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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Washington, D.C. 20520

June 5, 1974

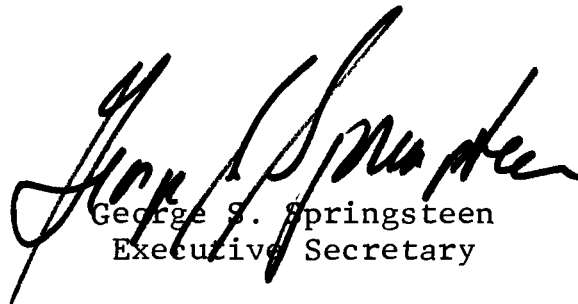
~~CONFIDENTIAL~~MEMORANDUM FOR MAJOR GENERAL BRENT SCOWCROFT
THE WHITE HOUSE

SUBJECT: The Vice President's Meeting with the German
Defense Minister, Georg Leber, May 30, 1:15
p.m.

Transmitted herewith for the Vice President's approval is a Memorandum of Conversation covering his meeting with the German Defense Minister, Georg Leber, on May 30.

Minister Leber told the Vice President that Chancellor Schmidt had asked him to convey assurances that the new German Government will pursue the same policies as its predecessor. The Minister stressed German support of NATO and close cooperation with the United States. He underscored his excellent relationship with Secretary Schlesinger. He added that Europe faces serious economic problems, which Germany will try to solve in cooperation with France.

The Vice President assured the Minister of the President's support of the Alliance. He expressed confidence that the United States will continue its support of NATO despite the opposition of a few members of Congress. He also stressed that the United States was not moving toward isolationism.


George S. Springsteen
Executive Secretary

Attachment:

Draft Memorandum of Conversation

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GDS

WHM 10/24/00

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Memorandum of Conversation

DATE: May 30, 1974
Time: 1:15 p.m.
Place: The Vice
President's Cere-
monial Office,
Senate Chambers

SUBJECT: Vice President Ford's Meeting with
FRG Defense Minister Leber

PARTICIPANTS:

German

Georg Leber, Minister of Defense
Berndt von Staden, FRG Ambassador to the United States
Franz Krapf, FRG Ambassador to NATO
Dr. Walther Steutzle, Personal Aide to Minister Leber
Karl Freudenstein, Interpreter

American

The Vice President
John O. Marsh, Office of the Vice President
Harry Bergold, OSD/ISA, Department of Defense
Nelson Ledsky, EUR/CE, Department of State (note taker)
Harry Obst, Department of State Interpreter

There was a brief initial session with photographers, during which Minister Leber discussed the itinerary of his seven-day visit to the United States. He told the Vice President that he would be traveling from Washington to El Paso, to visit German troops training in Texas. The Vice President noted this was a most interesting part of the United States, and that Texans still regarded themselves in some sense as separate from other Americans.

The Vice President: I am very pleased to see you, and want to congratulate you on your reappointment as Defense Minister in the new FRG Government.

As you know, I myself have had some experience with defense matters. I served on the Defense Subcommittee of the Appropriations Committee between 1953 and 1965, and this was the crucial period, when we were building up our strategic programs and setting our policies concerning conventional forces. So I'm not a stranger to these

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(Drafting Office and Officer)

WHM/10/24/00

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defense issues. Indeed, my heart really lies in this area.

Minister Leber: I am well aware of your experience and expertise in the defense field. It is a source of satisfaction to me and everyone in Germany that the United States has a Vice President with this kind of experience. Indeed the very issues which you considered in those earlier times are still of top priority today. They touch on questions which are crucial to cooperation within the Western Alliance and between the West and the Communist world.

I would like to begin by saying a few words about the new German Government which, you know, was established only some 14 days ago. Chancellor Schmidt has asked me to convey his greetings to you and to assure you that the change in the FRG has not resulted in the introduction of new policies. The Government intends to continue exactly the same programs and policies as its predecessor. In its policy declaration to the German Bundestag on May 17, my Government made it clear that the three pillars of our foreign policy are (a) cooperation with the Atlantic Alliance, (b) special cooperation within the framework of that Alliance with the United States and (c) appropriate FRG contributions both financial and material to maintain the strength of the Alliance.

The Vice President: The Federal Republic has done extremely well in the Alliance. The United States is proud to work as a partner with your Government in this vital endeavor, and we will do our part to maintain the strength and maintain the integrity of the Alliance. The President firmly supports the Alliance, I support it, and so do a majority of the members of Congress. There are indeed only a few in the Congress who have not been as enthusiastic as they might have been. I have argued with these individuals, not always with the success I would have wished. But this much is clear. The American people will not, in my judgment, repeat the mistakes of the past. Isolationism is bad for the United States, bad for Western Europe, and bad for the world. I am confident that we can maintain United States support for the Alliance and it is in everybody's interest that we succeed.

