

June 23, 1975

**President Ford to Secretary of Defense, 'Missile
Cooperation with France'**

Citation:

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Summary:

President Ford authorizes providing additional ballistic missile assistance to France. The assistance was extended to cover new French missiles, penetrative aid technology, and intelligence information about Soviet systems and potential French vulnerabilities to attack.

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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE - XGDS

June 23, 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR

THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

SUBJECT:

Missile Cooperation with France

I hereby authorize the following program of missile assistance to the Government of France:

-- Extension of the current assistance program conducted under NSDM 103 to cover the new generation of French missiles, in particular the M-4 SLBM. Areas in which assistance may be provided include basic missile design, guidance, propellants, reliability, flight testing, and RV and missile hardening to nuclear effects. Assistance in MRV system design may also be provided on the condition that such assistance not provide information applicable to French development of MIRV capability. Assistance on MRV systems should therefore be restricted to multiple RV release mechanisms and other information necessary to develop an MRV system in which each RV presents a separate aim point to the existing Soviet ABM system; assistance in methods of providing additional flexibility in RV separation and targeting may not be provided.

-- Provision of information on penetration aid technology, exclusive of that which might reveal specific characteristics of US operational systems. An update of the 1973 briefing on the Soviet ABM system may also be provided. However, this update should be restricted to a description of those changes, if any, which have taken place since 1973 in the basic characteristics of this system.

-- Discussion of possible scenarios for Soviet attack of French strategic systems including command and control communications.

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By WBY

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-- Provision of information which will assist the French in assessing the vulnerabilities of their strategic missile forces to Soviet attack. In this context, limited exchanges on methods of decreasing these vulnerabilities, to include improved submarine quieting and tactics and improved missile silo hardness, may also be undertaken. However, exchange of specific information on US ASW and hard target capabilities, Soviet strategic system vulnerabilities, or US SLBM or ICBM procedures and system vulnerabilities is not authorized.

-- Provision of information on basic knowledge in the fields of materials behavior related to nuclear weapons design.

The intent of this expanded program of cooperation is to improve the operability and reliability, and decrease the nuclear vulnerability, of French strategic nuclear missile forces. The President has authorized the disclosure of unclassified information and classified information through Secret, but not including Restricted Data, for this purpose.

Exposure of French RV components and materials at the U. S. Nevada Test Site may not be undertaken.

The French Government should be informed through the established channels for the existing program of our willingness to extend the missile assistance program as generally described above. You should determine, within the above guidelines, the more specific and detailed technical areas on which we will share information with France. However, in order to insure coordination with other diplomatic efforts with the French, agendas for all proposed meetings should be submitted to the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs for prior approval, and Memoranda of Conversation should be provided after each meeting.

Gerald R. Ford

cc: The Secretary of State

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