

COVERING SECRET

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MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
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MO 14/4D

Dr

RH January 1991

Dear Richard,

CALL BY ADMIRAL LANXADE

You asked to see the note of the call by Admiral Lanxade on the Defence Secretary today. A copy is attached.

I should add, for a more restricted circulation a coda to the point in the last paragraph. Admiral Lanxade made it clear that he had President Mitterand's authority for his reassurance that France would fight.

I am sending a copy this letter to Sir Charles Powell (No 10) and Len Appleyard (Cabinet Office).

Len Appleyard.
Sir Webb.

(S WEBB)
Private Secretary

Richard Gozney Esq
Private Secretary to Foreign Secretary

COVERING SECRET



b

MO 14/4S

8th January 1991

Copy to:
 PS/Minister(AF)
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 Hd of Sec (NATO/UK)(P)
 Cabinet Office
 (Mr Appleyard)
 FCO (Sec Pol Dept)
 (Emergency Unit)

PSO/CDSCALL BY ADMIRAL LANXADE

Admiral Lanxade had a 40 minute call on the Defence Secretary this morning. Discussion was mainly on the Gulf where he was notably robust; there were brief exchanges on European security structures.

Gulf

2. Admiral Lanxade said that by now Saddam Hussein should have realised that his military forces were insufficient to defend Kuwait; if he wished to avoid being a martyr then he would have to withdraw. France was however ready to take part in offensive operations on air, land and sea. In particular, they had accepted that the French division would come under the operational control of the 18th US Corps.
3. In answer to questions from the Defence Secretary, Admiral Lanxade said that President Mitterand had no constitutional need to obtain parliamentary approval though he would probably talk ("dire pas consulter") to leaders of other political parties. Admiral Lanxade was in close touch with General Scowcroft and expected to get 72 hours warning of US initiating offensive operations.
4. Admiral Lanxade thought that the Syrians would fight if the Americans were already winning in Kuwait. He agreed that other countries such as Pakistan or the Saudis themselves should bear the burden of looking after Prisoners of War.
5. The Defence Secretary said that the Americans had raised with us the possibility of sending a carrier to the Red Sea to control embargo operations and free US CVS¹ for offensive operations. They



had asked whether the UK could provide a carrier. He wondered with the French had considered this role. Admiral Lanxade said that he was puzzled by the need for a carrier for embargo enforcement co-ordination; the operating area was sufficiently far from Iraq that he saw no need for area air defence.

6. In discussion of problems with Puma helicopters, Admiral Lanxade said that the French had identified some spare engines from Romania and possibly Portugal, that the UK could purchase. He suggested that Sir Peter Levene pursue this with M Sillard.

European Security Structures

7. In a general discussion on future European security structures, Admiral Lanxade emphasised the need to take a broad view of security even in areas where for historical reasons direct co-operation was not feasible (such as integrated military structures). There could still be co-operation over deployments outside Europe or against terrorism; these did not require permanent military structures but could be arranged to meet problems as they arose.

8. It was important to retain an American presence but that was not incompatible with building up the WEU or European Political Union. He thought that the Chairman of the NATO Military Committee might be the prime co-ordinator in peace-time; France was ready to serve under a SACEUR in war (even an American SACEUR).

Conclusion

9. At the end of the meeting Admiral Lanxade went out of his way to stop and reassure the Defence Secretary that, if there were offensive operations in the Gulf, France would fight.

(S WEBB)
PS/S of S



100-100000-100000
100-100000-100000

had asked whether the US could provide a...
The French had considered this...
was possible by the need for a...
co-ordination, the operation area...
that he was not ready for... air defense.

6. In discussion of problems with...
Lanoux said that the French had...
Romania and possibly Portugal, that...
suggested that air power lessons...
with N. Gillard.

European Security Structure

1. In a general discussion on...
Lanoux stressed the need to have a...
view of security even in areas where...
co-operation was not feasible...
outside Europe or against...
problems as they arose.

2. It was important to retain an...
not incompatible with building up...
Union. He thought that the...
might be the prime co-ordinator...
save under a SACUR in war (even...)

Conclusion

3. At the end of the meeting...
to stop and reassess the...
offensive operations in the...
light.

12 APR 1954