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OFFICE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT
WASHINGTON

February 23, 1983

MEMORANDUM FOR MIKE WHEELER
Staff Secretary
National Security Council

SUBJECT: Vice President's Meetings in London

Attached are Memcons of the Vice President's meetings with Social Democratic Party leader Roy Jenkins and Liberal Party leader David Steel and with Labor Party leaders Dennis Healey and Michael Foot which took place when the Vice President was in London.

Don Gregg
Don Gregg

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OFFICE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT

WASHINGTON

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NLRRF02-071/2 #3013

BY CU NARA DATE 6/12/08MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Vice President's Meeting with Alliance Leaders
Roy Jenkins and David Steel

The Vice President met February 9 with Social Democratic Party (SDP) leader Roy Jenkins and Liberal Party leader David Steel in their capacities as leaders of the SDP-Liberal Alliance. Also present were Ambassador Louis, Admiral Murphy, Assistant to the Vice President for National Security Affairs Donald Gregg, Assistant Secretary-Designate Richard Burt, NSC Senior Staff Member Dennis Blair, Chairman of the President's Council of Economic Advisors Martin Feldstein, and DCM Edward Streator.

The Vice President said he was encouraged by recent U.S. economic results, which were optimistic. Moreover, there was a good chance they would be sustained and at lower levels of inflation. He hoped that we soon would be able to ameliorate some of our difficulties, such as high unemployment. Among the rays of optimism was the increase in employment by some 300,000 which equates almost to a \$5 billion job program in one month. He anticipated that the improvements in the U.S. would have beneficial effects on the UK. Jenkins asked whether the U.S. could persuade others to spur growth, and Feldstein said that we were not looking for trains to which we could hook locomotives. Jenkins said it might be possible to restart the Bonn plan of 1979 that went wrong. Feldstein replied that, in most countries he visited, he had found leaders much more concerned about inflation and balance-of-payments. Jenkins noted that Britain did not have a balance-of-payments problem, though Feldstein said that depended on the sector at which one was looking. In response to Jenkins' query whether the FRG was worried about its balance-of-payments, Feldstein said that it was in surplus.

On the issue of linkage between economies and defense, Steel said that Trident had an impact in the UK, but not the cruise deployments. He thought the real issue was whether defense spending was easier in good economic circumstances. Burt recalled the stalward posture of the French. The Vice President noted that some U.S. Senators favor cuts in defense spending on the basis of the high cost. However, he noted, as a percentage of GNP, we were spending less than in Kennedy's time. Steel said it was interesting that a recent public

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opinion poll in Britain showed unemployment to be the most important issue. Law and order was next, followed by inflation. Cruise was only considered by eight percent to be the most important issue. The Vice President said that once the public focuses on an issue it takes on tremendous importance, as in the case of law and order in South Florida.

Steel said that the nuclear question seemed a minority issue in Britain. Jenkins, however, said that it was a much bigger issue than 18 months ago. In response to Burt's query as to why it had become a women's issue, Steel said that he thought the phenomenon was the result of clever campaigning. In response to the Vice President's question, Jenkins said it was a mixture of party politics and concerned mothers. Steel added that they were "not nuts".

In response to Jenkins' question on the prospects for INF talks, the Vice President said that if the alliance stayed firm in its collectively taken agreement, the Soviets will negotiate seriously because they don't want the deployment of Pershing and cruise. He saw no alternative to going ahead and testing the theory. Nitze, he said, was not optimistic about an early proposal from the Soviets. The U.S., for its part, had tried to show it was not inflexible, yet was adhering to certain principles such as balanced and verifiable results. He said that the U.S. had not wanted to sally forth with a new proposal simply because the Soviets did not like the present proposal. He believed that the Soviets want a deal. "The walk in the woods", though unauthorized, took place. We must keep pressing, he said, and saying that we are serious. Several dates are key, the Vice President said: the FRG election will be important because, if the Soviets think a new German government will be more amenable to their proposals, they will delay advancing new ones. The other important date is that of deployment in 1983. While he could not document his view, the Vice President believed that the Soviets would offer something. In reply to Jenkins' question about marking time until the FRG elections, the Vice President noted that his visit could be construed as an attempt to influence the elections. However, he thought that he had avoided giving that impression. Steel said it was important to continue to underline publicly that there is no debate on the other side, as Burt had noted on British TV over the weekend. By contrast, every argument is being listened to on the Western side.

In response to Steel's question, Burt said that there were about 200 SS4's and 5's left on the Soviet side. However, he added, warhead numbers is not the issue; the arrival of the

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USSR to parity is. In the 1960's, he said, we did not worry about the Soviets' superiority in intermediate-range weapons. But the situation now has changed because of parity and the threat of decoupling is greater.

