

## **December 1970**

# **Report of the National Security Council Staff, 'NSSM 100 - Military Cooperation with France (Analytical Summary)'**

### **Citation:**

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### **Summary:**

A summary and critical commentary on National Security Study Memorandum (NSSM) 100, an issue paper on potential US military aid to France's ballistic missile program. The report describes the specific French requests for assistance, current US policy restricting such assistance, and outlines options for future cooperation. The options are subdivided into three "approaches" based on the actors involved: 1) Bilateral US-French approaches, 2) NATO-oriented approaches, 3) Anglo-French or European-oriented approaches.

### **Original Language:**

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### **Contents:**

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By CHNARA Date 3/16/09TOP SECRET/NODISNSSM 100 - MILITARY COOPERATION WITH FRANCE  
(Analytical Summary)I. Introduction

We need to take an early decision on French requests for assistance to their nuclear weapons program in the following areas:

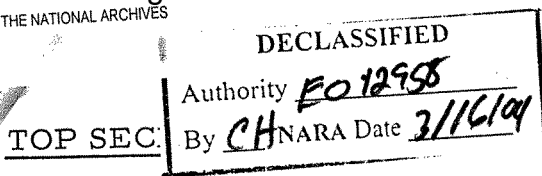
- advanced computers for use in French weapons laboratories;
- aid to the French ballistic missile programs;
- nuclear safety.

In considering our response to these French requests, we also need to decide what position the U.S. should take on:

- French relations with the Nuclear Planning Group (NPG);
- The deployment of French tactical nuclear weapons in the FRG;
- Increased cooperation between France and NATO in non-nuclear areas;
- Possible Anglo-French military cooperation extending to the nuclear field.

More fundamentally, however, our basic purposes in contemplating a change in U.S. policy to allow assistance to the French nuclear effort need to be clarified. The NSSM 100 Issues Paper, written by State in consultation with us, begins to address this question. Three broad objectives -- which are not mutually exclusive and could represent stages in the development of a new policy -- are identified:

TOP SECRET/NODIS



- 2 -

1) a bilateral approach, aimed at strengthening U. S. -French relations.

This approach, which would not involve any specific quid pro quos, could be focused on removing irritants and demonstrating our willingness to enter into certain kinds of limited military cooperation. Or it could be seen as a stepping stone toward more extensive military relationships.

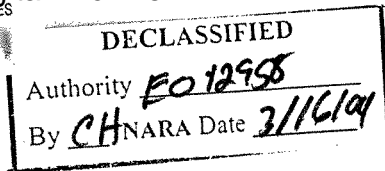
2) a NATO-oriented approach, designed to lead to increased French cooperation with NATO in both nuclear and non-nuclear areas (although France would not be expected to re-integrate its military forces).

3) an Anglo-French, or European-oriented approach, designed to encourage UK-French nuclear collaboration and lead eventually to an augmented European nuclear role, either a) in some loose connection with a re-structured NATO, or b) outside NATO.

The third approach, which involves movement toward a European deterrent arrangement of some kind, does not receive thorough discussion in either the Issues Paper or the interagency Report. This is unfortunate, since in many ways it could represent the most persuasive rationale for assistance to the French nuclear effort. Admittedly, however, there are uncertainties in discussing it at this stage. It also would require a sharper definition of our longer-range objectives in Europe than we now have. Further study of this approach is needed.

The major achievement of the Issues Paper is its attempt to relate options on particular issues to the three broad objectives outlined above. However, total integration is not achieved -- as the two-part options discussion reveals.

TOP SECRET/NODIS



TOP SECRET/NODIS

- 3 -

(Further work on the options may be necessary before the SRG meeting.)  
Some of the presentation, especially in the Report, is biased toward the NATO-oriented approach.

