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B.07554

MR POWELL

c Sir Robert Armstrong

Visit of President Mitterrand: Thursday 16 October

The attached defensive brief on our dialogue with France on certain nuclear weapons matters has been revised in the light of up-to-date advice from the Ambassador in Paris.

2. I am sending copies of this minute and the brief (though not the attachments) to David Goodall (FCO) and David Nicholls (MoD).

CLG Mallaby

C L G Mallaby

15 October 1986

ANGLO-FRENCH NUCLEAR WEAPONS DIALOGUE

Our Objective

1. If Mitterrand unexpectedly raises the subject, to say, in general and cautious terms, that the Anglo-French dialogue on certain nuclear weapons matters should continue to develop.

Arguments for use if the matter is raised

2. (a) United Kingdom and France share common interests as European nuclear powers.

(b) Our exchanges on aspects of this subject have continued since you and I gave an impetus to them in 1981.

(c) Right that the dialogue should continue to develop.

Background

A 3. As agreed by the Prime Minister (Sir Robert Armstrong's submission of 9 July attached at Flag A), the Secretary of State for Defence raised this subject with M. Giraud, his French opposite number, on 15 September. In a useful discussion the two Ministers agreed that there were two areas on which they might build on past exchanges: general politico/military and strategic matters on the one hand and technical matters on the other. Mr Younger followed up the meeting with a letter in which he spelled out in more detail what we had in mind
B (Flag B).

4. Officials on both sides are now looking at possible agendas for future discussions and considering what lines of communication should be used. The latter may be something of a problem for the French, since a number of parts of the French Government have a hand in policy advice in this field.

SECRET Covering TOP SECRET

5. Our Embassy understand that M. Giraud has not informed President Mitterrand of his contacts with Mr Younger. In view of the sensitivities of "cohabitation", it is best for us to leave M. Giraud or M. Chirac to inform the President.

6. We do not expect the President to raise the subject on 16 October and we suggest that the Prime Minister should not do so. But, given the recent publicity for the idea of United Kingdom/French co-operation on nuclear weapons, it is not inconceivable that M. Mitterrand, with whom the Prime Minister discussed this subject on 10 September 1981, will mention it now. The line suggested above for that eventuality is designed both to accord with our present policy and to avoid revealing the Younger/Giraud contacts.

7. M. Chirac was insistent that his remarks on this subject to the Prime Minister on 26 April should be regarded as private.

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SECRET Covering Top SECRET

6. The necessary understanding that M. Girard has not informed President Mitterrand of his contacts with Mr. Younger. In view of the sensitivity of "Operation", it is best for us to leave M. Girard or M. Chirac to inform the President.

5. We do not expect the President to raise the subject on 13 October and we suggest that the Prime Minister should not do so. But, given the recent publicity for the idea of United Kingdom/France co-operation on nuclear weapons, it is inconceivable that M. Mitterrand, with whom the Prime Minister discussed this subject on 12 September 1981, will mention it now. The line suggested above for that eventuality is designed both to accord with our present policy and to avoid revealing the Younger/Girard contacts.

7. M. Chirac was insistent that his meeting on this subject to the Prime Minister on 12 April should be reported as follows.

cc PC
B/S/P



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B.07553

*overlook
on.*

~~MR POWELL~~

c Sir Robert Armstrong

Visit of President Mitterrand: Thursday 16 October

I attach a short defensive brief, in case the question of the Anglo-French dialogue on nuclear weapons is unexpectedly raised by the French President with the Prime Minister on 16 October.

2. I am sending copies of this minute and the brief (though not the attachments) to David Goodall (FCO) and David Nicholls (MoD).

C L G Mallaby

C L G Mallaby

15 October 1986

ANGLO-FRENCH NUCLEAR WEAPONS DIALOGUE

Our Objective

1. If Mitterrand unexpectedly raises the subject, to express hope that Anglo-French dialogue on certain nuclear weapons matters will develop in coming months.

Arguments

2. (a) United Kingdom and France share common interests as European nuclear powers.

(b) Welcome discussion between our two Defence Ministers last month on developing the British-French dialogue on certain nuclear weapons matters.

(c) Hope that dialogue will grow accordingly in coming months.

Background

A 3. As agreed by the Prime Minister (Sir Robert Armstrong's submission of 9 July attached at Flag A), the Secretary of State for Defence raised this subject with M. Giraud, his French opposite number, on 15 September. In a useful discussion the two Ministers agreed that there were two areas on which they might build on past exchanges: general politico/military and strategic matters on the one hand and technical matters on the other. Mr Younger followed up the meeting with a letter in which he spelled out in more detail what we had in mind (Flag B).

B 4. Officials on both sides are now looking at possible agendas for future discussions and considering what lines of communication should be used. The latter may be something of a problem for the French, since a number of parts of the French Government have a hand in policy advice in this field.

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5. Our Embassy are arranging to brief President Mitterrand's staff about Mr Younger's contacts with M. Giraud. In view of the sensitivities of "cohabitation" this will be done with especial care. Meanwhile, we believe that the President is not aware of the recent exchanges. We accordingly do not expect him to raise the subject on 16 October and we suggest that the Prime Minister should not do so (though it may be a suitable subject for the Anglo-French Summit next month).

6. M. Chirac was insistent that his remarks on this subject to the Prime Minister on 26 April should be regarded as private.

DEPARTMENT/SERIES <i>PREM 19</i> PIECE/ITEM <i>1762</i> (one piece/item number)	Date and sign
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