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RECORD OF MEETING BETWEEN THE PRIME MINISTER AND THE UNITED STATES SECRETARY OF DEFENSE AT 10 DOWNING STREET ON 2 JUNE 1980 AT 1630 HOURS

Present:

Prime Minister	Dr. Harold Brown
Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary	HE Mr. Kingman Brewster
Defence Secretary	Mr. David McGiffert
Sir Robert Armstrong	General Carl Smith
Mr. R.L. Wade-Gery	Assistant Secretary of Defense Mr. T. Ross
Mr. C.A. Whitmore	
Mr. M.O'D.B. Alexander	

Afghanistan and the Soviet Union

Dr. Brown said that Afghanistan was so important not because it was vital territory from the point of view of the United States or its allies, but because of what it might portend for the future. There had been an impressive Soviet build up in global terms since 1970. Despite the good response by the Alliance which the 3 per cent per annum defence improvement programme represented, the Russians now regarded themselves as militarily equivalent to the West or even superior. They might well be tempted to seek advantages from this state of affairs and therefore to contemplate further operations of the Afghanistan type. Actual military invasions were perhaps unlikely. The greater danger was of the Russians using their military power as an instrument for political intimidation. They were already having some success in this respect in the Moslem world. The Prime Minister said that the British Government fully agreed. One major danger was that world opinion might simply come to accept the Soviet presence in Afghanistan. The Soviet military build up was alarming not just in quantitative terms but also because of the great qualitative improvements which the Russians had been able to make. Dr. Brown said that one should not be too worried about improvements in the quality of Soviet equipment. Quantitatively the Russians had the advantage, as had always been the case. But in many areas the West still retained a big technological lead. On the other hand the Russians were helped by the fact that they tended to have two generations of military equipment for each single generation in the West. Moreover

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the Warsaw Pact equipment was always interoperable.

The Prime Minister asked about Soviet chemical and bacteriological weapons. Dr. Brown said that it was not clear that the Russians had used nerve gas in Afghanistan although they might well have enabled the Vietnamese to do so in Kampuchea. More generally, however, the Soviet lead in chemical weapons was alarming. The Americans own capability was obsolete; and the Alliance would suffer a big penalty in any conflict if they were the only side which had to operate in protective clothing. As regards bacteriological weapons, his own opinion was that the recent accident in the Soviet Union had probably originated with anthrax bacteria stored for military purposes. There was a certain amount of circumstantial evidence of this, although nothing could be proved.

Responses to Afghanistan

a. Military. Dr. Brown said that the Americans would be able to stand up to the Russians in South West Asia. They would have to spend \$30-40 billion or more over the next 5-6 years to improve their Rapid Deployment Forces. They would also be improving their forces in Europe and North East Asia, but not as rapidly as would otherwise have been the case. Hence the need for the Europeans and Japanese to contribute more in those areas. American public opinion was inclined to criticise the Allies for not doing enough. That was natural. European public opinion might well feel the same about the Americans. The Prime Minister said that Britain had no such feelings about the Americans. Dr. Brown acknowledged that Britain was a welcome exception in this respect.

b. Diego Garcia. Dr. Brown said that the United States Government needed very urgent permission from the British Government to indicate to Congress that the proposed American improvement plans for 1980 and 1981 were agreed between the two sides. The Prime Minister said that she was ready to give this permission. The British Government's attitude was that the security interests of the Americans were the same as the

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security interests of Britain and the West as a whole. For this reason the British Government were also well disposed towards the American proposals for more substantial expansion in Diego Garcia in 1982 - 1985. Negotiations on this subject should therefore proceed as planned. But it had to be recognised that the issue was already a very sensitive one in domestic and parliamentary terms in Britain, and that there would also be political problems vis-a-vis India and other countries in the area. The British Government's domestic problems over Diego Garcia were perhaps comparable to the United States Government's domestic political problems over the supply of weapons for the Royal Ulster Constabulary. The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary said that it was unhelpful in terms of the British domestic situation for too much emphasis to be placed on Diego Garcia by American spokesmen e.g. the remarks by Mr. Warren Christopher the previous week. Dr. Brown agreed that too much publicity had been given to the United States ships carrying military equipment, which in practice moved between many different locations; their crews were civilian and their presence certainly did not turn Diego Garcia into a military base. The Prime Minister asked when the Americans wished to announce agreement on the 1982-1985 expansion programme. Dr. Brown said that this would not be necessary before the autumn. Mr. McGiffert commented that it was almost certain to leak sooner. The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary said that the negotiations would need to cover not only the physical expansion of United States facilities, but also the arrangements for consultation on their use.