Minister Leber: We in Germany, of course, know of the discussions in the United States about Alliance issues. We are grateful for the strong position you and this Administration have taken with Congress. I also want you to know that cooperation in the defense

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field with Defense Secretary Schlesinger, the civilians in the Pentagon and the United States military establishment has been excellent. Naturally, problems arise from time to time which must be dealt with. What I hope is that the occurrence of such problems can be accepted as natural so that we can proceed to settle them frankly and openly, without in the process creating the kind of nervous tension between us which has sometimes arisen in the past. Most important of all, we must not allow small issues to cause us to lose sight of the basic security interests which bind us together and of the need to protect the roots of freedom for the Western World. The central security core of the Alliance must not, in sum, be jeopardized by secondary issues.

The Vice President: It sometimes amazes me that the Alliance has done so well. Some in the United States only faintheartedly support the Alliance, not recognizing its tremendous accomplishments. I can't imagine any other Alliance that has been more successful or lasted as long as NATO, which is now some 23 years old.

(Defense Minister Leber interrupted jokingly at this point to remind the Vice President that NATO is about to celebrate its 25th Anniversary.)

It simply makes no sense for people to undercut or destroy the Alliance. If there are differences between us, the facts must be laid out on the table and worked out intelligently and rationally. There is a saying in the House of Representatives that you can disagree without being disagreeable. This saying, I think, could have application to Alliance issues.

Minister Leber: I always like to use the analogy about the family, when speaking of the Alliance, noting that there can be differences of opinion within a family without the family itself coming apart.

The Vice President: This is certainly true in our family.

Minister Leber: I did also want to say something about the current situation in Europe. We are in the midst of a difficult period. The difficulties stem basically from economic conditions, but they tend to have repercussions in the political sphere. I hope the United States can show understanding for these problems. Some countries face growing instability: problems of trade, balance of payments and public finance are prevalent. Our fear is that if these danger signals are not promptly responded to, the entire European Community could be endangered. This is why

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Chancellor Schmidt is traveling to Paris on Friday for talks with French President Giscard d'Estaing. It is our hope that our two Governments (FRG and France) can develop common positions so that Europe can get moving again toward the solution of some of its most difficult problems. By way of example, the Defense Minister cited Italy's recent curtailment of imports, noting that this endangered the future of trade throughout Europe. We will keep the United States informed of the essential issues so you can be certain of what is going on. We do so in the expectation that it cannot be in the United States' interests to have a Europe encumbered with these difficulties. Moreover, our problems can only be solved in close cooperation with the United States.

The Vice President: I have been somewhat encouraged by certain recent developments in Europe. I was pleased, for example, by the recent Callaghan statements which seemed straightforward and strong, and very helpful for the Alliance. While I don't like to comment on internal political developments elsewhere, I have noted that the new President of France is a friend of Chancellor Schmidt, and it would be my hope that this could lead to good results, both in terms of greater stability and cooperation in Western Europe. Indeed, I have the impression that there is more hope now than a month or six weeks ago. The situation in Europe seems better. I certainly hope this is so.

Minister Leber: We are certainly not out of trouble in Europe. We have not even come to grips with the political consequences of our basic economic difficulties. It is important, I think, that these be tackled, for continuing difficulties could undercut the unification process which is very important for each of the independent states in Western Europe, for Europe's future as an entity, and for the Atlantic Alliance. I agree that the last few months have helped clarify the question of how relations between Europe and the United States should proceed. It is clearer now than it was six months ago that there is a necessity for Europe to unite, but only in cooperation with the United States. New sensitivities are required on both sides of the Atlantic if developments are to proceed in a satisfactory manner.

I want to thank you, Mr. Vice President, for seeing me. I know your time is valuable and I don't wish to intrude upon it.

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The Vice President: I am deeply grateful that you came by. As I said before, my real love in Government is defense issues and problems. I feel at home talking with someone like you who is an expert on matters of this kind. This is especially valuable since there is an identity of aims and purposes between our two countries.

One final observation which may interest you. Within the last six months I have traveled some 85,000 miles in this country and talked to many, many Americans. My overwhelming impression is that in the area of foreign affairs the President and Secretary of State Kissinger have the full support of the overwhelming majority of the American people. Indeed, recent public opinion polls suggest that Dr. Kissinger is the most popular public official in this country and this, I think, reflects the faith our people have in the policies the President and he have been following in the foreign policy field.

As a final note, I want to say again that I and this Government support the Alliance and will do our very best to strengthen and broaden it and make it as effective as possible.

Minister Leber: Many thanks again for your comments. May I only add a word about the American military presence in my country. Your soldiers have made a very good impression in Germany, and are very well received by the German people. I want to thank you also for the manner in which German soldiers, even though they are a much smaller number, have been received in this country. My Government is grateful for this cooperation.

