicated because the politics of it were that one had to keep considerable forces in the FRG. But because Britain had put so much into forward defence on the central front, we would stand to lose ^{the} lot if the Russians came across there, ~~and~~ the question then arose whether there would be enough to cover the UK. Should one therefore put more into defence of the home base? In naval terms Britain contributed 30% of the ships under Saclant's command. She was unsure how this whole discussion should be brought out, but we ought to take a look at it. Her impression was that NATO looked better than ^{the} detailed reality would justify.

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money and brought people together in a fruitful way. Mr Weinberger agreeing, referred to his forthcoming attendance at the Nuclear Planning Group and Defence Planning Committee and expressed the wish that there be further consultation before then with UK officials. He was glad that Mr Nott would soon be visiting Washington.

13. The Prime Minister referred to the Rapid Deployment Force. Britain committed almost all her resources to NATO, Unlike the French who as a result had added flexibility. How was US thinking progressing? Mr Weinberger said he had spent a good deal of time looking at this whole subject with Mr Carlucci. He was not very satisfied with the way in which the previous Administration had expanded the concept ^{exposition of} but he certainly agreed that the US needed the capability to project force. So far as concerned South West Asia, he thought it essential that the US and the UK should act in concert as far as possible. There were some details that needed to be resolved e.g. ^{the} command question for the RDF - should it be assigned to the European command, or would these ^{US} cause alarm? He was not of course suggesting that the job be done by NATO as such. The French had expressed a great readiness to act outside Europe. It was important to get a suitable and effective command to facilitate the projection of US and other forces. The Prime Minister asked how this could be done. Lord Carrington said that in NATO terms one way would be to get the Federal Republic and others to accept that if for example the UK were to earmark some of its forces for use elsewhere, they themselves would have to make good the gap. Mr Weinberger agreeing, said the United States did not formally assign or draw down NATO forces for the RDF but gave the forces in question specialist training and the necessary command structure. Mr Carlucci said he was in favour of a broader collaboration taking place between the US and its Allies in the out-of-area region itself. Mr Weinberger said it was important to keep the Gulf area friendly and free from Soviet interference. If some such agreement could be worked out with the FRG, that would be very helpful. As he had recently observed for himself the troop readiness of the RDF was high, although airlift was not as strong as it should be. He favoured taking UK/US coordination further and quickly.

it was easy for the French since their forces were not assigned to NATO, the way to make it possible for the UK is contribute

14. The Prime Minister said the need for quick action was brought out by the suddenness of the Iraq/Iran war which so far as she knew had not been foreseen ⁱⁿ by any of the available intelligence. She recalled that three days had been spent trying to stop that war from spreading when Lord Carrington was last in Washington. Mr Weinberger said he assumed that no such intelligence had been available. Lord Carrington said when he had been Defence Secretary in 1970 he had commissioned an inquiry into the 54 occasions since World War II in which there had been a need to use British troops. Only one of these had been foreseen. The Prime Minister asked ~~about the need for a prominent~~ ^{Whether the U.S. was seeking a permanent} presence in the area. Mr Weinberger said he favoured some kind of permanent presence if it could be made locally acceptable. Oman was a start. There was of course Diego Garcia but this was a long way off. The F15 enhancement for the Saudis was intended to make Saudi Arabia more amenable. There was not yet a US military presence as such in Saudi Arabia, though the AWACS had been one step. Pre-positioning could help but not as much as a good solid base. Or should he say facilities? Lord Carrington said bases were a different matter. Mr Weinberger said he was talking about a place where one could land and operate and get troops and ships in. This would offer a reassurance against further adventurism from the Soviet quarter. The Prime Minister said that if local resolution were not to be weakened she was inclined to agree that nothing short of a permanent presence would do. Mr Weinberger referred to US acquiescence over Angola and Ethiopia, the comparatively ^{limited} ~~little~~ response to Afghanistan and now the threat to Poland and El Salvador. He hoped the message would be getting across to the Russians. The Administration would be out to raise two additional ^{carrier} ~~battle groups~~ ~~and was aiming at a~~ ~~600 ship navy~~. Sir Frank Cooper stressed the need for continuing bilateral contacts. Mr Weinberger concurred and repeated that he had always been an advocate of the special relationship. He was delighted with Britain's efforts and wished others would follow the British example. The Prime Minister said we were very grateful about the Trident deal which was absolutely vital. One piece of evidence for growing awareness of the threat in the UK was the demand to spend more on civil defence. Mr Carlucci

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said if the debate shifted from deterrence to war fighting and emphasis on civil defence, we would be in for trouble. The Prime Minister referred to the immoral attitude of those in the Netherlands who wished to withdraw from the responsibility of making their own defence efforts. Mr Weinberger said America too had been through its bouts of isolationism. He hoped they would never go back to that. He looked forward greatly to visiting London probably in connection with his visit to the NPG in April. ¹⁵ The meeting ended at 4 pm.

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