

**November 15, 1971**

**Cable from William P. Rogers to American Embassy  
Paris, 'Military Relations with France'**

**Citation:**

"Cable from William P. Rogers to American Embassy Paris, 'Military Relations with France'", November 15, 1971, Wilson Center Digital Archive, National Archives, Record Group 59, Subject-Numeric Files, 1970-73 Top Secret Files, box 1, AE 1-1 70-71. Obtained and contributed by William Burr and included in NPIHP Research Update #2. <https://wilson-center-digital-archive.dvincitest.com/document/112258>

**Summary:**

Text of a letter from Foster to Blancard discussing an exchange of nuclear safety information between the United States and France. Foster goes into detail about the specific procedures and systems which could be discussed. The US could not exchange any information classified as Restricted Data or Formerly Restricted Data.

**Original Language:**

English

**Contents:**

Original Scan

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Department of State

# TELEGRAM

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FOR AMBASSADOR WATSON

SUBJECT: MILITARY RELATIONS WITH FRANCE

REF: STATE 66637

,FYI,

There follows/text of letter dated November 12, 1971  
 from Dr. John S. Foster, Jr., Director of Defense  
 Research and Engineering, to Jean Blancard, Delegate  
 Minister for Armaments:

QUOTE

Dear M. Blancard:

During the past twenty months, Mr. John H. Morse,  
 Secretary Laird's Deputy Assistant Secretary for  
 European matters, and M. Marc Geneste of your CEA

11/15/71

NODIS REVIEW

Cat. A - Caption removed; transferred to O/FADRC

Cat. B - Transferred to O/FADRC with additional access controlled by S/S

Cat. C - Caption and custody retained by S/S

Reviewed by: Ambassador W. Witman, II

Date: 6/28/76

Paris  
Tel. 207972

NODIS REVIEW

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Cat. B - Transferred to O/FADRC controlled by S/S

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Date: 9 Oct 1980

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Clearance: EUR/FBX-Mr. Tanguy LA  
 S/S - SEE MR. MILLER mm

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have explored informally the possibility of nuclear safety discussions between experts of our two governments. This possibility was also noted in meetings between Ambassador Watson and Ministers Debre and Schuman during July. We now consider it timely to proceed with such exchanges and I have been authorized to propose that we do so.

(PARA) As we see it, the nuclear safety discussions would be centered on the operational nuclear safety procedures followed in the field by our respective commanders. This could include strategic sea-based missile systems, strategic land-based missiles, strategic bombers, tactical missiles, and tactical aircraft. After a discussion of general principles

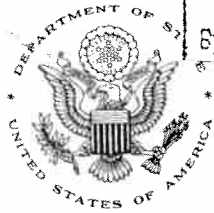
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applicable to all these systems, each of us could explain something of the safety design of our nuclear weapon carriers, including, for example, division of critical controls, separation of conventional and nuclear control circuitry, bomb rack locks, etc. We each could then describe the procedures which would be followed in the actual use of the systems, such as authentication of execution messages and manipulation of separated firing keys.

(PARA) With regard to nuclear warheads themselves we would be able to discuss the general principles of safe nuclear designs, as well as the types of . . . electrical and mechanical components which are used to assure that an inadvertent or unauthorized nuclear detonation will not occur. In addition we could exchange information on storage and handling criteria, quality assurance, and minimum maintenance, as they

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enhance nuclear safety.

(PARA) While we would not be able to exchange information which we treat as Restricted Data or Formerly Restricted Data, this limitation does not appear to be an obstacle to the main objective of nuclear safety discussions. We would, of course, be able to talk about relevant information previously transmitted to you, as well as certain classified defense information.

(PARA) We could also, if desired, discuss past nuclear weapon accidents which we have experienced. These are those few accidents, such as the ones at Thule and Palomares, none of which has resulted in a nuclear explosion. We could discuss our reporting procedures, response capabilities and decontamination experience.

(continued)

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(PARA) Should this proposal meet with the approval of your authorities we on our side would designate as our point of contact and discussion team leader my colleague, Dr. Carl Walske, the Secretary of Defense's Assistant for Atomic Energy. Dr. Walske is Secretary Laird's senior staff member charged with responsibility for nuclear safety. His team would include three military officers knowledgeable in each general force area (strategic sea-based missiles, strategic land-based missiles and bombers, and tactical missiles and aircraft), an AEC laboratory expert on warhead safety, and Dr. Walske, a total of about five.

(PARA) If further preparatory work on an agenda is desired, Dr. Walske is prepared to undertake it with whomever is designated. There would also need to be an understanding between us against transfer of

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information to third countries, unless agreed to  
by ~~xxx~~ the originator. Dr. Walske will, of course,  
be able to discuss this matter as well.

(PARA) Finally, I am sure that you would agree that  
this matter should remain quite confidential between  
our two governments.

(PARA) With great respect, Sincerely,

UNQUOTE.

//-end-//

ROGERS

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