The Vice President: We are very glad to have your soldiers training in the United States. May I ask that when you return to Germany you give my personal good wishes to all the members of the German Cabinet.

Minister Leber: I hope that you will travel in the not too distant future to Western Europe and that when you do so, you will pay us a visit in Germany.

The Vice President: Thank you. I have no immediate plans to travel, but when I do go to Europe at some future time, I would very much look forward to visiting your country.

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OFFICE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT

WASHINGTON

May 30, 1974

MEMORANDUM FOR

THE VICE PRESIDENT

SUBJECT: Meeting with FRG Defense Minister Georg Leber

The German Defense Minister, Georg Leber, will be in Washington on May 30-31 for talks with Secretary of Defense Schlesinger on U.S. -FRG defense cooperation. He will also be meeting with Secretary Kissinger, George Meany, and members of the Senate.

You have agreed to meet with him today, at 1:15 p. m. in your Capitol ceremonial office, based on his request and a positive recommendation by the National Security Council.

Minister Leber favors closer U.S. -FRG ties. Although his visit with you is billed as a courtesy call, it will provide an opportunity for you to underline the importance the United States attaches to U.S. -FRG defense cooperation in the NATO context.

To support your efforts in this regard, talking points are provided at Tab A.

A biography of Minister Leber is provided at Tab B. His schedule, while in Washington, is provided at Tab C.


Jack Marsh

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E.O. 12958, Sec. 3.5
NSC Memo, 11/24/98, State Dept. Guidelines
By W. P. M., NARA, Date 10/24/00

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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

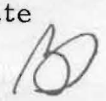
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THE VICE PRESIDENT'S MEETING WITH
FRG DEFENSE MINISTER GEORG LEBER

Thursday, May 30, 1974

1:15 p.m. (15 minutes)

Ceremonial Office at the Senate

From: Brent Scowcroft 

I. PURPOSE

This will be a ~~courtesy call~~ by the German Defense Minister.

II. BACKGROUND, PARTICIPANTS & PRESS PLAN

A. Background:

Defense Minister Leber (biography at Tab A) will be in Washington May 29 to June 1. From Washington, he will travel to Texas to see Germans training at facilities maintained by the German Ministry of Defense. In addition to this meeting with you, Minister Leber will be continuing discussions with Secretary of Defense Schlesinger, with whom he has a good working relationship. He is also scheduled to meet on Friday with Secretary Kissinger and has appointments on Capitol Hill with Senators Kennedy, Jackson, Symington and Nunn. In addition, he plans to see George Meany, an old friend from Leber's trade union days.

Leber was elected to the Bundestag in 1957 and has been a member of the German Cabinet since 1966, first as Minister of Transportation and then as Minister of Defense. In this post he has generally continued the policies instituted by his predecessor, the current Chancellor Helmut Schmidt. Leber is an outspoken supporter of NATO and close cooperation between Germany and the United States.

Leber's visit to Washington comes less than a month after the sudden resignation of Willy Brandt on May 6 and the Guillaume spy affair. The new German Government under Chancellor Helmut Schmidt has gotten off to an impressive start. Leber's personal relationship with Schmidt is good, and he can be expected to exercise considerable influence in both the party and Government. (NOTE: Leber understands some English but does not speak it.)

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E.O. 12958, Sec. 3.5

NSC Memo, 11/24/98, State Dept. Guidelines
By W/AM, NARA, Date 10/24/00

- B. Participants: Defense Minister Leber, his personal aide, Dr. Walther Stuetzle; and his interpreter Karl Freudenstein; the German Ambassador, Berndt von Staden; Mr. Nelson Ledsky, Acting Director of Central European Affairs, Department of State; Harry Obst, Interpreter; and John O. Marsh.
- C. Press Plan: The meeting will be announced as part of your May 30 schedule.

III. TALKING POINTS

1. I am very pleased to welcome you to Washington, and, I would add, to congratulate you on your reappointment as FRG Defense Minister.
2. I believe that visits such as yours make a solid contribution to the best possible US- German defense cooperation, as part of the overall NATO effort.
3. As the President has repeatedly emphasized, and as I would fully agree, the Atlantic Alliance remains the cornerstone of U. S. foreign policy.
4. This Administration strongly supports European unity in which Europe works confidently and cooperatively with the United States directly within the framework of the Atlantic Alliance.
5. The President fully intends to maintain U. S. troop strength in Europe, in the absence of reciprocal reductions.
6. The US-FRG offset agreement -- in which I know you played a most important role -- together with likely military purchases in the U. S. by the other Allies, should enable us to meet the immediate requirements of the Jackson-Nunn Amendment.
7. I am pleased to have had this opportunity to meet with you. This meeting and others you are holding with key members of our government represent the kind of mutually beneficial consultation that add to the strength of our relationship and of the Atlantic Alliance.



