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OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301

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Date: SEP 21 2018

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

*AWACS*

SUBJECT: Meeting between Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld and  
Federal Republic of Germany Minister of Defense Georg Leber (U)

Federal Republic of Germany Participants

Minister of Defense Georg Leber  
Ambassador to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization Franz Krapf  
General Inspector of the Armed Forces Admiral Armin Zimmermann  
Assistant Chief of Staff for Politico-Military Affairs and Operations,  
Armed Forces Staff, Major General Juergen Brandt  
Personal Assistant to the Minister of Defense Dr. Walter Stuetzle  
Interpreter Mr. Karl Freudenstein

United States Participants

Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld  
Acting Assistant Secretary of Defense (International Security Affairs)  
Amos A. Jordan  
Defense Advisor, United States Mission to the North Atlantic Treaty  
Organization, Dr. Laurence J. Legere  
Military Assistant to the Secretary of Defense Rear Admiral M. Staser  
Holcomb

Time: 0800 to 0850 Hours, Wednesday 21 January 1976

Place: Minister Leber's Suite, Vier Jahreszeiten Hotel, Hamburg, FRG

1. Theater Nuclear Force (TNF) Improvements.

Secretary Rumsfeld opened the meeting by telling Minister Leber how the U.S. intended to proceed with the handling of its paper on Theater Nuclear Forces (TNF) improvements. The U.S., he said, would not be announcing "Here are our proposals for action"; rather, the U.S. would be saying with this paper, "Here are the problems as we see them", with the idea that the problems would receive appropriate address over time. Minister Leber asked if this TNF paper would raise any problems, or was it simply an adaptation of some kind? The Secretary said the paper should cause no problems. He felt it simply reflected technological changes and changes in the level and kind of Warsaw Pact capability. The paper, he stressed, was meant to promote alliance discussion; it advanced no specific proposals for changes, nor did it lay out any timetable for action. If the paper did provoke concern among the allies, the Secretary said he hoped they would speak up

~~Will Asst to SecDef~~

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and say so, because he himself thought it a very useful paper.

Minister Leber wondered, then, whether later in the day the Ministers would be simply recording the tabling of the paper by the U.S. Secretary Rumsfeld said it was all right with him if that was the way the Ministers chose to handle the paper. He recalled the changes in nuclear targeting strategy that the U.S. had advanced a few years ago. The changes were sound ones, but people became worried anyhow. What had then happened was that subsequent frank discussion had cleared up the misunderstandings. He saw the same kind of thing happening again, thus once more avoiding the creation of problems in this nuclear area.

## 2. Airborne Warning and Control System (AWACS).

Shifting the subject, Minister Leber said he thought the AWACS was now being processed in an orderly way. He said that he had recently written the promised letter to Secretary Rumsfeld, and that this letter once again noted the fact that consideration of AWACS funding by the Bundestag will take time. Secretary Rumsfeld reported that Congress had recently authorized four AWACS for FY-76, and that the President was asking for six more in FY-77. The Secretary appreciated, he said, the FRG's co-operative attitude and thought it was important to involve other countries as well, especially on long lead time funding. Minister Leber wished that the base of participation in AWACS could be broadened to include more countries. He said that the FRG's views on this, and on other matters concerning AWACS, coincided with those of the U.S. AWACS must be a multinational NATO effort. He wondered, however, if the UK really wanted to join. Secretary Rumsfeld said he hoped that the minimum base participation of U.S., FRG, and UK could be expanded to include Canada and as many more as possible.

Minister Leber said he thought AWACS might be a good subject for inscription on an NPG agenda, since it appeared worthwhile to him to engage the other allies on AWACS as often and in as many ways as possible. Dr. Legere intervened at this point to note that the timing and relative occurrences of the Spring NAC and DPC Meetings were already being directly affected, in fact almost driven, by the AWACS timetable, and that, therefore, to put an AWACS item on the spring NPG agenda could complicate matters almost impossibly. Minister Leber said he appreciated this, but nevertheless it would be useful somehow to link the requirement for AWACS to the Warsaw Pact threat in an NPG context. Secretary Rumsfeld agreed, and said he believed the TNF paper in fact did make reference to AWACS. In response to his request for confirmation of this belief, Mr. Jordan and Dr. Legere told him that the paper did make a passing reference to AWACS, but that it might be a good idea to insert an AWACS phrase into the Secretary's talking points scheduled for delivery later in the day when the NPG considered the agenda item on Theater Nuclear Forces posture. (Note: Such a clause or sentence was inserted into the Secretary's talking points prior to his delivery of them.)