Jenkins said that he did not dissent from the view that zero was the best option. However, he asked, is the U.S. rigid? The Vice President replied that it was essential to keep in mind the objective of zero and also the views of all our Allies. Jenkins asked about British and French systems, noting that this opened the discussion into the strategic area. Steel said that they would like to see a stage where they were introduced, assuming there was some success in Geneva. Jenkins said that the ideal would be to achieve a settlement in the INF talks that led to a balance. However, he thought it necessary to move from the zero option and he thought the Soviet position was not unreasonable in asking that the UK and French forces be taken into account. At the same time, he acknowledged that the U.S. could not be left out. He could envisage a deal after the FRG elections that led to Soviet reductions and then linked INF and START as well as bringing in UK and French forces. The Vice President asked if they would agree that there should be no deal permitting a monopoly on the INF category of weapons. Steel suggested that agreement might be possible if the balance were not different than that obtaining in 1979. In response to Burt's query, Steel said that 1979 was an arbitrary date. He added that it might be possible to live with an agreement that left no more on the Soviet side than there were SS4's and 5's, with zero for the West. Burt said that would result in about 100 SS-20's on the Soviet side. He added that he could foresee a major argument in Geneva on the mathematics.

Burt said that he tended to discount the view that the Soviets are more concerned about Pershing than cruise, for it may be that the Soviets are aware that Pershing is the first system the Germans must deploy. If they can prevent the Pershing deployment, others will not go ahead with their deployments. Steel said that this may be the reason why Vogel seems preferred by the Soviets. The Vice President noted that Vogel's views did not seem firm. Burt continued that he thought the Soviets viewed cruise as more destabilizing, based on Karpov's statements. He concluded that he was not prepared to say that Pershings were seen as all that much more dangerous from the Soviet point of view. Gregg noted that the Soviets were stressing the short warning involved with Pershings. Burt added that only 108 were to be deployed, and they could not reach Moscow. Moreover, he said, cruise can be a first strike weapon if it cannot be seen.

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In response to Jenkins' question on French views, the Vice President said that they had indicated that their weapons should not be counted, that deployments of cruise and Pershing should go forward and that the U.S. and the other Allies should stay strong. Jenkins said this suggested that the French remained "detached but determined". Burt added that the French also seemed worried about Germany.

Referring to a question he had received at lunch about the UK opting out of nuclear weapons but staying in the alliance, the Vice President said that he had indicated in reply that it would be bad for any allied country to reduce its defense contribution. Steel said that if Britain stayed in NATO, the U.S. shouldn't worry about what Britain did about its independent deterrent. Jenkins said that the U.S. should be concerned about its bases in Britain rather than Polaris and Trident. While Denmark might contract half out, it was not feasible for Britain to stay in the alliance but refuse bases to the U.S. Burt said that the U.S. position on the UK deterrent is that it does make a contribution to defense, that it should be maintained and that it would be a loss if Britain opted out. He added that the U.S. had contributed to the British program. Steel said that Secretary Weinberger had said that he was much more concerned about the British navy; with regard to nuclear forces, he had said that was a British decision. Burt reiterated that the U.S. supports the UK deterrent. The Vice President said that we did not wish to see any departure from the present arrangement.

In response to the Vice President's question, Steel said that he thought the President was right in proposing a summit and that the decision on next steps on INF should be postponed until after the German elections. Jenkins suggested moving off the zero option after the German elections. He saw little difference between the alliance and the U.S. on INF negotiations. Zero option is not negotiable, as Andropov has said. Something in between would be negotiable. At the same time, he said that he did not believe that the U.S. could win a nuclear war, achieve nuclear superiority or spend the other side into the ground. Murphy and others said that these were not U.S. positions.

Jenkins acknowledged that the ambiguity in European thinking must be maddening as seen from Washington. The Europeans were ambivalent, some fearing that the U.S. would use Europe as a battlefield. Statesmanship would be needed, he said.

cc: State Secretariat
U.S. Embassy London
White House/Judge Clark ✓

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BY CW NARADATE 6/12/08



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OFFICE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT
WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Vice President's Meeting with Labor Leaders
Dennis Healey and Michael Foot

The Vice President met February 9 with Labor Party Leader Michael Foot and Deputy Leader Denis Healey. Other U.S. participants were Ambassador Louis, Admiral Murphy, Assistant to the Vice President for National Security Affairs Donald Gregg, Assistant Secretary-Designate Richard Burt, NSC Senior Staff Member Dennis Blair, Chairman of the President's Council of Economic Advisors Martin Feldstein, and DCM Edward Streator.

The Vice President said the situation in Lebanon has created support for the Arab cause. While it was difficult to see how the matter would play itself out, Begin might keep Sharon in the Cabinet and call an election. Healey said that he had heard that two members of the small religious parties in the Knesset allied with Begin would buck an election. It was possible, Healey said, that Begin would resign and then respond to a call again to form a government. He could expect to win an election against a Labor Party that might be led by Navon. Healey said that he was worried about the PLO conference scheduled to be held February 14; if Arafat does not have some help from the U.S., he cannot expect to defeat his opponents. What the U.S. does next is very important, Healey said.

The Vice President noted that Ambassador Habib had been very upbeat before departing recently for the Middle East.

Foot asked what would happen next in Geneva. He feared that there were "a few differences" with the U.S. on those issues.

