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RECORD OF PLENARY DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN DEFENCE SECRETARY AND FRENCH
DEFENCE MINISTER AT ANGLO-FRENCH SUMMIT: 29TH JANUARY 1988

Present:

The Rt Hon George Younger MP
Secretary of State

M. Andre Giraud
Defence Minister

Mr P Levene
CDP

M. d'Amecourt

Mr D Nicholls
DUS(P)

C. Schelle

AVM E Macey
ACDS(Pol/Nuc)

Admiral Lucas

Mr J M Legge
AUS(Pol)

Mr B Hawtin
PS/Secretary of State

Summary

There was no tête-à-tête. Plenary discussions concentrated on equipment issues, with M. Giraud making a strong pitch for co-operation on engines and radar for Rafale and EFA. Ministers invited NADs to look into the possibilities; and to do likewise on a joint development programme for tank tracks. Ministers also exchanged views on the state of play and way ahead on nuclear co-operation, the Gulf, and European security co-operation with M. Giraud alluding to Spanish interest in contributing a battalion to the Joint Brigade. The meeting lasted two hours.

1. Nuclear Co-operation

2. Mr Younger said progress in discussions had been encouraging. The momentum might sensibly be maintained by broadening the agenda to cover other aspects of security policy, which would comprehend nuclear matters as viewed from our common perspective as nuclear



powers. Specific topics might include arms control implications, intelligence, SDI and ASMP. DUS(P) added that the French decision to establish a Defence Policy Staff made such a broadening of the agenda particularly timely.

3. M. Giraud agreed that this would be helpful. NATO was not entirely sure of what to do on concepts and weapons systems post the INF Treaty. The UK believed that the European pillar should be reinforced from within NATO. France was not entirely of the same opinion on the means. But both countries believed that they should seek to influence the way in which European defence and security evolved. There was a legitimate European interest in such evolution and in the nature of the weapons systems to be deployed. There would, therefore, be great advantage in both countries developing a common approach. M. Giraud added that a tripartite meeting with the Americans on ASMP was now sensible; perhaps at Bourges on 15th February. He saw three possible steps forward on ASMP. A small increase in range was already in hand. Secondly, a longer range ASMP could be built using the same basic technology and propulsion system. This would cost more but should involve no great technical risk. Thirdly, they could attempt to build a new long range system. If a feasibility study suggested that it might be worth pursuing this route problems over concepts of use would inevitably arise. Such a missile could be visible and could not include decoys. It would have to be compared with ballistic missiles which did have decoys. And if a long range missile were to be developed what was the role for aircraft?

4. Mr Younger commented that the first option did not meet our requirements. The other two steps might offer better prospects. He added that there was absolutely no truth in the claim in The Independent on 21st January that the RAF was biased against Anglo-French co-operation. (M. Giraud seemed to accept this assurance.) Mr Younger welcomed the fact that an agreement, which would permit reciprocal SSN visits, had been reached.

II. Equipment Collaboration

5. The discussion covered a wide range of equipment matters.

Informal IEPG Meeting

6. M. Giraud explained that his idea was to earmark a weekend for informal discussion in addition to the normal IEPG meetings. Each Minister could explain the problems he was facing and how he was tackling them. There would also be opportunities for informal discussions of common problems in smaller groups. It could be a useful way of facilitating co-operation. There would be no agenda and no record. In discussion, it became clear that a mutually convenient date for all could not be found in the near future. It was left that M. Giraud would suggest dates around the end of September.

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7. M. Giraud agreed that the solution reached was a good one. In response to a question, Mr Younger explained that competition on price was of the essence, in awarding contracts in British shipyards. On Trident, it was not possible to have an alternative to Vickers as the main contractor. But the MOD monitored their tendering closely and there was competition for the subsidiary contracts, including some of the work carried out by Vickers. M. Giraud said that with state shipyards competition was not possible. The system worked reasonably well on submarines but he was not happy with the pricing on frigates. After discussion, it was agreed that a discussion on prices and respective practices at the Naval System purchasing Conference in March would be useful.

EFA

8. Mr Younger said that he has agreed with Dr Woerner that it could be useful to explore the possibility of commonality of some components between EFA and Rafale. CDP and M. Chevallier had also talked about the possibilities. M. Giraud agreed that such co-operation could be a way of reaching the best technical solution and of keeping costs down. When France found herself alone after EFA, he could not afford to allow the aerospace industry to wither. So a purely national programme had been designed. But co-operation could be considered at any stage, provided the end result was cheaper, and time was not lost on the critical path towards the ISD. The engine and radar were two possible areas for co-operation.

9. Continuing, M. Giraud said that the SNECMA objective was a thrust of 75 kNs for the Rafale engine, Rolls Royce were working to a thrust of 90 kNs for the EFA engine. A study had shown that for an extra 2bn francs, including tax, on top of the present development costs of 6.7bn francs at January 86 prices, SNECMA could develop a 90 kN engine as well. Rolls Royce could co-operate by doing similar development work on a 75 kN engine. In due course, a competition could be run to see which company had produced the better engines and to decide how to share out work on the joint programme fairly. An alternative way of proceeding would be to adapt Rafale to fit the 90 kN engine. That would mean making it bigger, with a greater payload and range. Such a step could be attractive if the costs were no greater because of the prospects for co-operation in manufacture.

