



INTERNATIONAL
SECURITY AFFAIRS

ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301

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In reply refer to:
1-27197/73

#28

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: SecDef Meeting with FRG General Inspector Zimmermann

Participants:

Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) Side

General Inspector of the German Armed Forces, Admiral Armin Zimmermann

~~Major General Harold West, Chief of Staff~~

Defense Attache, Brigadier General Matthaus Speigl

Military Assistant to Admiral Zimmermann, Col Gerhard Drugmann

United States Side

Secretary of Defense, James R. Schlesinger

Acting Assistant Secretary of Defense (ISA), Vice Admiral Ray Peet

Military Assistant to SecDef, MG John A. Wickham

Deputy Director (Country Affairs), OASD(ISA) European Region, Col Frederic Ackerson

Time: 1545-1705 hours, 14 December 1973

Place: Office of the Secretary of Defense, Pentagon

1. State of the Alliance. In discussing his US itinerary, Admiral Zimmermann stated that he was particularly impressed by SAC Headquarters. After SecDef asked Admiral Zimmermann's view on NATO, the latter replied it was obvious that NATO must be revitalized, and the Allies must develop a more concrete approach to solving its problems. There seemed to be too many areas of conflict between European nations brought about by a myriad of politically sensitive situations. The new dialogue within the Alliance was the most useful thing that had recently evolved.

2. National Contributions to NATO. ADM Zimmermann went on to say that at a minimum the FRG would try to maintain its current level of expenditures, and in the future hopefully increase slowly. While FRG would maintain its NATO contribution with at least the same strength and the same combat effectiveness as it had today, there was a need for a new German force structure, and MOD Leber agreed. The major conclusion resulting from the recent force structure commission was that it was necessary to modernize the Bundeswehr and decrease the ratio between operating costs and procurement.

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SecDef asked why the FRG devoted less than 4% of its GNP to defense expenditures. ADM Zimmermann questioned the basis for NATO accounting because, by NATO definition, Portugal was No. 1 and the FRG well down the line of contributors. SecDef commented that the FRG was devoting 5 to 5 1/2% of its GNP to defense 10 years ago, but today only 7/10ths of 1% of its population was under arms and in the UK only 6/10th of 1%. This record was "topped" only by Canada, Luxembourg, and Iceland. The FRG did deserve credit for making good use of its expenditures. As an example, the UK fighting capability - an Army of 160,000 - did not reflect its 5 to 6% GNP defense expenditures. Italy could also do better. ADM Zimmermann noted the UK's costly nuclear effort and its involvement in Ireland.

After stating that he was more concerned about the European defense effort than he was about the balance of payments aspect of US defense expenditures, SecDef noted that countries providing manpower cannot buy equipment, and those providing equipment do not provide manpower. He also noted the FRG force level of about 495,000 and commented that if 1% of the FRG population were under arms, a force of some 600,000 would be available. ADM Zimmermann replied that the FRG wartime strength was 1.2M - all of whom had arms available.

3. European Defense Community. After ADM Zimmermann asked for SecDef's views on the European move toward a defense community, SecDef replied that he had favored this since 1954, and the U.S. had no problems with such an entity. He noted that a historical examination of the French attitude on this question revealed that whenever there is European irritation with the U.S., the French line is always to develop a defense community. As soon as a crisis passes, the French then change their mask and talk about a Europe of fatherlands. Unfortunately the quest for European unity seems to develop out of an anti-Americanism. The problem with European defense is the lack of an internal structure to enforce decisions; therefore, each country shrugs off its own responsibilities and tries to shift them on to others.

SecDef commented on the USSR defense expenditures of \$00B annually of which about \$35B is directed toward Europe. At the same time Europe spends \$35B and achieves unimpressive results. Although he had never examined the UK budget closely, he felt that much was probably devoted to support costs such as maintaining such "pork barrel" items as obsolete defense industries. Individual countries must demonstrate a much greater stamina and industry to react to Soviet pressure. He felt that as a result of a 25 year period of luxury, the Western world had developed low morale with little discipline. Furthermore, the quality of Western civilian defense leadership was spotty, and at the least one-half of it was scared of its Parliaments. The DPC encouraged him because he felt some of the defense ministers would go out and do something, and Belgium's Vanden Boeynants has apparently already

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done this. Since the U.S. Congress and the people do not perceive that the Europeans are prepared to make sacrifices themselves, they question why the US should do so.

