

July 4, 1974

Memorandum from Helmut Sonnenfeldt to Henry Kissinger, 'US-French Military Cooperation'

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Summary:

Sonnenfeldt describes for Secretary Kissinger the state of US-French relations after a schism developed in the wake of the 1973 October War, and what impact this would have on the two countries' nuclear cooperation.

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French

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July 4, 1974

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY

FROM: HELMUT SONNENFELDT

SUBJECT: US-French Military Cooperation

It is not known how much Giscard knew at the time or knows now of our military exchanges with the French. He may not personally be as eager about some of the programs as Pompidou and Galley were because of their costs; but politically he probably has to go along with most of them for now.

Pompidou and Jobert professed great bitterness about what they claimed was our going back on our word. De Rose has said that this contributed greatly to their attitude toward us late last year and early this year. It is not clear whether Pompidou ever understood the message Walters gave to Galley last November when he went to Paris to say in effect that French policies were removing the political basis for the earlier understandings on military matters.

You may want to raise this whole matter with Giscard, perhaps by way of reviewing the unhappy turn of events last year, rather than in the form of a new offer. Although some of the French programs -- submarine missiles, for example -- on which they hoped to get "negative guidance" from us, have gone ahead, the earlier understanding may still be of use to the French. Nuclear safety should also be of continued interest as should intelligence exchange on Soviet defenses.

The French cast of characters in all these matters has changed substantially since last year and new channels would undoubtedly have to be established if we wanted to pick up some of last year's threads. There may also be more resistance in the Pentagon.

Another way to approach the matter might be by offering detailed briefings on SALT and the issues involved. The French could send a couple of people to Washington for that who could then also have the opportunity to reopen the military cooperation issues. In any event, we will need a new shopping list than making blind offers ourselves.

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SUBJECT TO GENERAL DECLASSIFICATION
SCHEDULE OF EXECUTIVE ORDER 11652
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If the French are going to come into the ECG operation in some way over the next few weeks, military cooperation may be too much for Giscard's political traffic at the same time. In any case, we should probably not imply in any way that one is the quid for the other.

In sum, you may want to give Giscard an opening by referring to the past and then, if he expresses interest for the future, suggest that a couple of people come to Washington quietly whenever they are ready.

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