

January 9, 1971

Memorandum from Helmut Sonnenfeldt to Henry A. Kissinger, 'Interim Report on NSSM 100: US-French Military Relations'

Citation:

"Memorandum from Helmut Sonnenfeldt to Henry A. Kissinger, 'Interim Report on NSSM 100: US-French Military Relations'", January 9, 1971, Wilson Center Digital Archive, Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, National Security Council Files (NSCF), box 677, France vol. VII, 1 Oct 70-Mar 71. Obtained and contributed by William Burr and included in NPIHP Research Update #2.

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Summary:

Sonnenfeldt describes and criticizes National Security Study Memorandum (NSSM) 100, an issue paper on potential US military aid to France's ballistic missile program. He states that the current version of the study "does not adequately explore" the broader policy implications of such aid, especially in regards to "the direction we wish to take in Europe in the 1970s."

Original Language:

English

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MEMORANDUM FOR MR. KISSINGER

FROM: Helmut Sonnenfeldt

SUBJECT: Interim Report on NSSM 100 -- US-French Military Relations

Earlier this week the ad hoc working group reviewed the NSSM 100 study. Although the group has worked hard, the NSSM has been too narrowly interpreted, and the results are far from ideal. Despite our efforts, which did get the group to address alternative objectives in entering into closer military-nuclear relations with the French, the study does not adequately explore these objectives. Of the objectives identified -- involving bilateral goals, NATO-oriented goals, and Anglo-French or European-oriented goals -- the examination of the third framework is especially deficient. Basically, the problem we have here is that this NSSM makes only a start at going to the heart of fundamental questions about the direction we wish to take in Europe in the 1970's. It also has major SALT implications which have to be more fully examined.

We badly need to get some basic issues out on the table at an early SRG meeting. Moreover, Pompidou having been here almost a year ago, we should soon give the French a response on their requests for computers and assistance to their ballistic missile program. A new French request for cooperation on nuclear safety is expected shortly. However, before we decide to enter into closer relations with the French in any of these areas, we should be clearer about our longer-range objectives (lest we repeat errors of past American policy). It is not too early to think about the question of whether we should bring the French up to the British level, or the British down to the French, or both to an intermediate one. Likewise, although dormant at the moment, the question of Anglo-French nuclear cooperation could begin to ripen later this year if the negotiations on British entry into the Common Market reach a favorable conclusion. If so, we may be precipitated into difficult choices as to ^{our} ~~the~~ attitude toward and relationship with it.

To keep you abreast, at Tab A is the NSSM 100 Issues Paper as it now stands, and at Tab B is our analytical summary together with critical comment at the end. The basic paper is quite long, and is still being worked on. It

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should be available on your return from the West Coast on January 15. A new introduction is in preparation for the Issues Paper, which will try to relate the NSSM to broader questions of our European policy, including Germany. This new introduction will be reviewed by the working group on January 11. Thus, we should be ready for an initial SRG on January 19, as now tentatively scheduled. After initial consideration of NSSM 100 in the SRG, you may want to decide on a broader and deeper look at the alternatives. I doubt that we can get such an examination without preliminary airing of issues at the SRG.

Caution:

At the same time, in dealing with this range of subjects in any depth, we will rapidly encounter heavy controversy within the Executive: Defense, for example, has taken a quite strict view of the need for hardware quid pro quos for any technical assistance; General Goodpaster feels strongly that any dealings with the French in the nuclear and strategic areas must be tied to French return into the NATO fold, if not formally then at least in practice. In addition, the Joint Committee has strong views on US-French nuclear relations (as it does also on nuclear propulsion for Dutch and other NATO submarines!).

Consequently, before opening up this whole subject in a fundamental way, there has to be awareness at the political level that any decisions that represent a basic change from current policies will require major effort to enforce as well as serious Congressional problems -- which would, of course, not be unrelated to the status of US-EEC economic relations.

WK:HS:mm

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