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THORNEYCROFT/McNAMARA DISCUSSION  
 ON  
 US/UK R&D COOPERATION  
 13 September 1962

Participants

U.S.

Secretary McNamara  
 Dr. Brown  
 Mr. Nitze  
 Mr. Rubel  
 Mr. Robinson  
 Capt Weymouth

U.K.

Minister Thorneycroft  
 Mr. Haviland  
Sir Robert Scott  
 Sir Solly Zuckerman  
 General West  
 Mr. Hockaday

Complementarity:

Secretary McNamara gave a general discourse on the theory of complementarity. Referring to President Kennedy's letter to the Prime Minister on complementarity as evidence of the U.S. desire to engage in R&D cooperation, he indicated that this desire is still a difficult matter to express satisfactorily. Underlying the principle of complementarity should be the principle of competition. Arbitrary allocation of effort is not suitable within our systems. But the U.S. will normally win any competition if the U.K. spreads its research thin, simply due to the size of the U.S. effort. If the U.K. is to win, it must concentrate its effort. This is a tough political problem which must be solved if the U.K. is to be successful in the competition. Mr. McNamara then described the situation in the U.S. mid-west, which has lost defense business, from perhaps 20% down to 3% of the total, as it stayed with production of tanks and trucks, etc., while defense contracts shifted to growing electronics industries in Massachusetts and California. This has become a difficult political problem for the U.S. - one in complementarity analogous to the U.S.-U.K. problem- and one Secretary McNamara does not know how to solve any more than the problem between the U.S. and the U.K.

The U.S. - U.K. problem is not without hope. The present scheme evolved by Mr. Rubel and Sir Solly Zuckerman may offer a way to make progress, but Mr. McNamara did not want to overestimate these hopes. He wished to make sure there is no misunderstanding of the U.S. position. The U.S. wants to pursue complementarity for its potential to make more effective use of the free world's resources. The U.S. will modify its procedures to accommodate the idea of complementarity as long as basic principles in our systems are retained. But there are complex problems in the way of realizing success.

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