## II. Specific French Requests

### A. Assistance to the French Ballistic Missile Program

The French are having difficulties in certain areas of their strategic missile programs and have requested our assistance in order to save time and money. They would like our help in solving particular problems that have arisen in weapons systems they have already developed. They have not asked for new weapons systems. The French requests, which relate to both their land-based and submarine-launched IRBM's, involve areas of varying sensitivity. We still await information on the specific data the French need, but they have outlined general areas.

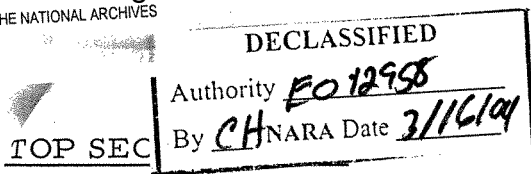
The less sensitive areas of desired assistance are:

- reliability and quality control of elements of land-based missiles;
- solid propellant rocket motors.

The more sensitive areas are:

- hardening of re-entry vehicles (i. e. resistance to nuclear effects, or "FLASH");
- star tracker guidance for submarine-launched missiles (we are not using this system and have already told the French we cannot help in this area);
- inertial navigation for ballistic missile submarines.

TOP SECRET/NODIS



- 4 -

We face several possible constraints in dealing with the French requests:

1) SALT: The question of non-transfer to third countries has been discussed in SALT. The U.S. has rejected a very restrictive Soviet proposal which would forbid transfer of offensive or defensive strategic armaments or any of their components, as well as technical assistance toward their development. Our position has been that both sides must agree not to "seek to circumvent the provisions or effectiveness of the agreement through a third country", and that the basis for an agreement could be removed by "substantial transfers to a third country of strategic systems limited by the agreement." The Soviets have stated they consider this wording too vague. At this time we cannot say exactly what the Soviets would consider a substantial, prohibited transfer.

The study concludes that any significant assistance by the U.S. to the present French missile or warhead programs might provoke a verbal reaction and an opportunity for Soviet propaganda. But it is not predicted that the Soviets could block an agreement on this issue alone, or withdraw from an agreement once made, if this were the only point at issue and if the assistance could not realistically be interpreted as substantially changing the strategic balance (which would be the case with any of the measures discussed above). Beyond this, there are two views.

-- One view (ACDA) holds that Soviet reaction would depend largely on the scope of assistance. The Soviets might react mildly to minor assistance as a precedent. Major assistance would probably provoke them to press for a total and explicit ban on transfers of strategic weapons and technology to

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- 5 -

third countries.

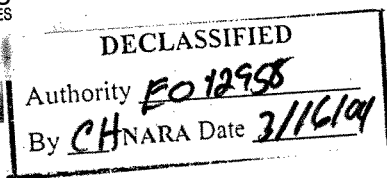
-- According to another view (CIA), the Soviets might react against even minor assistance in order to prevent any new precedents, and to block improvements in French-American relations. However, they would be expected not to break off SALT, but rather to harden their position on other items in the SALT package. If an agreement were already in force, they would be more likely to interpret it narrowly.

2) Legal: A State legal analysis claims that problems may arise if assistance included sensitive atomic energy information. The case presented is not fully persuasive. A key issue is the interpretation of the Atomic Energy Act of 1954, as amended, under which the provision of Restricted Data or Formerly Restricted Data to France requires a Presidential determination that France "is participating with the U.S. pursuant to an international arrangement by substantial and material contributions to the mutual defense and security." Earlier agreements made under this provision are now held inoperative because of France's 1966 withdrawal from NATO commands.

3) Congressional: Although not detailed in the study, certain types of cooperation involving atomic energy information would require, at minimum, Congressional acquiescence; more extensive cooperation might necessitate a new agreement. It might be wise to inform the Congress of any anticipated assistance.

4) Security: Sharing of sensitive information with the French could compromise security data important to us. This contention is based on our

TOP SECRET/NODIS

TOP SECRET/NODIS

- 6 -

estimate that French security procedures cannot prevent leaks to Soviet bloc countries. However, since much, if not all, of the data in question is probably already known to the Soviet Union, this argument may not present the kind of obstacle the study suggests.

