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MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
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16 February 1989

ANGLO-GERMAN SUMMIT: DEFENCE CO-OPERATION

The UK-FRG Joint Study Group on defence co-operation has produced a number of proposals to extend the close links between our Armed Forces and to give them greater visibility. Several were announced during the joint Press Conference given by Mr Younger and Dr Scholz on 30th January, principally in the fields of training, logistics and personnel exchanges. There would be merit in the Prime Minister and Chancellor Kohl capitalising further on these achievements by referring to them at the Summit press conference; this is reflected in the proposed themes at Annex C of the Steering Brief.

There is an attractive and additional measure which the Prime Minister could refer to at the Press Conference as being under initial consideration, namely a proposal to form a joint unit linking 4 UK Oerlikon 35mm anti-aircraft guns (3 refurbished ex-Argentine and 1 purchased) with 2 German Skyguard radars. Manning would probably be provided by about 50 Royal Auxiliary Air Force personnel and a cadre of some 15 RAF regulars and Germans. The unit would provide additional and cost-effective short-range air defence at an RAF station in Germany; it would also be a natural development of the essential co-operation that exists between British and German forces engaged in air defence in Germany. Details are being worked out and a trial will be held later this year.

Quite apart from the military advantages, the proposal offers scope for positive publicity about Anglo-German defence co-operation; it affords evidence of our determination to strengthen such bilateral co-operation within the Alliance and could prove of some use in managing the political difficulties in Germany related to training. It would also be well received in NATO as a means of strengthening European defence capability through co-operative action.

We understand that German officials are keen to make a public announcement and we expect Dr Scholz to confirm this during his

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bilateral meeting with the Defence Secretary. I attach material which the Prime Minister could use at the press conference.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Richard Gozney (FCO) and to Trevor Woolley (Cabinet Office).

Your sincerely,
Brian

(B R HAWTIN)
Private Secretary

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[until used]

LINE TO TAKE

Initial consideration is being given to the possibility of forming a joint unit to augment short-range air defence of an RAF operating base in Germany.

SUPPLEMENTARIES (if needed)

Further details?

Option under consideration would involve linking RAF Oerlikon Guns and German Skyguard radars: largely manned by UK auxiliaries but with cadre provided by RAF and German Air Force.

Decisions?

Subject to further consideration and to technical trials. Decisions possible before end of year.

Numbers? Costs? Timescales?

Too early to give details. But size likely to be of the order of 50 auxiliaries and 15 UK/German regulars.

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