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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

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MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: General Scowcroft's Meeting with Norwegian Defense Minister Johan Holst

PARTICIPANTS: U.S.
Brent Scowcroft, Assistant to the President
for National Security Affairs
Ambassador Robert D. Blackwill, Senior
Director, European and Soviet Affairs
Robert L. Hutchings, Director for European
Political Affairs (Notetaker)

Norway
Defense Minister Johan Jorgen Holst
Erik Senstad, Director General, Defense
Ministry
Vidar Falck, Military Adviser
Ambassador Kjeld Vibe
Vidar Wikberg, Minister and Deputy Chief of
Mission

DATE, TIME AND
PLACE: March 15, 1989, 11:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.
General Scowcroft's Office

After opening greetings, Defense Minister Holst noted that he had not met Defense Secretary-designate Cheney except in group settings, but that he had spoken with him by telephone the day before. General Scowcroft recalled his joint tenure with Congressman Cheney when they were, respectively, National Security Advisor and Chief of Staff under President Ford. The General assured Minister Holst that he would like his new counterpart and find him good to work with.

Minister Holst noted that he had seen Assistant Secretary of State Ridgway earlier in the day and was going next to Canada and also to New York in connection with U.N. peacekeeping groups.

By way of launching the discussion, General Scowcroft asked what the Minister was worried about.

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Minister Holst replied that there was also a bright side, particularly in Vienna, where there are hopeful signs and where the Soviet Union is taking a businesslike approach. He stressed that the Alliance must still deal with SNF, which has now become a political issue and a key domestic problem in the FRG. Only the British, he said, will stick their necks out on SNF. Minister Holst asked General Scowcroft about prospects for the START negotiations.

General Scowcroft agreed that prospects are brighter and asked whether we as an Alliance can stand prosperity. Can we make the most of these opportunities, or will we lose the chance? The answer is not self-evident. The Alliance must work together in a positive way, not just in reaction to a military threat. General Scowcroft agreed that SNF is an acute political issue, especially in the FRG, and emphasized that we must make it clear that we are not planning to denuclearize the Alliance.

Turning to START, General Scowcroft said that the Administration is reviewing thoroughly the draft treaty and overall U.S. objectives. It is also keeping an eye on ratification, bearing in mind that during the INF debate some in Congress saved their ammunition for START. The General said that his personal forecast was that the Administration would not start all over on a process already well under way and that any significant variations would be done thoughtfully.

Minister Holst asked about the handling of sea-launched cruise missiles (SLCMs). General Scowcroft offered what he stressed were his personal views on this difficult issue. Much depends on force structure: with survivable ICBMs we can be more relaxed about SLCMs, for example. Strategically, what they offer is negligible except to replace nonsurvivable ICBMs. Minister Holst raised the question of verification and agreed with General Scowcroft that these systems are so easy to conceal and hard to detect that a verification regime would almost certainly be more general than we would like. The best for verification would be an all or none solution. Minister Holst observed that a ban on all nuclear warheads is more likely -- which, General Scowcroft observed, would make verification difficult.

Ambassador Blackwill noted that there is more interest in Europe in SLCMs after the INF treaty. Minister Holst added that Ambassador Nitze has said that the Germans want to find substitutes for land-based cruise missiles. The Germans have not said this to us, Minister Holst noted, but his government's view is that a greater nuclear role for naval forces would interfere with their principal role in protecting sea lanes. SLCMs, Minister Holst noted, are of greater concern in northern Europe than in central Europe, where the preoccupation is with ground-based weapons.

General Scowcroft stressed the danger that some might see SLCMs as an easy way out of the SNF problem. Minister Holst noted that the HLTF and SACLANT see dangers in dealing with these issues piecemeal, adding that such an approach may preempt an overall solution. Moreover, naval forces should not be treated as if they were regional forces; in a reductions environment their roles in reinforcement and resupply become more important. General Scowcroft agreed, adding his personal hope that we do not turn to naval forces for a primary role in the defense of Europe.

Minister Holst asked General Scowcroft his assessment of an SNF outcome and timetable. General Scowcroft said he could not be sure, but he looked to an agreement in principle and then to Chancellor Kohl's view of what is possible in the FRG. General Scowcroft hoped for an early decision: if deferred until after the 1990 election in the FRG it would become an election issue anyway.

Strategically, General Scowcroft continued, what kind of role SNF plays is dependent on the outcome of conventional negotiations. It would be premature to begin SNF negotiations without a conventional agreement, though we might agree in principle to negotiate SNF. General Scowcroft added that this is not Foreign Minister Genscher's view, however. Minister Holst agreed that we should not preempt the question of when SNF talks might start but rather maintain our options so long as the issue does not block progress on conventional negotiations.

Minister Holst alluded briefly to General Galvin's nuclear weapons study, noting the conceptual difficulty of aligning the questions of methodology and nuclear theology with the more important issue of the role of nuclear weapons in the Alliance.

General Scowcroft conveyed his greetings to Foreign Minister Stoltenberg, with whom he met recently, and to Prime Minister Brundtland, who is scheduled to visit Washington May 3 for a meeting with the President.