OPTIONS:

1. Continue the present restrictive policy (NSAM 294); provide no assistance.
2. Provide limited assistance, avoiding sensitive information or items of equipment (i. e. classified atomic energy information, or information that might, if compromised, increase the vulnerability of U.S. systems).
3. Provide initial limited assistance, but be prepared to expand gradually to sensitive areas to meet all present French requests, and perhaps more, depending on the state of French-U.S. or French-NATO relations, or on increased French-European military cooperation.

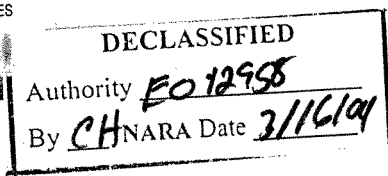
B. Relaxation of the Restriction on Use of Advanced Computers

U.S. refusal to authorize the sale of advanced computers to France for use in the French nuclear weapons program has been an irritant in French-American relations. The restriction rests on two factors:

- our past policy of non-support of the French nuclear effort (set forth in NSAM 294 in 1964);
- our present interpretation of our obligations under the Limited Test Ban Treaty (as explained to the French in a 1964 Aide Memoire; this was modified somewhat by the 1966 Fowler-Debre Agreement which permits the export of computers to France on condition that they not be used in nuclear weapons

laboratories).

TOP SECRET/NODIS



TOP SECRET/NODIS

- 7 -

Allowing the French to use advanced U.S. computers in their military nuclear program could save them time and money; it would enable them to perform more complex calculations and to produce more reliable and effective nuclear weapons. This would represent an important gesture toward improvement of U.S. -French relations, although it would not in itself provide us any direct benefit in terms of influencing French policy. Whether or not we relax the restriction, the French will proceed with their nuclear weapons and testing program.

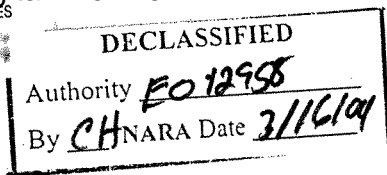
There is a debate as to whether our past restriction has rested more on legal or on policy grounds.

-- A State legal analysis concludes that providing advanced computers to France would probably violate the Test Ban Treaty. Although acknowledging that the Treaty is ambiguous in its definition of what constitutes assistance to the conduct of nuclear tests in prohibited environments, the analysis concludes that in practice we have interpreted the treaty to preclude the use of such computers in support of the French military nuclear effort. (The State legal analysis is weak and will be challenged by even State/PM. We need to consider the bureaucraties of how to obtain a better analysis.)

-- A contrary view (held by State/PM and others) contends that our past position has rested as much on policy grounds as on law. Support for this view is found in the legislative history of the LTBT.

TOP SECRET/NODIS





TOP SECRET/NODIS

- 8 -

If one assumes that policy grounds have dominated our past restriction and that there is no legal obstacle to changing our policy, the central issue becomes whether our interests would be served by such a change in policy.

-- If we do change our policy, it would seem desirable to emphasize our continuing support of the Test Ban Treaty and our intent not to encourage or participate directly in French atmospheric tests.

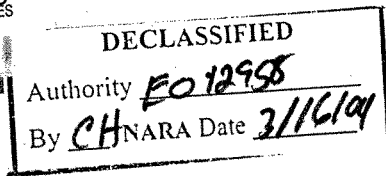
-- While unlikely that removing past restrictions on computer exports to France would in itself complicate SALT, the Soviets might believe we were becoming more deeply involved in the French weapons program. Complications would be more likely to arise if a policy change on computers were accompanied by the provision of missile assistance to France.

-- The study also points out that dropping our computer restriction could be viewed as a change in our attitude toward proliferation. But this could be countered by asserting that France is a nuclear power and was one at the time of the LTBT.