4. Allied Tactical Air Forces. SecDef stated that 2 and 4 ATAFs were examples of European inability to face reality. This situation - air assets in the south with the primary Soviet attack threat from the north - should have been remedied ten years ago. He noted that although Dutch MOD Vredeling wanted specialization, he could not translate this into a decision to drop the headquarters at Brunssum. To Vredeling specialization meant other things. ADM Zimmermann felt that the Alliance had made progress and that GEN Jones would soon be appointed to head AAFCE so that he could work out the terms of reference and common operating procedures. In principle, ADM Zimmermann favored collocation in peace and war. His major lesson in this episode was that where pressure is exercised and leadership shown, the Alliance progresses. SecDef commented that it unfortunately takes six to seven years to make adjustments properly accomplished in three or four months. It is wasted effort for ministers to sit around and encourage each other to do obvious things; they should be involved with broader Alliance strategical problems.

5. Aircraft Shelters. ADM Zimmermann noted that the EDIP-financed construction of shelters has certainly shown steady but slow progress. SecDef mused that some think the French might be right. They see the tangled way the Alliance operates; and while they believe in French membership in the Alliance, they have no use for its day-to-day operation. Everyone has an excuse. Possibly if more things were done on a bilateral basis in the immediate future, the Alliance could move. Subsequently, after necessary things were done, all could return to the Alliance.

6. MBFR. After SecDef stated that most of the deterrent is provided by US forces in Europe, he expressed a lack of understanding in European attitudes. After he made his June proposals to improve conventional forces and make them capable of securing the defense of Europe, he received a neurotic reaction. It is unfortunate that the Ministers seem disposed to take steps now leading to short term benefits which will be very costly in the long run. The Soviets are attempting to exploit this situation.

SecDef stated that he had disagreed with Leber's plan to reduce FRG's military forces during MBFR's second phase. If FRG forces and Czech are reduced, the balance will be disturbed. There is no USG problem of US funding of the US defense contribution to Europe as it is both in our own interest and in the broad interest of the survival of freedom. The fact that Europeans do less is essentially incorrect.

ADM Zimmermann replied that it was clear both to the FRG military and to

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MOD Leber that the Soviets, Poles, Czechs, and other Eastern Europeans want to get rid of the Bundeswehr. This fear results from a historical, psychological trauma which will take generations to eliminate. The new FRG force structure plan is designed to build the Bundeswehr into a more effective defensive force and not as a threat. He then invited SecDef to visit Germany to see for himself, and SecDef replied that he would come.

ADM Zimmermann felt that if the FRG government tolerated the Bundeswehr being torn down, the end result could only be that all of Europe would fall. SecDef commented that the Western Hemisphere can survive in such circumstances but not easily. After he expressed again that the Bundeswehr should be strengthened by the addition of another 100,000 men, ADM Zimmermann wondered if such a step would be liked by European governments. SecDef replied that they should be ignored. It had been 28 years since the end of WWII, and it is time for Europe to look to the future rather than to the past. The residual anti-German attitudes in Europe are not only senseless but are counter productive. Furthermore, part of the problem is European lack of self confidence. After ADM Zimmermann commented that it would take some ages for Europe to overcome its anti-German attitude, SecDef said that America also has certain irrational tendencies. In particular, it had certain moralistic tendencies in the international sphere, and the US Government should make the necessary hard decisions rather than being so moralistic about it. ADM Zimmermann agreed from a military point of view and said that he would love to do everything necessary in support of European defense even though it might be politically unwise, but commented that he also must follow his civilian leadership.