The Vice President responded that his trip was two-faceted: on the one hand, he had sought consultations in the form of confidential discussions with leaders in the allied countries; on the other, he had been making speeches and responding to press questions. It was his impression that the Allies were close together on the zero option and determined to go forward in holding serious negotiations in Geneva. He planned to talk to the President about the views he had found in Europe, but he believed that the zero option was a sound position. The Soviets don't like it, but they were the only ones who were

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Labor Party

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against it. Moreover, the Soviets appear to have no flexibility, though we have asked them to come up with a more reasonable proposal than they yet had advanced. One thing was clear: we could not accept a Soviet monopoly.

Healey noted that the Alliance had accepted the deployment of SS4's and 5's. Foot added that Labor had not been a party to the 1979 decision and has opposed deployment of cruise and perishing missiles. As a party, Labor had never been committed to the dual track decision. On the issue of dual control, he expected continued pressure for such arrangements from the Labor Party and others. Labor was opposed to the deployment as such, and he believed it represented opinion in Britain and in Western Europe. In response to the Vice President's question whether Labor had opposed the decision when it was taken, Foot said that the Party had not mounted a frontal attack. Some of the Labor leadership might have favored it. However, since then, the Party has opposed it. A Party document is in preparation on defense policy that will move toward a posture favoring a non-nuclear defense.

Healey said he had read all the minutes of the former Labor Government on this issue and had concluded that none had been convinced that deployments were necessary to achieve equivalence. Sufficiency, he said, was enough, as President Carter had been told. He opposed a Euro-strategic balance because it strengthened decoupling. In his view, ground-launched missiles were bad; submarine or seaborne missiles would be better. The deployment of ground-launched missiles increased the danger to population centers. He recalled as well that on the so-called "grey areas" issue, Labor had opposed inclusion in SALT; however Labor had decided that it should be put into subsequent discussions and that the British should ask for representation in the talks. David Aaron, he recalled, had been trying to find out what the Germans wanted in the last days of the Carter Administration, and no final decisions had been reached.

The Vice President inquired whether the Labor Party now would wish UK and French weapons included. Healey responded affirmatively. Foot said it was not an official Party position, but would be supported. The Vice President asked if the French and UK weapons were viewed as equivalent to SS-20s. Healey said it was necessary to go into theology in order to respond, but in summary, an SS-20 would be regarded by him as strategic if it landed on him. He noted that the SS-20 has a slightly longer range than a Polaris, and that Polaris is less accurate. Healey continued that a major argument against a new generation of weapons is that they may invite preemptive attack. Moreover, once the British public is aware of plans for dispersal of ground launched missiles, opposition to them will increase.

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He asked whether it was true that the SALT II protocol explicitly prevented the deployment of cruise missiles with a range of over 600 kilometers. Burt noted that the protocol had an expiration date of December 1981, and that the Carter Administration had said in 1979 that nothing prevented deployment after 1981. Moreover, it was made clear that INF was to be negotiated in the SALT framework and that is still the case. Healey suggested that, in the event of a deadlock in the INF talks, it might be useful to seek wider scope for trade-offs by shifting the discussions to START.

The Vice President hoped there would be no such deadlock. The Soviets knew that the U.S. was anxious to negotiate.

Foot inquired about the possibility of postponing deployment if INF discussions were transferred to START. The Vice President said the decision would depend strongly on timing. The Soviets want to defer deployment and would look for excuses not to negotiate seriously. Foot said that he could see a case for deferral on the basis that there may be a need to go to the brink.

The Vice President asked if Foot and Healey had seen Andropov. Healey responded negatively, noting they had talked to the Soviet Ambassador in London but had gotten from him nothing beyond a reiteration of press releases. The Vice President said he had spent forty minutes with Andropov in a conversation limited largely to courtesies. The Vice President said it would be fascinating if he really were to shift to a less confrontational stance, or actually do something about Poland or Afghanistan. Healey recalled an article in the Brookings Review stressing Andropov's experience in foreign affairs. Burt said that the author argued essentially that a new generation of Soviet leaders might prove more reasonable. Healey interjected that the article did not seem to be based on hard evidence. Healey added that he was impressed by Zagladin.

In response to the Vice President's inquiry about other Labor Parties' difficulties with U.S. positions, Foot pointed to Central America and the Vice President inquired what we should do differently. Healey said the key is probably Nicaragua, where matters are deteriorating. Pressures from the U.S. acting through Honduras are damaging America's reputation, he said. Also, there were UK concerns about the U.S. decision to rearm Guatemala. He recalled that the Labor Party and the German Socialists wanted to work toward a negotiated settlement since there was unlikely to be a settlement achieved by force. He found publicity about our attempts to destabilize Nicaragua hard to reconcile with stated U.S. positions. The Vice President asked about the total denigration of human rights in Nicaragua. He thought that the Sandinistas had betrayed their own revolution

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and found it difficult to understand how Marxists and the Church could cooperate.

cc: State Secretariat
U.S. Embassy London
White House/Judge Clark ✓

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