#### OPTIONS

1. Continue the present restriction on French use of advanced U.S. computers;
2. Redefine "advanced" computers to allow French use of higher performance U.S. computers (e. g. IBM 360/65) while continuing to impose restrictions on use of the most advanced computers (i. e. CDC 6600 and larger machines);
3. Remove the present restriction on French use of all advanced U.S. computers.

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- 9 -

C. Nuclear Safety Arrangements

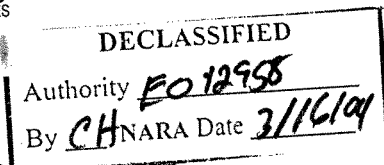
Twice in 1970 a DOD official was approached informally by the French about the possibility of reopening French-American discussions on nuclear safety initiated by the U. S. but dropped by France in 1963. A formal French request is now expected in early 1971. We could propose an exchange of information with France on this subject, which would serve to improve French nuclear safety procedures and increase our knowledge of French nuclear weapons. Closer relations between French and American nuclear specialists (both military and scientific) could thereby be fostered, which might contribute to broader military and political cooperation.

We would be willing to discuss nuclear safety design and safety procedures. Much of this information is unclassified, although design details of associated hardware and components would probably involve secret Restricted data. Transmission of the latter information requires a determination by the Secretary of Defense and the AEC Chairman, with Presidential approval, based on the 1961 nuclear cooperation agreement with France under Section 144b of the Atomic Energy Act.

The following factors would bear upon a determination to enter into nuclear safety discussions with the French:

-- Congressional assent (JCAE) would probably be required if Restricted data were involved, especially since the 1961 nuclear cooperation agreement with France was suspended following France's 1966 withdrawal from NATO commands.

TOP SECRET/NODIS



TOP SECRET/NODIS

- 10 -

-- We have proposed exchanges on nuclear safety with the Soviets in SALT. Therefore it might be preferable not to approach the French on this subject until we have completed our exploration of it in SALT.

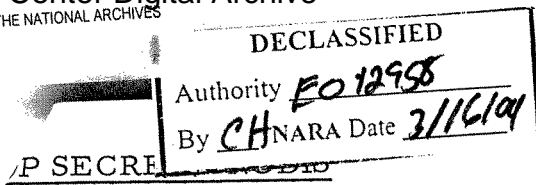
-- In the past we have exchanged nuclear safety information with the U.K. It might be desirable to conduct trilateral conversations with the French and the British on this subject, although this could reduce any political benefits to us.

On this rather straightforward matter, the study provides no options. It might be desirable to probe these questions further and develop a more detailed position on possible sharing of more sensitive information, once we hear what the French have in mind.

D. Non-nuclear cooperation: Research and Development

We have revived the Franco-American Committee on Research and Development Projects, dormant since 1966. At a meeting in Paris in June, 1970, the French took the initiative in developing a long list of projects for eventual cooperation. They want information on research, technology, weapon systems and weapon-related systems in the conventional area. We are now doing our homework and hope to be forthcoming on many of these projects. Prospects for cooperation are good.

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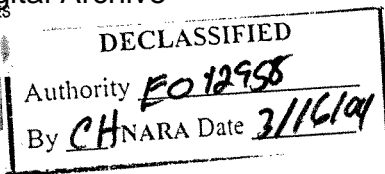
## III. Specific Issues in France-NATO Relations

The study reviews the present state of France-NATO cooperation. Following France's withdrawal from NATO, a 1967 agreement between General Ailleret and General Lemnitzer provided for coordination of military planning between France and NATO commands, with the explicit understanding that French forces in Germany would be available to support NATO missions in the event of hostilities only after a French governmental decision to go to war. Since that time, French and NATO military staffs have discussed contingency planning in Germany. French liaison missions have been established at several NATO military headquarters, and there have been joint naval exercises. France has continued participation in a number of military projects (e.g. NADGE, NATO pipeline on French territory, air defense alerts.) The French have granted military overflights on a monthly basis. They would like to participate in the NATO Integrated Communications System (NICS), including SATCOM III, which would benefit France should a war occur. There are signs that the Pompidou government is interested in gradually expanding its military relationships with the Alliance. So far, the attitude of NATO authorities has been to welcome closer French cooperation when it is offered, but not to seek it.

