

DECLASSIFIED
Authority EO 12958
By MC NARA Date 5/9/8

SENSITIVE

July 1, 1972

MEETING OF DR. KISSINGER
AND FRENCH MINISTER OF STATE FOR NATIONAL DEFENSE

July 7, 1972

Attachments:

- Bio
- Topics for Discussion

Classified by ATSD(AE)
EXEMPT FROM GENERAL DECLASSIFICATION SCHEDULE
OF EXECUTIVE ORDER 11652. EXEMPTION CATEGORY 3
DECLASSIFY ON N/A

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Topics you should raise:

- TAB 1 -- US-French Ballistic Missile Cooperation
- Happy we could assist French development.
 - Caution that, following guidance, might not be immediately forthcoming.
 - If French want direct contractor participation, will require further study.
- TAB 2 -- US-French Nuclear Safety Exchanges
- First series of discussions useful; impressed with French.
 - Hope French military involved during October sessions.
- TAB 3 -- Nuclear Strategy and Coordination of NATO and French Forces
- Mutually advantageous to exchange views on policy and cooperation.
 - US not challenging national sovereignty over nuclear decision-making - want to address practical problems.
- TAB 4 -- Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions in Europe
- US principle criterion is undiminished Alliance security.
 - More stable balance with comprehensive approach.
 - ● MBFR is means to help sustain our commitment.

Topics MOD Debre may raise:

- TAB 5 -- US Sale of A-4M Aircraft to France
- First indication of major French purchase since 1966.
 - US will provide fixed price on other than French-supplied components after French provide A/C configuration.
 - US prepared to offer industry/DoD offset.

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TAB 2

U.S.- FRENCH NUCLEAR SAFETY EXCHANGES

Background

We have recently concluded the first of a series of nuclear safety conversations with the French in Paris. The French indicated that their primary interest in the talks was to benefit from the greater U.S. experience in the nuclear weapons safety area. During a short meeting of Dr. Walske with Minister of Defense Debre, and longer talks with Ministerial Delegate for Armaments Blancard, who is the approximate counterpart of DDR&E, ASD(I&L) and ASD(SA) combined, the same motivation was indicated. The French at all levels, including Debre and Blancard, seemed pleased to meet again in October, this time in Washington, to discuss in some detail the areas of testing and quality control as they relate to nuclear safety. At the same time, or in a subsequent meeting, it may be possible to have more substantive discussions with French military representatives on the operational aspects of safety.

Talking Points

- We are pleased that the first discussions were useful to both sides.
- We are looking forward to further discussions in October and hope the French military will be involved.
- Our experts were impressed with the competence of the French experts and with the quality of the French nuclear safety program.
- In executing SECDEF responsibility for the safety of nuclear weapons, he has advice of Joint Chiefs of Staff, Atomic Energy Commission, and civilian experts on his staff. Dr. Walske described his role to Minister Debre in maintaining an overview of all activities affecting nuclear weapon safety for SECDEF. If Minister Debre,

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E.O. 12958, Sect. 3.5 [p 4007]

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By SM/2 NARA, Date 9-30-05~~TOP SECRET SENSITIVE~~

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who has no such person, raises this matter, you might confirm that it provides a useful check to have a member of your personal staff with that function.

Prepared by: Capt Johnson, USN
OATSD(AE)
29 June 1972

NLN 00-1/5 P 5177 }

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US-FRENCH BALLISTIC MISSILE COOPERATION

Background

Following French initiatives, the White House in August 1971 approved guidelines to "improve the operability and reliability of existing French systems" (land-based and sea-based ballistic missiles). Technical discussions began in June 1971, and formal agreements were signed in October 1971. Procedures: French submit questions on specific problems; US (DDR&E staff) provides coordinated reply. First series was completed in Paris in June 1972. MOD Debre is aware of progress and very pleased.

Relations to date very cordial; French are very open about details of their systems and their problems, e.g., bearing failures for gyroscopes, separation problems in propulsion stage, corrosion in control systems, electrical failures and leakage in hydraulic systems. US answers stayed within White House guidance. Possible that some new French questions may soon require policy guidance (further background attached).

Talking Points:

- You should express satisfaction that we could assist France in ballistic missile development.
- M. Debre will:
 - Probably express his appreciation for US cooperation.
 - Possibly stress strong French desire to go more deeply into nuclear hardening and other sensitive areas.
 - Possibly ask about direct contractor participation.
- Your reply should:
 - Caution Debre that US guidelines may at times mean US cannot be forthcoming in some areas (French point-of-contact recognizes this).
 - Regarding contractors, state this would require further study.

CLASSIFIED per Appeal

12958, Sect. 3.45

LN 00-01/5 per 3.3 (b)(6) per letter 6/5/06

SO [redacted] Date 6-26-06

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Prepared by: Mr. G. R. Barse
ODDR&E/OAD/SW and Mr. W. James,
OASD(ISA)EurReg, 30 June 1972

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Subject: BALLISTIC MISSILE COOPERATION WITH FRANCE

BACKGROUND

Responding to French initiative, and with Presidential approval, we have entered into an agreement with France to "improve the operability and reliability of existing French systems". The systems referred to are the French land-based and sea-based ballistic missile systems. Although formal agreements were executed in October 1971, we have been engaged in technical discussions since June 1971. The French motivation is to save the time and money which would be required to solve their problems without U.S. help. (It is the concerted opinion of the U.S. personnel who have dealt with the French in this matter that they have exceptionally capable people and that U.S. help truly would be a time and money saving factor, rather than making the difference between success and failure).

