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## MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

SUBJECT: Conversation with Sir Robert Scott

I lunched with Sir Robert on Wednesday, 14 November, at the suggestion of Ambassador Bruce, who thought that he might conceivably be or become a crucial figure in the British policy on the Sino-Indian matter. In addition to this topic, to which it turned out that he had in fact given little thought and certainly nothing going beyond what the British team was telling us in the talks, I learned through the MAAG and the Embassy that the British had not responded in any way to our request for the same sort of comprehensive information on their supply level that we are asking all of the NATO nations under Project 41.

Accordingly, I took the occasion, using as a lever the necessity of frank statements on the items that might become involved on aid to India, to inquire into British supply policy and the general status of levels. Sir Robert responded very fully and indicated that the British policy was never again to set up reserve supply levels such as they had found necessary in both world wars, but rather to assume that any conventional conflict in Europe would be of short duration. The possible option of a prolonged conventional war was one, he said, that the British simply did not see their way clear to cover.

I alluded in passing to the outstanding request for information and his reply carried the suggestion that the British had considered this request very sweeping and perhaps did not know at this point how or indeed whether they would respond. In view of my sketchy knowledge of what may have passed between yourself and Mr. Thorneycroft in this area, I did not press the point further.

Sir Robert then went on to say that the British attached increasing importance to mobility and particularly to airlift. Since they could not lay down the kind of pre-position equipment stocks that

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we might be able to do in selected areas, they envisaged that each unit would have to move with fairly complete equipment, and that they would need major additions to their airlift. For this reason, he said, they attached special importance to their project for a STOL transport aircraft of approximately the same carrying capacity as our C-130. He remarked that this project had not yet had much of a response from us, and went on to say that there seemed to be a number of R&D cases where the British idea and blueprint would be suggested to the US and the US would then turn up with a modified and perhaps improved version meeting the same requirement and insist on carrying out the US project.

Again, because of my lack of detailed knowledge of the position, I did not follow up or attempt to state what our position might be on their STOL transport project.

All of this was stated in Sir Robert's habitually gentle fashion, but the substance appeared to betoken at least two areas of possible serious disagreement between the UK and ourselves. If you see no objection, I have drafted the attached note to him omitting reference to the STOL matter but indicating the importance you attach to the question of supply levels and the desire for, at the very least, a full exchange of information on this matter. The note also prods him gently to elicit a response on our request for information.

Paul Nitze has a copy of this memorandum, and I am also sending one to Harold Brown.

William P. Bundy  
Deputy

Copy furnished:  
Deputy Secretary of Defense

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