### A. French Deployment of Tactical Nuclear Weapons

The French are developing a tactical missile, the Pluton, for deployment with French divisions in Germany in 1973-74. As an interim measure, they may mount their tactical nuclear warheads on Honest John rockets still in their possession in 1972. Impending availability of tactical nuclear weapons under French command and control raises the need for cooperation in nuclear planning. It is reported that the French have already broached <sup>with the FRG</sup> the question of storage depots for French tactical

TOP SECRET/NODIS



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weapons on German territory.

As the study correctly points out, French strategy seems to be moving toward a concept of graduated nuclear response to incorporate the use of tactical nuclear weapons, as outlined by General Fourquet in 1969. However, we lack details as to the present state of French official doctrine. In order to avoid conflict with the utilization of similar weapons by NATO forces, coordination is desirable at both the military and political levels. Although doubtful that France would place her tactical nuclear armament in Germany under SACEUR's Selective Release Procedures, other methods of coordination may be possible. The French have expressed a willingness to explore the subject with us, as their tactical weapons approach deployment, and they undoubtedly will be discussing the matter with the Germans as well.

Options:

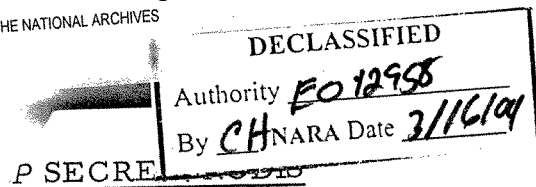
1. Rely on a political agreement between France and Germany (possibly including a German veto power) and coordination at military levels, without insisting on a formal agreement requiring concurrence of the NATO commander before the French could employ their tactical nuclear arms in the FRG.

-- Under this approach we could seek an understanding with the Germans that they would not agree to French use of these weapons in Germany without a US/NATO decision to escalate to the tactical nuclear level.

2. Press for French adherence to SACEUR's SRP, or some other suitable arrangement for reliable coordination at the military level (e.g. French association with the NPG, discussed below).

3. Insist on a formal agreement that French forces would not employ tactical nuclear weapons in a conflict in Germany without NATO's concurrence.

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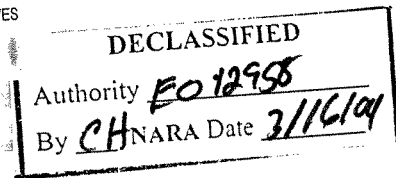
We also need to consider the tactical question of how to handle this issue, especially vis-à-vis Germany which will be the pivotal country in any US/NATO discussions with the French.

B. French Association with the NATO Nuclear Planning Group (NPG)

Some kind of French association with the NPG would be in our interest. It would provide a forum for discussion between France and NATO allies of important questions of nuclear strategy. It could serve as a vehicle to draw France into a more cooperative attitude toward the Alliance in meeting European defense requirements. The study maintains, however, that it is unclear whether full French NPG membership would best serve US or allied interests at this time, given divergent French strategic concepts, which could lead to French obstructionism. (A counter argument can be made, however, that full membership would indeed be desirable, in light of recent changes in French strategy and signs that Paris wishes cooperation on tactical nuclear weapons.) At any rate, the French, on their side, may be wary that full membership at this time could be advertised as a major step toward rejoining the integrated NATO organization as a whole, which they do not view as in their interest.

In early 1970 the French made a low-level approach to German military officers regarding the possibility of French access to certain NPG documents. After some allied discussion, the French were told to approach NATO directly. They did not do this and nothing resulted from the overture. The episode raises the question, however, whether the time is right to encourage French association with the NPG.