The procedural method adopted has been to respond to French questions pertaining to specific problems they are experiencing. The questions, and backup technical data regarding their system designs, are presented orally to a U.S. team, and followed up by written submissions. U.S. responses are written, supplemented as needed by verbal discussions with U.S. technical personnel drawn from Government offices and laboratories. No contractor personnel participate.

The U.S. team is headed by a member of Dr. Foster's staff, and the French team by Ingenieur General M. Brunet, their head of missiles development. (M. Brunet reports to M. Blancard).

Relations to date have been extremely cordial, and the French have been very open and forthcoming in discussing their problems and pertinent system design details.

STATUS:

Initial French questions pertained to the following:

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| Propulsion | - Separation problems. |
| Gas bearings for gyroscopes | - Life problems. The bearings failed after only several hundred hours. |
| High Pressure Nitrogen Tank (used in missile control system) | - Corrosion problems caused premature failure, with possibility of tank explosion. |

[ENCLOSURE 1/5 of 2 of 2]

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- Electrical Connectors - Too many missile failures traceable to connector problems.
- Hydraulic accumulators - Leakage rate too high.
- Missile maintenance, test and inspection procedures - No specific problems. Wanted general info on U. S. approach, to help in establishing their own procedures.
- Safety precautions to preclude motor ignition in submarine tube. - No specific known problems. Wanted general info to compare with their own approach.
- RV hardening and test procedures - No specific problems. Wanted U. S. views on certain facets of their proposed design and testing approaches.

We have made responses in all of the above areas, over the last 6-8 months, completing our first set of replies at a meeting in Paris in June, 1972. We believe that our replies have been substantive and helpful, while at the same time staying within White House guidelines.

On this initial set of questions, the ball is now in their court and they must work for a period of months to apply the information and see whether further problems/questions remain. At first glance, it appears that the problems on high pressure tanks, propulsion, gas bearings, hydraulic accumulators and electrical connectors are solved, or a solution reasonably in hand.

Information on RV hardening and test procedures apparently was quite helpful, but they would like now to go more deeply into this subject. They are forwarding a new set of questions. It may be difficult to respond to these new questions within current White House guidance. No answers will be furnished without resolving this issue and obtaining appropriate policy guidance.

In addition to their desire to pursue further the RV hardening topic, the French noted other areas during the June meeting in which they would like to pose questions. Generally, these pertain to submarine missile launch techniques, missile ignition, missile (not RV) hardening, as well as other areas not yet defined. Questions are under preparation in France and are expected to be forwarded soon.

Present indications are that we are just at the completion of the first step in this program. It apparently has been worthwhile to the French and they want to keep it going. They stated at the June meeting, in fact, that they are very pleased with the results to date and have found our information very helpful. They stated further that M. Debre is personally aware of the progress and personally is very pleased.

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TAB 3

NUCLEAR STRATEGY AND COORDINATION OF NATO AND FRENCH FORCES

Background

There is no provision at present for coordination of French nuclear forces with those of NATO. The French have consistently refused to consider any dilution of full national sovereignty over their "force de frappe". There are indications, however, that they are prepared to consider some form of coordination of their prospective tactical nuclear forces with NATO, or with certain allies, e.g., the FRG. The issue would be difficult for the French to avoid because of contingency plans calling for the cooperation of their forces with SACEUR, and because French tactical nuclear weapons would clearly be planned for use on or from West German soil.

FRG MOD Schmidt has made strong representations to MOD Debre on several occasions concerning the need for joint arrangements covering the deployment and coordination of French tactical nuclear forces. The French reportedly have not been prepared to engage in substantive discussions on grounds that deployment was still too far in the future. Recent reports indicate that the French may maintain all tactical nuclear weapons on French soil, possibly to minimize difficult issues with the FRG or other NATO allies. We do not know, therefore, how far the French may be willing to go in cooperation in this area.

There are substantial military reasons, and important political reasons, for attempting to reach some understanding with the French concerning policy and/or coordination for the use of tactical nuclear weapons in defense of Europe. Cooperation can be envisioned in a variety of political and/or military forms, e.g., military-to-military agreements; bilateral arrangements; policy formulation a la the NPG; etc. We recommend you raise this issue with Debre drawing on talking points below. This is, however, a matter of great sensitivity to France and Debre personally. You should, therefore, express our general interest in the subject, and seek to draw out French views on their plans and expectations but without pressing any particular U.S. view or position.

Talking Points

- We have followed with interest the progress you have made, in the development of tactical nuclear weapons.

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- We believe that it would be mutually advantageous to exchange views on ways in which the use of tactical nuclear weapons can be coordinated under circumstances in which French and other NATO forces are fighting alongside each other. We are prepared to engage in such talks whenever the French wish.
- In such an exchange of views, of course, we are not interested in challenging national sovereignty over nuclear decision-making. We would expect, rather, to address practical problems related to coordination of our respective forces.

Prepared by: Mr. J. A. Woodworth
OASD(ISA) EurReg
29 June 1972

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[NW 00-01/5 & T]