c. COCOM. Dr. Brown said that the Americans wished to see the controls on high technology exports to the Soviet Union tightened in three respects. First, the exceptions procedure should be suspended; the Germans seemed likely to be co-operative on this, although the French were being more difficult. Second, there should be tighter restrictions on computer technology; this was an area where the Russians

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were badly behind, in the military as well as the civilian field. Third, new restrictions should be imposed in the field of process controls; American business men would not like this, but the fact remained that improvements in Soviet steel production, for example, enabled the Russians to build more tanks. In general, it was important for Defence Ministries and Foreign Ministries to be involved in COCOM policy as well as Ministries of Commerce. The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary said that Britain agreed that the exceptions procedure should be suspended and would consider the other proposals. One difficulty might be if neutral countries such as Sweden and Switzerland were unwilling to co-operate. Japan might also be a problem. Dr. Brown thought that Japan would agree to suspend the exceptions procedure but might be more hesitant about controls on computer technology. The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary asked whether the United States would be raising COCOM matters at the NATO meeting in Ankara. Dr. Brown said that he would consult Mr. Muskie about that. He himself would certainly be raising the subject with Chancellor Schmidt in the near future. The Prime Minister asked whether the Americans agreed that the Russians should not be provided with oil exploration technology, despite the argument that this would bring the Soviet Union on to the world oil market. Dr. Brown said his own view, with which not all his colleagues agreed, was that the West should sell the Russians tools for oil exploration but not the technology for manufacturing such tools. This would enable the Russians to achieve higher production but would create a situation in which maintenance of that production would depend on continuing Western goodwill. He did not wish to increase the temptation for the Russians to intervene in the Middle East.

d. Other measures. Dr. Brown referred briefly to restrictions on grain exports. The Americans believed that they had prevented the Russians meeting about half their current shortfall of 17 million tonnes. This would be a serious blow. But it was unlikely that the same success could be achieved

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next year when a better Soviet harvest was expected. As regards the Olympic Games, the boycott had clearly had some success. The United States Government understood that the British Government had done everything in their power to discourage British participation.

GLCM Basing

Answering a question from Dr. Brown the Prime Minister said that it would be politically impossible in Britain to have all the United States GLCMs based at Greenham Common. Hence the proposal for a second base, at Molesworth. The Defence Secretary said that the distribution between the two bases would probably need to be in the proportion of 6:4 rather than 7:3 as the Americans had proposed. The distribution should in any case not be made public. Dr. Brown said that the extra cost of having two bases rather than one would be \$17 million non-recurrent and \$3 million annually recurrent; or rather more if the distribution was 6:4 rather than 7:3. Since the argument for two bases was political rather than military, it would be very difficult to persuade Congress to approve this extra money. The Prime Minister said that the British Government welcomed the basing of United States GLCMs in Britain, which would be an important part of the defences of the free world, but they did not feel they could contribute to the cost of basing. Two bases would surely have military as well as political advantages over one base. It was in any case in American interests that political criticism in Britain should be minimised. The members of Congress, who were themselves politicians, could surely be persuaded to recognise a domestic political imperative. They should also be urged to bear in mind the rapidity with which, at a crucial moment, Britain had agreed to accept an extra flight of GLCMs and, more generally, the very large amounts of United States military equipment which Britain purchased.

Polaris Replacement (This part of the discussion has been recorded separately; the record has been retained by the Secretary of the Cabinet.)

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3 June 1980