A number of alternative forms of French association below full membership are outlined in the study. These include: "associate membership," a liaison mission,



TOP SECRET/NODIS

ad hoc participation, participation limited to working group meetings, observer status, bilateral Ministerial exchanges regarding NPG proceedings, and the provision of NPG documents to the French without their participation.

The following ways of encouraging French association with the NPG are suggested without detailed discussion in the Report:

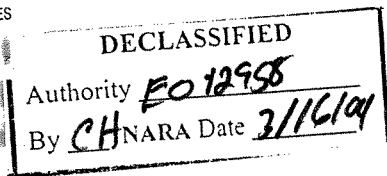
1. Do nothing on the assumption that French interest in the NPG may develop anyway, as the French deploy their strategic and tactical nuclear systems; they may ultimately raise the issue.
2. Raise the question in terms of French self-interest in greater coordination between French and US/NATO nuclear forces.
3. Link the question of association with the NPG to French requests for U.S. assistance to their nuclear programs.

C. Coordination of Targeting of French Strategic Forces with US/NATO

There is no coordination between General Goodpaster's Priority Strike Plan for NATO and the French strategic forces. The French have never ruled this out completely, but have generally claimed it would be premature until their strategic missile force was further along. Last spring President Pompidou said in a New York Times interview that coordination with SAC might be "feasible."

From our standpoint, as French IRBM's and SLBM's are deployed, the completely independent use of the French force could cause potential problems for us. Joint planning and coordination would reduce uncertainties, even on a contingency basis for wartime. Some consensus on doctrine might develop. Certain limits would be set on French freedom of action. On their side, the French would gain the benefit

TOP SECRET/NODIS



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of linkage to superior US strategic power. In general, coordination with the French in some fashion would help bring all Western strategic forces into the same framework and could enhance deterrence by multiplying the uncertainties confronting the Soviet Union.

Coordination would best be accomplished through SACEUR, although the French might object. But this is not the only possibility. The study identifies the following options:

1. Encourage direct discussions between France and SACEUR, looking toward coordination of the French strategic force with SACEUR's nuclear strike plan.
2. Explore the possibility of a tripartite US-UK-French arrangement with SACEUR sitting in.

-- Although offering a compromise if the French do not wish to deal directly with SACEUR, this approach might have the appearance of a "directorate" and provoke other allies.

3. Explore a bilateral US-French arrangement. (SACEUR could be kept informed through liaison.)

D. French-NATO non-nuclear issues

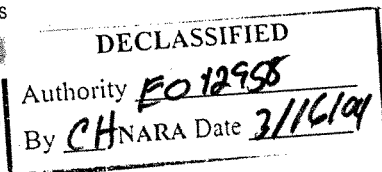
As a result of the disengagement of French forces from NATO commands and the expulsion of NATO bases from French territory, allied defense planning was weakened. Our military would, of course, be interested in any of the following measures to improve the situation:

-- assured availability of French forces to NATO in a crisis (present NATO planning is premised on the assumption that, at best, French forces will constitute reserves);

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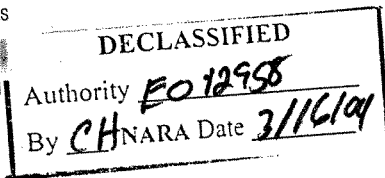
16

-- re-entry rights into France in an emergency or in wartime, possibly tied to NATO alert procedures;

-- an agreement with the French on LOC, use of facilities in France, and POL in wartime;

-- an improved arrangement for a longer period on military overflights.