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3. Stationing a U.S. Army Brigade in the Northern Army Group (NORTHAG) Area.

Shifting the subject again, Minister Leber said he thought that the bilateral contacts between the U.S. and FRG had succeeded in clarifying most problems associated with the proposed deployment of the NORTHAG Brigade, but then when Chancellor Schmidt returned from his recent trip to the U.S., he had said that he doubted that the NORTHAG Brigade enjoyed explicit support and approval of President Ford. This had created difficulties for a time, but now the Chancellor no longer doubts the personal commitment of President Ford. Nevertheless, the Chancellor was about to write President Ford in order to confirm the planned role of the NORTHAG Brigade: was it intended that it remain permanently in the FRG or was it somehow perceived by the U.S. as a kind of strategic mobile reserve for further deployment elsewhere in contingencies? Regardless of this question, the FRG still approves the NORTHAG Brigade concept, and understands the importance of beginning to think now about how to work out the funding arrangements later.

Secretary Rumsfeld responded as follows: He said he was not aware of the President Ford aspect of this NORTHAG Brigade question, but believed it must have proceeded from some misunderstanding; in any event, he would talk to the President about this on Friday (23 January). As for funding, he was afraid that the present commendable momentum would wind down if the U.S. and FRG did not expedite NORTHAG Brigade funding arrangements so that the necessary construction could start as soon as possible. As for the notion of the NORTHAG Brigade as a strategic mobile reserve, he had certainly never heard about this but would check into it. He thereupon asked Dr. Legere if he had heard of any such notion. Dr. Legere said he had not. So far as he knew, the case for the NORTHAG Brigade had always proceeded primarily from (a) the need to begin correcting the large disparity between military capability in the NORTHAG area and military capability in the CENTAG area; and (b) the perception of the NORTHAG Brigade as possibly the lead element of a reinforcement corps.

Minister Leber said he himself had no doubts concerning the role of the NORTHAG Brigade, and therefore welcomed Secretary Rumsfeld's statement. The Chancellor may believe that any subsequent deployment of the NORTHAG Brigade after its arrival in Germany should be subject to U.S. - FRG consultation, and the Chancellor's letter to the President could well refer to such consultation.

Minister Leber then stated that he and Secretary Schlesinger had had an understanding for keeping in direct touch with each other during times of trouble. Minister Leber thought it would be a good idea to establish such an arrangement with Secretary Rumsfeld. Secretary Rumsfeld said he would be delighted to carry on the Leber-Schlesinger direct contact arrangement.

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On the NORTHAG Brigade, Secretary Rumsfeld said he understood the motivation of the Chancellor's position on consultation, including the latter's fear that the FRG might be used as a marshalling yard. However, and to be frank, he said, American taxpayers supported one single array of military forces for the U.S., and the U.S. Government must therefore use its defense assets in ways that made sense. It would certainly not make sense, for example, if the U.S. were to maintain one set of forces for deployment at home, another for deployment in the FRG, a third for deployment elsewhere, et cetera. What was important was an understanding of the intent of the U.S. in deploying the NORTHAG Brigade. Minister Leber responded by saying, "Perfect".

Secretary Rumsfeld recalled a development that had occurred during his tenure as U.S. Ambassador to NATO. Some economies in support forces had resulted in the activation of a new U.S. battalion for deployment in Vicenza, Italy. Although welcoming this deployment, the Italian Government had wanted it to be played low key. The then-Ambassador Rumsfeld had opposed this, believing that publics must know what is going on so that governments have options for sensible action open to them. He agreed it was necessary and desirable for the U.S. and FRG to talk matters through fully in order to reach a full understanding on everything concerning the NORTHAG Brigade. Minister Leber said that the problem in the FRG was opposite from what had apparently been the problem in Italy. When the U.S. brigade arrived for stationing in NORTHAG, the German Government and public wanted it to march in with all bands playing; what they did not want was to see that brigade leave some day on another mission.

#### 4. United Kingdom Defense Budget Reductions.

In closing, Minister Leber referred to the forthcoming defense budget cuts in the UK and to the part played by Minister Mason in lowering those proposed cuts from about 500 million pounds to about 200 million pounds. He told Secretary Rumsfeld that Chancellor Schmidt had gotten into direct but discreet contact with Chancellor of the Exchequer Healey on this matter, and that it had worked. Secretary Rumsfeld agreed that the cuts would indeed apparently be less than those originally contemplated.



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