7. Strategy. SecDef said that NATO and European security are the most important things for US foreign policy and for the Department of Defense, and we must have more and closer collaboration between defense ministers. An example is the fertile, realistic US-FRG collaboration.

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This exchange will obviously be over FRG soil and will result in mass destruction.

8. Conventional Option. SecDef said that Europe has the same resources as the USSR but possesses a higher technology. Soviet resources are also diverted to more than just the central front; e.g. Asia where the USSR must maintain a major capability. In addition, Soviet resources are further expended in developing a reconnaissance capability for its strategic nuclear forces. All this is costly to the USSR. At the same time, all the Europeans are asked to

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do is to develop a conventional defensive force - not an overwhelming task. Militarily, it is a problem of quality combined with a willingness to cohere on basic strategy. Since the victim of any nuclear strategy is the FRG, it seems logical that the FRG should wish to stress the conventional option. The US has stressed such an option because of its concern for the FRG. It is unfortunate that the press as well as others attack this concern and picture it as US desires both to decouple and to collaborate with the USSR. In reality, we are deeply concerned with the future of Europe. The US and Europe must have a rational strategy to deter the Eastern nations without question. While he felt that the Dutch were willing to accept the conventional option, SecDef was uncertain about Belgium.

SecDef said that we do not want to understate the opponents' capability solely for budgetary reasons or to maintain Alliance harmony. We expect the Soviets to be able to mobilize and to move, but our intelligence planning factors for these actions are questionable. The 82d Airborne Division should in no way be construed as an equivalent to a 10% manned USSR division in NOVOSIBERSK. ADM Zimmermann noted FRG agreement to examine US proposals. SecDef replied that even though any sound doctrine dictates that we should remain in Europe, Congress might want us out if they were to believe that the conventional balance is one of utter hopelessness. All strategy options must be credible.

9.  Nuclear Options. After ADM Zimmermann thanked SecDef for such a clear statement of US thoughts, he noted that the FRG would not want to downgrade tactical nuclear weapons. SecDef stated that we should review our tactical nuclear strategy. The Soviets today are uncertain in regard to what we will do in any future confrontation, and we must continue to develop and maintain our tactical nuclear posture, particularly under today's circumstances where there is a premium on striking fast.

After ADM Zimmermann expressed concern over Soviet attempts to get rid of Forward Based Systems (FBS), SecDef replied that the West has lost its capacity to reject outright the preposterous, unacceptable USSR proposals. The US will talk only about central strategic systems; and when the USSR demands that we discuss others, we should reply with our own quid. The US is prepared to defend Europe up to the Elbe boundary. If the USSR wishes to discuss FBS, we should counter with our own demand to discuss all of the Soviet alliance nuclear sub-systems to include such weapons as even the KOMAR patrol boats. In sum, if they want to talk FBS, we want to talk IR and IRBMs as well as all nuclear capable systems in Eastern Europe. He felt that the Soviets try to get the maximum out of any negotiations, and we should never agree to initiate any negotiations without realizing it. If the Soviets do not perceive all Allied capabilities to include a controlled tactical nuclear weapons option and believe in our capabilities to execute them, they will not continue to be deterred.

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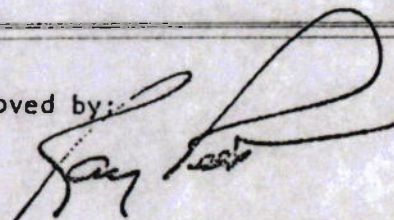
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10. ~~63~~ Capacity of Europe. SecDef said that if Europe is willing to do its part, the future is assured. Unfortunately, Europe has become a spectator and allowed its destiny to be determined by outside forces. This is most recently demonstrated by a Europe appearing to be at the mercy of those who control the oil sources of the Mideast. He felt this incomprehensible.

11. (U) US Commanders in Europe. In conclusion, ADM Zimmermann expressed his particular appreciation of the excellence of GEN Davison and his progress in Europe.

Prepared by:
Col Frederic Ackerson, USA

Approved by:



Date:

1/7/74

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