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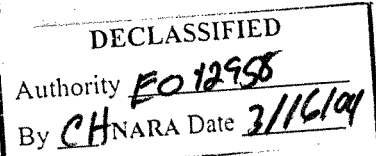
- 17 -

#### IV. Anglo-French Nuclear Cooperation

There has been vague talk of possible Anglo-French nuclear collaboration. Both Prime Minister Heath and President Pompidou have spoken in favor of considering the possibility. As far as we know, no specific dialogue has yet been initiated. In the past the issue has hovered in the background of British entry into the Common Market, but <sup>it</sup> has not been linked to British accession so far in the present round of negotiations. If it becomes a real issue at all, it may not be until after Britain's admission to the European Community is assured.

Of four possible kinds of Anglo-French nuclear arrangements identified in the study, two--development of a truly or common deterrent and joint development of advanced nuclear weapons systems--are termed extremely unlikely in the near future. UK technical assistance to the French force de dissuasion, and/or vice versa, is seen as "conceivable", although U.S. concurrence would probably be required for the British to pass on nuclear information of American origin to the French. (Another view, not reflected in the study, holds that the French would not seek technical cooperation until their own force is further advanced and more nearly equal to the British force, i. e. around the mid 1970's). Coordination of the two national forces is the most likely first step, although the term "coordination" could be applied to anything from general staff talks to actual joint targeting. However,

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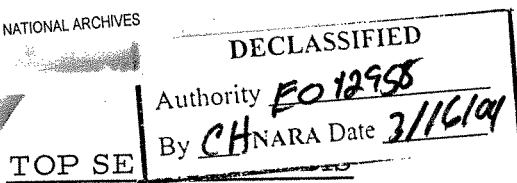
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- 18 -

limitations are placed on this approach by the fact that British nuclear forces are currently committed by NATO, whereas the French force is not. Moreover, the UK deterrent currently serves in a counterforce role, whereas the French force has so far been envisaged in only a counter-city strategy. At minimum, a change in strategy would appear necessary by one force or the other.

The study correctly indicates that a U.S. decision to assist the French nuclear effort in the context of encouraging Anglo-French nuclear collaboration would represent a choice for an augmented European nuclear role. An Anglo-French force which coordinated its targeting with that of the U.S. and SACEUR would be one way of bringing all allied strategic forces into one framework. The possibility of independent European action would be preserved. Eventually, such a policy could lead to some kind of European nuclear deterrent arrangement, although the implications of such a development--both political and strategic--are not treated adequately. Adoption of such a policy could be based on a long term view of U.S. -European relations, including some reduction of the U.S. military involvement in Europe. It would require a more careful analysis than this study provides of the role of independent European nuclear capabilities in overall deterrence in the context of the U.S. -Soviet strategic relationship after SALT. Nevertheless, the objective of some kind of expanded European nuclear role would represent the most persuasive rationale for US assistance to the French nuclear force.

TOP SECRET/NODIS



- 19 -

A decision to assist the French nuclear effort in the context of promoting or encouraging Anglo-French nuclear collaboration would need to be weighed in the light of several constraints, already noted above.

-- Depending on the scale of assistance, it could be challenged by the Soviets and complicate SALT.

-- Congressional consent would probably be required, especially if a new formal agreement were necessary to permit the British to release our nuclear weapons data to the French. However, it might be possible to persuade the Congress by arguing that we wish now to treat the French on the same basis as the British, and to encourage greater European efforts in their own defense and security.

-- There could be difficulties in relation to the LTBT, depending again upon the kind of assistance contemplated.

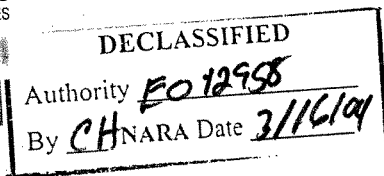
-- Some might see in such an action a change in our policy against nuclear proliferation. On the other hand, it could be argued that by moving toward a European deterrent, we would be working to reduce the number of totally independent nuclear capabilities in the world.

OPTIONS:

Although admitting that the issues have not been adequately explored, the Report suggests the following attitudes we might adopt toward Anglo-French nuclear cooperation:

1. Withhold judgment until the issue becomes real and its form clearer, but indicate now our general view that any such arrangement should be properly related to NATO.