10. M. Giraud said that co-operation on the radar might also be possible. The French programme would cost just under 3bn francs. Thomson and ESD would be competing for the contract. They were both looking at possible American partners; an entirely American radar might even be considered. It was not a question of national pride but of finding the cheapest radar to meet the requirements. Thomson already had links with British firms; ESD could also take a



British partner. There might also be similar prospects for co-operation on other parts of the plane, in addition to the engine and radar. At the end of the day, there might be two planes with common components or one joint plane. In conclusion, M. Giraud said that he was also considering a similar approach with the US.

11. Mr Younger said that two consortia were in competition for EFA development. Thomson were involved indirectly already in one of them, through their links with Ferranti. He could see the logic of M. Giraud's approach. The problem was that there were four EFA partners, each expecting a proportionate share of the work, and it was not a simple question of Anglo-French co-operation. That was not to say his ideas were impossible, just more difficult to sort out technically. CDP added that he could see the advantage of having two engines to choose from. The disadvantage was that both countries would spend money on development. Agreement to develop a common engine would be preferable. The suggestion that the Rafale could be made a little larger could be significant. Depending on the extent of the changes, we could be talking about two very similar aircraft. After further discussions, Ministers agreed that CDP and M. Chevallier should look further into the possibilities for co-operation on the engine and radar.

AEW/JTIDS

12. In view of their concern at the implications for their respective AEW programmes should the US cancel or postpone the JTIDS programme, Ministers agreed to keep in touch.

Exchange of Contracts Bulletin

13. Ministers were satisfied with progress.

British Army Equipment Exhibition

14. Mr Younger extended an invitation for a visit on 27th June.

Tank Tracks

15. After discussion, Mr Younger's suggestion that CDP and M. Chevallier should look into the possibility of a joint development programme was agreed.

TRIGAT

16. In response to M. Giraud's query on progress, Mr Younger said that it was crucial to tie down the prime contractor on a maximum price. CDP said that we expected to sign the MOU and complete the contractual negotiations by the end of February. M. Giraud was clearly concerned at the delay but seemed to accept the position.



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17. M. Giraud suggested the engine could also be used for the EH101. CDP replied that we wanted to ensure we got the best price. There would be a competition in two months time between Rolls Royce/Turbomeca and the possible American engine.

Aimed Controlled Effect Anti-Tank Mine and COBRA radar

18. Mr Younger said it should be clear in a month or so whether these projects could be fitted into the forward programme.

ALARM/PHOENIX/STAR

19. M. Giraud said he was awaiting the results of the technical study on ALARM and was considering whether PHOENIX would be of interest. Mr Younger said we would like to be kept in touch with the STAR programme.

III. European Co-operation

20. Mr Younger welcomed the formulation of the Joint Brigade but expressed concern that the role of the Joint Defence Council should not extend beyond instructions to the Brigade. M. Giraud said the intention was a pragmatic extension of present arrangements not the creation of a separate defence arrangement. They were currently looking at the practical problems of common communication and support for the Brigade. Spain would like to contribute a battalion; there were no objections, in principle, but there would be considerable practical problems.

21. Mr Younger expressed concern at such a step at a time when a possible Spanish military contribution to NATO was under consideration. M. Giraud retorted that France had no wish to drive the Americans out of Europe; that would be stupid and a big mistake. He had been very vocal on the need to maintain the American presence. But there was common agreement that the European pillar should be strengthened. There was also a feeling that greater effort might be achieved, in addition to rather than from within, the integrated military structure. It was all very well for the UK to criticise such efforts, but what suggestions did we have to offer? DUS(P) said the basic problem was organisational; forces declared to NATO formed part of a coherent force structure. M. Giraud could throw no light on President Mitterrand's suggestion, as reported in Die Welt, of a joint Franco-German naval unit.

22. Mr Younger welcomed the co-operation of European navies in the Gulf. He was discussing with his Dutch and Belgian colleagues how the respective minesweeping forces could work even more closely together while remaining under national command. M. Giraud took note.



23. Turning to the WEU, Mr Younger said that the outcome of the Hague Ministerial and consultation on the Gulf were encouraging. We should build on this, using the Special Working Group as a particularly valuable forum for substantive discussion. Outstanding institutional problems should not be allowed to get in the way of progress. M. Giraud said the agencies had been set up in 1954 when the security problems had been very different. They were not suited to modern purposes; they should be merged and given a single and coherent purpose. He objected to merging them as a pre-condition for moving to Brussels. The staffs were already in Paris; there was no reason to move them. In any event, we should disconnect the issue of creating a single agency from that of co-location. We should merge the agencies first, which was a technical matter, and consider the location, which was a political issue, subsequently.

Ministry of Defence
1st February 1988

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