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Authority **MND 989528**By **AD** NARA Date **6/8/05**

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Memorandum of Conversation

TOP SECRET
 COPY NO. 3
 OF 3 COPIES

DATE:

September 11, 1951

SUBJECT:

US-UK Consultation on Atomic Warfare

PARTICIPANTS:

Mr. Morrison (U.K.)
 Sir Oliver Franks
 Air Marshal Sir William Elliott
 General Sir Kenney MacLean
 Sir Pierson Dixon
 Junior member of British Delegation

Secretary (U.S.)
 Mr. Jessup

COPIES TO:

Mr. Matthews
 Mr. Nitze

EYES ONLY

[REDACTED]

SEP 13 1951

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Mr. Morrison requested a private meeting with the Secretary at the end of the UK-US talk yesterday afternoon. He raised the questions proposed by a paper which I understood was written by the British Joint Chiefs on the subject of atomic warfare and the exchange of information on atomic development. MR. MORRISON said that the principal question was consultation by the US with the UK before the use of the atomic bomb. He hoped to be able to receive some reply from the Secretary which he could take back with him. The Secretary said that he had discussed the matter with General Marshall and General Bradley, and that General Bradley was prepared to talk with Air Marshal Elliott. AIR MARSHAL ELLIOTT said that Bradley had so informed him, but that the question remained of politico-military talks. He wondered whether he and Sir Oliver could talk with General Bradley and someone from the State Department this week in order that Mr. Morrison would know the outcome before he returned. MR. MORRISON said that he would very much like to be able to talk finally about this with the Secretary before he left. He said Mr. Atlee might be questioned in the House almost any time as to whether the U.S. had agreed to consult. He referred to the conversations between Ambassador Douglas and Mr. Bevin in regard to the agreement on the use of bases in the U.K. He referred also to the conversations between Prime Minister Attlee and the President. He said the question of consultation was broader than the use of bases in the U.K. He thought that perhaps consultation should include the U.K. and Canada and said the Prime Minister felt strongly about it.

The SECRETARY

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TOP SECRET

- 2 -

The SECRETARY said that he was not sure whether there would be time enough to get results this week. He said there were a good many aspects to it which needed to be discussed very thoroughly. SIR OLIVER FRANKS supported this view but suggested that Bradley and Elliott might begin their talk at once and that then they could be joined by himself and someone from the State Department to carry the discussions further.

The SECRETARY said it was necessary to discuss the situations which might bring on general war. A discussion of specific situations might lead to actual practical solutions. This was in line with the U.K. paper. However, situations would change and agreements reached might need to be reviewed soon and this would make it necessary for us constantly to keep in touch. In regard to the use of the atomic weapon, the question might arise when we might use it and from what places we might deliver it. There was a difference between bases in the U.K. and our action elsewhere. He referred to the law in the U.S. which limited what we could do. SIR OLIVER and MR. MORRISON stressed that it was important that the latter should be able to report real progress and hoped that talks could begin particularly on the question of consultation. AIR MARSHAL ELLIOTT expressed the view that purely military talks would not be sufficient. MR. MORRISON returned to the difficulties of the Prime Minister in the House of Commons and said it would be a very bad situation if first the British knew of the use of their bases was after a bomb had been dropped. He said he was not interested in strategic details and doubted whether he and Mr. Acheson could discuss those satisfactorily, but he did think that discussions should start. The SECRETARY said that this was a most difficult question and he could not give an answer now. He repeated that the talk on specific issues might solve the problem. Any major war might involve the use of the atomic weapon. It was inconceivable that the U.S. would get into a war without knowing whether it had allies or not. If the situations were discussed, we would get clarification. In regard to the use of the bases in the U.K., he saw no difficulty in the question of prior consultation with the U.K. before those bases were used. In another situation, he supposed all agreed that if Chicago were bombed we would go ahead with retaliation. Situation here was, however, that if the President was asked whether he had any agreement which prohibited the use of the atomic weapon under any circumstances, he had to answer "no." It was the same as the question of the use of the battleship MISSOURI.

In answer to Mr. Morrison's question as to how the Prime Minister could answer questions in Parliament, the SECRETARY said he didn't know but he thought this would be soluble if they would discuss the international situations. MR. MORRISON inquired whether under the American law it would be possible to say that we have been in consultation on the subject and are in agreement. The SECRETARY

again indicated

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TOP SECRET

- 3 -

again indicated that he thought the Prime Minister's answer could be worked out but he was not sure how soon. He thought that progress could be made if Elliott and Bradley began their conversations. AIR MARSHAL ELLIOTT said this would not be enough for Mr. Morrison's needs, but the SECRETARY thought that this would get us on the road and we should make this attempt while Mr. Morrison was here.

MR. MORRISON then referred to the question of American complaints about security of British personnel in this field. He thought the Americans were insisting that the U.K. should follow the American practice of having all workers sign forms saying that they were not and had not been communists. He doubted whether this was useful. He also raised the question of the exchange of atomic information. He said it would help him greatly at home if he received an understanding that the U.S. would seek an amendment to the McMahon Act on the exchange of information. The Secretary said this was a very hard thing to do. We had been on the verge of doing this twice. The first time the Fokes case arose and the second time there was the case of the man with the Italian name. He said Congress was now "horse head shy." He did not know about the question of method of securing security information, but security was vital. However, MR. MORRISON said it was not fair to seek an amendment to the Act as his instructions called upon him to do but it would help if the Secretary could say that the Administration would do what it can.

The SECRETARY said that they were considering the matter and tried to do something but that for the reasons indicated they had been unsuccessful. MR. MORRISON asked again whether the Secretary could assure him that whenever the opportunity arrived the Administration would do its best to get action in Congress. The SECRETARY inquired whether such an undertaking would be announced in the House of Commons, to which MR. MORRISON said "no." SIR OLIVER confirmed him that this would not be necessary. MR. MORRISON said it would not be fair to the Secretary to make such a statement in the House, but he wanted to use it in the Cabinet. The SECRETARY said he would take the matter under consideration.

After the British withdrew, the Secretary asked me to bring this matter to Mr. Matthew's attention and ask him to give the Secretary a recommendation. We discussed the possibility of suggesting some kind of statement which Mr. Morrison could make couched in general terms of consultation on war situations and perhaps dealing separately with the use of British bases but without specific reference to the atomic weapon.

Philip C. Jessup
Ambassador at Large

S/A PCJ:eva

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