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THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20301

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Chief, Records & Declass Div, WHS
Date: SEP 17 2018

2 DEC 1976

The Honorable Georg Leber,
Minister of Defense
Ministry of Defense
Postfach 1328
5300 Bonn 1
Federal Republic of Germany

Office of the Secretary of Defense
Chief, RDD, ESD, WHS
Date: 17 SEP 2018 Authority: EO 13526 + E USX 1982
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Dear George:

All of your colleagues missed you at the Nuclear Planning Group meeting in London and will miss you, I know, at our Defense Planning Committee sessions in Brussels. I am disappointed, of course, that we will be unable to meet next week, but more importantly, I deeply regret that you have not regained your good health.

In this letter, I wish to pass my thoughts to you, Georg, and to ask for yours on three important standardization issues now before us: the NATO Airborne Early Warning, tank harmonization and A1H-9L programs.

As for NATO AEW, recent developments encourage me to believe it may be possible to reach a firm agreement in principle at the forthcoming meeting of the Defense Planning Committee in Ministerial Session, and a formal procurement agreement sometime in the Spring after the several parliaments, including the Bundestag, approve national participation. Favorable trends in attitudes in Italy, Belgium and Denmark have occurred recently. Canada, as you know, has given support for the program, and prospects for Dutch and Norwegian participation may have improved, as well. I believe that if not all of these countries will ultimately support a NATO AEW provided the FRG, the UK and the US are clearly seen as fully supporting the program.

We understand, certainly, that you cannot commit your Government to procurement before Bundestag review and approval, but I am convinced that firm statements of intent by your representative, Fred Mulley and me at the December Ministerial ultimately will determine whether the Alliance acquires this essential military capability and political asset. Fred Mulley emphasized to me in London that his Government can wait until Spring for formal agreement only if firm agreement in principle is reached in December. I hope your representative at the Ministerial meeting will be instructed to provide, in your absence, agreement in principle to the

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NATO AEW program subject to negotiation of acceptable cost-sharing levels and to Bundestag approval. As we see it, the Federal Republic's role in obtaining firm NATO-wide agreement in principle is pivotal to success. It is necessary for Germany to be positive. As I noted, the positions of the smaller nations seem to be dependent upon how Bonn, London and Washington stand.

On the tank harmonization program, as I informed you on November 12, the United States decision to enter full scale engineering development is in substantial consonance with the objectives of our mutual efforts to attain a higher degree of harmonization between the German and American tank forces. Depending upon the results of the tank gun evaluation now underway and recognizing the actions of our Congress with respect to the tank gun, we jointly may have to consider delaying the tank gun selection beyond mid-January 1977. As this matter becomes clearer, I will advise you and will suggest possible courses of action.

On a separate but related matter, the Department of Defense has approached the British Ministry of Defense, informally, to see if there might be interest in the United Kingdom's production of the United States tank engine under license. We did this in order to try to move the UK toward the harmonization program and in the same spirit that prompted you to make the smooth bore gun available to the British.

Our respective representatives have discussed for some time arrangements for coproducing the A1H-9L. I am convinced that this program can serve as a model for Alliance standardization and resource conservation via coproduction. For this reason, we have approved the Federal Republic of Germany's coproduction of the A1H-9L, without research and development reimbursement charges or royalty fees when produced for members of the Alliance. We hope the FRG and other Allies will follow a similar policy of reducing the cost of coproduction to facilitate standardization. The result can only be a stronger Alliance.

I had looked forward to seeing you in Brussels next week, Georg, and to a discussion of these important issues with both you and Fred Mulley. However, I understand fully the wisdom of the decision to prolong your recuperation and hope you are feeling better and recover quickly.

With warm personal regards, I remain,

Sincerely,



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