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NOTE OF FINAL DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DEFENCE AND THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE FOR THE USSR: MOD, 28TH JULY 1989

General Yazov paid a final call, lasting some 40 minutes, on the Secretary of State for Defence this morning. He was accompanied by the principal members of his party including Admiral Chernavin, General Sukorukov, Colonel General Borsuk, Colonel General Chervov, Lieutenant General Larin, Rear Admiral Khuzhokov, Colonel Uvarov and Lieutenant Colonel Globenko. Marshal of the Royal Air Force Sir David Craig (CDS), General Sir Richard Vincent (VCDS), Mr Griffiths (AUS(Pol)) and Air Commodore Cheshire were also present.

2. Mr Younger welcomed the opportunity for a final discussion. He had very much enjoyed having General Yazov as his guest and hoped that he had enjoyed his programme of visits. The staffs should work together on detailed suggestions for further contacts at all levels. He understood that there was a helpful proposal for VCDS to visit the Soviet Union later this year; he hoped that CDS could pay a visit during 1990. General Yazov said that he had been planning on a visit by CDS this year; VCDS would also be very welcome. He could show CDS and VCDS the Asian and European parts of the Soviet Union respectively.

3. Turning to his impressions of his visit, General Yazov said that it had greatly improved his understanding of British Forces, their training, and how much they were in love with their motherland. He was very appreciative of the openness throughout his visit; if someone was just pretending that they were a friend, he would not have been given such an open demonstration of everything. He was convinced that this represented the United Kingdom's true feelings and his visits to all three Services had been superb and conducted in a spirit of goodwill. He had not had to plead to be shown anything; Mr Younger's subordinates had been very eager to show him around. He believed the draft proposals for mutual exchanges would be improved by visits from CDS and VCDS though he believed that there should be contacts at all levels including between soldiers and sergeants, as well as generals. He would very much like members of the British Armed Forces to know more about their Soviet counterparts, and vice versa, otherwise they would have a picture only of an enemy and would live in an atmosphere of suspicion.

4. Continuing, General Yazov said he wanted peace for the present generation and for their grandchildren. He had been very insistent in his discussions on the importance of peace, but wished to stress



that this did not imply that the Soviet Union was weak. He talked about peace as he wanted mankind to live forever and not to vanish by the products of its own hand, namely armaments. Each State should be able to protect itself but mankind should be wise enough to avoid another world war. He believed that Britain was a very decent partner and state which carried great authority and respect. If the UK, US, France and FRG fought for peace they should also be able to persuade others to do so with the possible exception of Israel who was not subordinate to anyone.

5. Mr Younger said that the British people felt as strongly about the importance of peace as anyone. He agreed that to believe in peace did not mean that you were weak. If friendship, confidence and openness existed, States could be sufficiently strong, even at lower levels of armaments, to have confidence in one another and their security. General Yazov agreed. After the wreath laying ceremony in Westminster Abbey the Deacon had made a speech devoted to the memory of the Unknown Warrior. He too had spoken of the struggle for peace; if politicians struggled for peace, armies would not have to wage war. Clausewitz wrote that war is a continuation of policy but he (Yazov) believed that politics should nowadays proceed from the assumption that war was not an obligatory continuation of policy. All politicians should have brakes; the UN was just such a brake if it could be made to function more effectively. Over the years, however, it had made many resolutions which were not honoured by everyone, particularly by Israel. The Russians had a saying that human blood was not water which was why he too wished to join the struggle for peace.

6. Mr Younger said that the arms control negotiators should strive for agreements which were satisfactory to both sides and which made both sides feel secure. General Yazov said that he had called on the new Foreign Secretary the previous day; Mr Major had touched on arms reductions matters but in a way that he found strange and which seemed to place the carriage ahead of the horse. Mr Major had opened discussion by mentioning verification and stressing the importance of agreeing on proposals for verification first; he (Yazov) understood that that was the position of both the US and the UK but was not sure what it meant. It was important to ask first what arms we wanted to reduce, to what levels, to achieve the actual reductions and then to create mechanisms for verification. It was more difficult to discuss verification as an abstract concept. For example, the terms of the INF Treaty were public but agreement on the number of missiles to be reduced by each side had come before consideration of the means of controlling such reductions. That was the logical sequence. The Soviet Union was very ready to receive staff for verification purposes and to use technical, or any other means, of verification on a reciprocal basis. His own visit had been an effective way of establishing a system of communications and verification was one means of communication. He reiterated that he



was very ready to receive verification experts and asked that Mr Younger should tell the US that he was ready to do anything necessary, provided that it was on the basis of full reciprocity.

7. Mr Younger commented that verification was essential for building confidence. The fact that good friendship and contact existed should make verification easy for many types of armaments. General Yazov interjected that confidence and trust must come first. Mr Younger agreed and added that that was why it should not prove too difficult to verify reductions in tanks. But there were other areas where verification would be more difficult and the problems must be talked through. For example, even with the greatest confidence, friendship and openness it would be very difficult to get proper and adequate verification on chemical weapons. The reason was simply because they were so easy and cheap to manufacture; they could be produced in tiny locations all over the country. A lesser difficulty, but one on which discussion was also needed, was the problem of verifying deployment of aircraft and pinpointing exactly where they were. He did not wish to say that in either case verification was impossible but the problems underlined the need to talk through how this might best be done, frankly and openly.

8. General Yazov commented that Mr Younger was right; difficulties were inevitable but it seemed to him that success depended more on the leaders of States than on the negotiators. If one State was to decide to deceive another in order to produce some binary or chemical weapons instead of fertilisers, that would be deception and contrary to confidence building. He wished to reach a situation in which the primary task of all concerned was to preserve the balance of interests and not to seek unilateral advantage. Mr Younger reiterated that the difficulties of verification must be addressed. He had greatly enjoyed meeting General Yazov and was confident that the British people wished to see relations with the Soviet Union improved. They were immensely impressed at the task President Gorbachev had taken on and warmly supported his efforts. The President could be confident that he had the best wishes of HMG and the British people for success in perestroika and all the other reforms he had embarked upon.

9. General Yazov expressed his thanks, and that of his entire team, for the invitation to visit the United Kingdom. He was sorry that he had only been able to get to know Mr Younger at the end of his period in office but he would be very welcome to visit the Soviet Union at any time and had provided a good foundation on which those in charge of the Ministry of Defence in future could build. He looked forward to developing bilateral relations and to establishing the same degree of co-operation with Mr King. He also wished to express his deep gratitude for the meeting with the Prime Minister and to assure her that everything she had said would be



passed on to President Gorbachev. Mr Younger expressed his thanks for these remarks. He knew Mr King was looking forward to working closely with General Yazov, as a friend, in the years ahead. (Note: General Yazov's party made it clear, in the margins, that an invitation to Mr King to pay a return visit would be forthcoming but that, for protocol reasons, they did not wish to extend the invitation through Mr Younger.)

28th July 1989
Ministry of Defence

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