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

2 July 1976

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Meeting between Secretary Rumsfeld and MOD Leber, 2 July 1976

Additional persons present were:

FRG

Amb. Krapf
Special Asst. Stuetzle
RADM Seizinger, Defense Attache
Interpreter Freudenstein
Mil. Asst. Carstens
R&D Attache Turowski

US

Deputy Secretary Ellsworth
Mr. McAuliffe
Secretary Hoffmann
Dr. Currie
Mr. Glitman
RADM Holcomb

Summary 07/1/76

Leber proposed that the very positive results of the high level US/FRG review of the tank program just completed in Brussels be discussed first. Secretary Rumsfeld pointed out that the review had really started some months ago when he had Secretary Ellsworth broach the subject with Leber. Then, prompted by constructive Leber-Rumsfeld bilateral talks in Brussels, the results achieved by Norm Augustine, Bob Parker and their German counterparts were quite encouraging. He went on to say that he had called together the Secretary of the Army, General Weyand, and Dr. Currie, along with Augustine and Parker, when the team returned from Brussels, and had decided as follows:

First, that any response to questions by the press would be to the effect that the US and FRG are working together and exploring new ideas, but that there are no decisions yet to be announced;

Second, that a high level DOD team would look further into the proposals outlined in Brussels and analyze their cost and the impact on the XM-I program;

Third, that it would be useful to have a small US/FRG group look further into some gun, ammunition and engine details; and

Fourth, that we should get together trilaterally with the United Kingdom before reaching a conclusion on the gun for the new tank.

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In any event, we should do all these things promptly, not allowing the business to stretch out into months.

Leber said that he agreed, with minor exceptions. He said he had talked with many Members of Congress, found them to be receptive to the course we have jointly mapped out. He said he was interested in comparing their reactions with those of members of his Bundestag. He said that not only did the Congressmen indicate that they would not stand in the way, but they are positively enthusiastic about the emphasis on commonality.

He went on to say that he does not believe that the agreement represented by the Joint Brussels Paper can be kept quiet for even three or four more days. He recommended that what we have agreed upon, what we believe to be feasible, be written down ... so we document the plateau we have reached, and, while not implying a decision, catalogue our progress to date.

Leber said, if his information is correct, the United Kingdom has no present requirement for a new gun. They don't need one until 1989 or so. He noted that the French do have a requirement for the 120mm gun now. Thus, if the US/FRG reached an understanding on 120mm caliber, for example, we would not have to decide now on whether it were to be smoothbore or rifled. And four major nations would have specified the direction in which to move, and we could convey that to the press.

Secretary Rumsfeld said that we had concluded in our US discussions that we could probably arrive at some statement of intent, indicating that specifics would be left to the experts to develop. With respect to the gun, our goal is to have commonality on barrel and ammunition. He added that our information on the United Kingdom's situation is somewhat different, in that we believe they have a requirement now. He invited Dr. Currie to amplify. Dr. Currie said the UK does have a 120mm rifled gun in hand, that they have offered to send us one for testing, and they could be ready for production shortly. However, they are in the process of increasing chamber pressure to achieve a higher muzzle velocity, and they would like tripartite development over a period of several years to verify the design.

Attache Turowski nodded and commented that the FRG needs a demonstration of higher performance now, not several years hence. Rumsfeld commented that once we agree to standardize we can work out the timing, and, if necessary, adopt the Block I, Block II approach.

Leber asked again why we could not then follow his approach and agree to standardize on the caliber now. Rumsfeld said he had two reservations: first, that we cannot prejudge the US competition now in progress, and agreement now would jeopardize our development; second,

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that specific agreement now on the caliber is not as important as agreement that we will standardize on the barrel and ammunition, whatever caliber we choose.

Discussion of these points went on for several minutes. The main thrust of the Germans' argument was that we should publicize agreement on as many of the 16 points in the "Brussels Paper" as possible, now. The U.S. thrust was that agreement as to specifics would be premature in light of the legal source selection process in which the U.S. is involved this month, and that a more general statement of intent and the objective of standardization was all that was needed. This would be completely consistent with what had been said on the tank question over the past year or two. Leber pressed for formalizing the advances represented in the Brussels work last month. Rumsfeld characterized the German position as being more sensitive to public relations than his own concern about making the standardization and commonality effort work. Leber said it wasn't PR as much as a desire to preserve gains already made.

After lengthy discussion, during which Rumsfeld emphasized that we ought to be able to do what he envisioned within a month or so, Leber agreed that there would not be much point in drafting a joint statement of specifics here and now. Rumsfeld said that we should state our principles publicly today, and the two agreed. At that point, McAuliffe, Currie, Turowski, and RADM Seizinger went into a room by themselves to produce such a statement.

Leber stated that he was convinced that the United Kingdom will not come up with a firm offer on their 120mm gun within the next three months. Krapf commented that this, like a number of other outside pressures, worries him because it only acts to delay us. Leber said that he recognized that the fact that FRG has a tank (meaning the Leopard II) where the U.S. does not as yet, must account for our differences on the degree of publicity we are ready to have right now. He noted that after US source selection narrows XM-1 to one design, there will still have to be give-and-take to achieve standardization. He also observed that the French and the UK are interested only in the gun, and they are not in a give-and-take position as we are.

Leber asked what Secretary Rumsfeld's concept was of how the UK and the French would be brought into discussions between the US and FRG. Rumsfeld said we ought to start with three-way talks immediately, as soon as next week.

Leber raised one unrelated point in closing. He noted the U.S. intention to sharply increase the costs of foreign military training and said that, although the dollars involved were not bank-breaking

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on either side, the increases hit the FRG in mid-fiscal year and pose an immediate operational problem. He said he hoped we could smooth that problem out. He also said that such increases in general might frighten other NATO countries from multi-national training, which would be bad. Rumsfeld agreed that multi-national training was very important, and promised to have McAuliffe get into the problem. He observed that DOD has learned that, while legislation is in progress, renewed argument characteristically has a worse effect than letting the Congress take its course.

M. Staser Holcomb
Rear Admiral, USN
Military Assistant

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