5A

NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION
Presidential Libraries Withdrawal Sheet

WITHDRAWAL ID 035866

REASON FOR WITHDRAWAL ÇNational security restriction

TYPE OF MATERIAL ÇBiography

DESCRIPTION Concerning West German official

CREATION DATE 05/21/1974

VOLUME 1 page

COLLECTION/SERIES/FOLDER ID . 002302749

COLLECTION TITLE GERALD R. FORD VICE PRESIDENTIAL PAPERS

BOX NUMBER 65

FOLDER TITLE May 30, 1974 - West German Defense
Minister Georg Leber

DATE WITHDRAWN 11/22/2011

WITHDRAWING ARCHIVIST WHM

5B

NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION
Presidential Libraries Withdrawal Sheet

WITHDRAWAL ID 035867

REASON FOR WITHDRAWAL ÇNational security restriction

TYPE OF MATERIAL ÇBiography

DESCRIPTION Concerning West German official

CREATION DATE 07/12/1973

VOLUME 5 pages

COLLECTION/SERIES/FOLDER ID . 002302749

COLLECTION TITLE GERALD R. FORD VICE PRESIDENTIAL PAPERS

BOX NUMBER 65

FOLDER TITLE May 30, 1974 - West German Defense
Minister Georg Leber

DATE WITHDRAWN 11/22/2011

WITHDRAWING ARCHIVIST WHM

C



Minister Leber's Schedule

May 30, 1974

- 1430 - Senator Symington
- 1515 - Senator Nunn
- 1615 - Senator Kennedy
- 1830 - Cocktails at the German Embassy

May 31, 1974

- 0900 - George Meany
- 1030 - Secretary Schlesinger
- Lunch - Secretary Schlesinger
- 1700 - Secretary Kissinger

Press

Conference - German Embassy

June 1, 1974

- 1000 - Depart for El Paso, Texas

~~SECRET~~

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

SCHEDULE PROPOSAL FOR
THE VICE PRESIDENT

Date: May 24, 1974

FROM: Brent Scowcroft

VIA: John O. Marsh

MEETING: FRG Defense Minister Georg Leber

DATE: May 30, 1974

PURPOSE: Courtesy Call

FORMAT: Capitol Hill Office, 15 minutes

SPEECH MATERIAL: Talking Points will be provided

PRESS COVERAGE: The visit will be announced

STAFF: John O. Marsh

RECOMMEND: Brent Scowcroft

BACKGROUND: The German Defense Minister Georg Leber will be in Washington on May 30-31 for talks with Secretary of Defense Schlesinger on US-FRG defense cooperation. He will also be meeting with Secretary Kissinger, George Meany and members of the Senate. He has requested a meeting with you. Minister Leber favors closer US-FRG ties. We believe it would be helpful if you were to receive him for a courtesy call to underline the importance the United States attaches to US-FRG defense cooperation in the NATO context.

Minister Leber's biography is at Tab A; his tentative schedule while in Washington is at Tab B.

APPROVE _____ DISAPPROVE _____

~~SECRET~~ (GDS)

WtM 10/24/00

NSC Requests
this meeting
jm

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~~SECRET~~

May 30, 1974

MEMORANDUM FOR

THE VICE PRESIDENT

SUBJECT: Meeting with FRG Defense Minister Georg Leber

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You have agreed to meet with him today, at 1:15 p.m. in your Capitol ceremonial office, based on his request and a positive recommendation by the National Security Council.

Minister Leber favors closer U.S. -FRG ties. Although his visit with you is billed as a courtesy call, it will provide an opportunity for you to underline the importance the United States attaches to U.S. -FRG defense cooperation in the NATO context.

To support your efforts in this regard, talking points are provided at Tab A.

A biography of Minister Leber is provided at Tab B. His schedule, while in Washington, is provided at Tab C.

Signed - John O. Marsh, Jr.
Jack Marsh

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E.O. 12958, Sec. 3.5
NSC Memo, 11/24/98, State Dept. Guidelines
By W.H.M., NARA, Date 10/24/00

JOM:aas:sc

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OFFICE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT
WASHINGTON, D.C.

① Call Bud McF.

② Give OK. on
time, place

③ State notific?

④ Talking points?



RIC



1:15 PM


15 min

at Capitol
Chenoweth

OFFICE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT
WASHINGTON, D.C.



I recommend

you see Mr. 
Leber on the

30th

Jack
Harris

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May 30, 1974

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THE VICE PRESIDENT

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E.O. 12958, Sec. 3.5

NSC Memo, 11/24/98, State Dept. Guidelines

By W.H.W. NARA, Date 11/24/00

JOM:ras:sc

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