

March 19, 1971

Memorandum from Helmut Sonnenfeldt to Henry A. Kissinger, 'Decisions on Military Cooperation with France'

Citation:

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Summary:

Sonnenfeldt summarizes the options for providing France with more advanced computers and missile assistance, recommending "a minimal response."

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English

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MEMORANDUM By AR NARA Date 2/4/04

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE

ACTION
March 19, 1971

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. KISSINGER

FROM: Helmut Sonnenfeldt

SUBJECT: Decisions on Military Cooperation with France

*Rede + tell him
noted 2 favor on
each item.
This must move
before
we leave
for Sen
Almirante*

Having received agency comments on the operative part of the draft NSDM on nuclear safety exchanges with France, we should now forward to the President a memorandum explaining the other, more sensitive issues -- computers and missile assistance -- and recommending decisions on all three issues.

The attached memorandum (Tab A) runs through the issues and arguments briefly and recommends in each case a minimal response, largely on the political grounds that we have already moved in this direction, and to halt all further cooperation would seem to run against the President's expressed intention to Pompidou.

-- For the computers, the memorandum recommends maintaining some restrictions on exports for use in French nuclear laboratories, but authorizes a redefinition of "advanced computers"; in practice this would mean allowing the French to use a new generation of IBM computers, but still exclude the most powerful. The same revised definition could serve to update our export controls on computers manufactured abroad by American subsidiaries to keep pace with progress in computer technology. However, to prevent any further delay in our response to the French, this broader question would be handled separately. The Under Secretaries Committee could be requested to work out the precise formula. (In the technical jargon, it probably involves raising the line defining "advanced" computers from a bus rate of 50 million to a level of approximately 200 million bits.)

-- On missile assistance the memorandum recommends that we cooperate in those items of least sensitivity (discussed at the SRG), but inform the French that there will be limits to our assistance.

-- On nuclear safety, which is non-controversial, an exchange is recommended, but limited to non-Restricted Data information.

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There are two draft NSDMs, though I am not sure how you want to come out on these issues. The memorandum to the President requests authorization for you to issue the NSDMs if the President concurs in your recommendations. The nuclear safety issues should be treated separately because of the sensitivity of the first two items.

RECOMMENDATION

That you sign the memorandum to the President (Tab A).

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