TOP SECRET/NODIS



TOP SECRET/NODIS

- 20 -

2. Say we would support British-French cooperation if properly related to NATO.

3. Encourage the British and French to cooperate in nuclear matters regardless of the ultimate relationship to NATO.

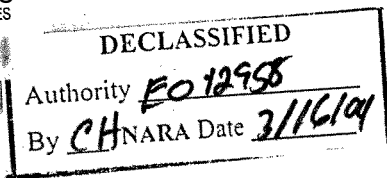
4. Seek to discourage Anglo-French nuclear cooperation if the French fail to alter their attitudes toward NATO and toward closer West European political cooperation.

(These options do not include all the possibilities which should be considered. For example, we might state publicly that we would support Anglo-French nuclear cooperation in the framework of some kind of West European defense identity that included a mechanism to allow non-nuclear states to consult with France and the UK on nuclear matters. Or, we might wish to say nothing at all at this time.)

COMMENT:

A pole of nuclear power may begin to develop in Western Europe in the 1970's, based on French and British nuclear technology. The British now have four operational Polaris-type nuclear submarines; the French should have three similar submarines by 1975, and plan two more, plus a small force of land-based missiles, by the end of the decade. The French have made clear that they will continue to give priority to their nuclear deterrent, and Pompidou has decided to proceed with construction of an operational hydrogen bomb, to be deployed within five years. If Britain achieves entry into the Common Market, as now appears likely, some kind

TOP SECRET/NODIS

TOP SECRET/NODIS

- 21 -

of Anglo-French nuclear cooperation may begin to be talked about this year. At minimum, this could lead to coordination of UK and French nuclear forces, i. e. a West European nuclear agreement, which the Soviets would have to reckon with. This would mean an augmented European role in overall Western deterrence.

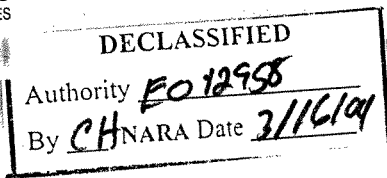
A small European force would obviously not supplant US nuclear protection, but it could supplement it if coordinated with US strategic forces. If the US decided to assist the growth of Anglo-French nuclear forces, <sup>EUROPEAN</sup> nuclear strength could become even more formidable. But any such decision would depend on many political and strategic factors. Especially important would be the nature of the Soviet-American strategic relationship, and our view of the priorities between our European and Soviet interests.

NSSM 100, as it now stands, does not thoroughly explore questions related to the development of West European nuclear forces in the 1970's. Since this goes to the heart of key aspects of our interests, a broader study will be needed. Among its deficiencies, NSSM 100 in its present form:

-- does not adequately examine how we might use military policies toward France to advance broader US objectives in Europe; and what those objectives should be into the 70's;

-- does not sufficiently examine in strategic terms how, or to what degree, the UK and French nuclear forces could contribute to overall Western deterrence in a SALT, or a no-SALT world;

TOP SECRET/NODIS



- 22 -

SECRET/NODIS

- does not adequately examine the probable forms of Anglo-French cooperation and our interests with respect to them;
- does not adequately relate questions of our nuclear relations with France to decisions we will face on renewal, modification, or non-renewal of our nuclear agreements with the UK beginning in 1974;
- does not adequately discuss the implications of continued development of UK and French nuclear forces for Germany and other non-nuclear European states, nor what role they might play with regard to these forces;
- omits discussion of possible long-term political effects of some kind of West European nuclear arrangement on East-West relations;
- does not deal in any precise manner with the nature of choices we may have to make as between our Soviet policy and our European military relationships;
- is not satisfactory in its legal analysis of what we can and cannot do in initiating new kinds of nuclear cooperation with France in terms of the Test Ban Treaty, the Atomic Energy Act, and Congressional constraints.

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