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By K.C. NAW Date 12/30/88



DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Washington, D.C. 20520

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August 24, 1973

8/24/73

TO : PM - Mr. Weiss  
FROM : PM/AE - Holsey G. Handyside *H.*  
SUBJECT: Speculation: Possibility of High Level  
Contact Between US and French Governments

1. The Background: From the outset of the US-French military cooperation program, the senior point of contact in the French Government has been M. Blancard, Minister-Delegate for Armaments in the Ministry of Defense. He signed the two Memoranda of Understanding setting forth the ground rules governing both the missile assistance and the nuclear weapons safety talks. Although two of M. Blancard's subordinates carried out the actual technical exchanges with US representatives, he kept in close touch with both the nuclear and the missile talks.

2. The Known Facts: (a) The end of July (about the 27th) Embassy Paris was asked to arrange for an airport visa to be issued to M. Blancard upon his arrival in the US. It is not clear whether considerations of time and haste or of discretion ruled out a routine request to the Embassy for a diplomatic visa. Although the Embassy eventually requested the Immigration and Naturalization Service to issue the visa at JFK Airport in New York, the first telegram indicated M. Blancard would be arriving at Dulles.

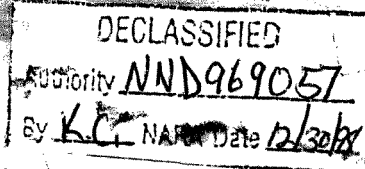
(b) So far as DOD/ISA and State (PM and EUR) can determine, M. Blancard did not meet with anyone in DOD. Nor did he contact either the Office of Munitions Control or the two US companies which are vigorously trying to obtain a license to sell an inertial navigation system to the French, a matter in which M. Blancard is known to be playing an active role.

(c) When queried about M. Blancard's visit to the US, Larry Eagleburger responded with something like "If M. Blancard was in Washington, he has in all probability departed."

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3. The Speculation: Staff level action officers in State and Defense speculate that M. Blancard came to Washington to discuss the continuation and/or expansion of US assistance to the French strategic nuclear weapons program. They posit that M. Blancard may have been following up on the Kissinger/Foreign Minister Jobert discussion which took place at San Clemente earlier in July.

4. The Import for the Forthcoming Schlesinger/Galley Meeting: If M. Blancard did indeed meet with Mr. Kissinger, we must assume that he made a full report of his conversation to his boss, M. Galley. Clearly, Secretary Schlesinger needs a definitive description of White House attitudes on the whole range of issues raised in NSSM-175 and of the current state of play before he sits down with M. Galley. Moreover, Mr. Schlesinger will need some clear guidelines on how to respond to any Galley overtures in this area -- or more actively -- on how to raise the matter or how to pursue it actively once raised by the French Minister. Finally, since the projected date of the Schlesinger/Galley meeting coincides with the scheduled visit of Foreign Minister Jobert to the UN General Assembly, a full-dress conference of defense and foreign ministers is, at the very least, a possibility during that period.

5. State's Role: Even though Mr. Kissinger will almost certainly be confirmed and in place as Secretary a week or so before M. Galley arrives in Washington and the Department of State will thus be informed of what is going on, the expertise and judgment of the State staff should be factored in to any position papers prepared prior to that time for senior USG officials. We cannot do much, however, until we obtain significantly more information and direction than we now have.

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