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COPY NO 1 OF 5

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Prime Minister

MR POWELL

CDP

cc Sir Robert Armstrong

19/xi

Anglo-French Summit:
Nuclear Weapons Dialogue

I attach a brief for the Prime Minister on the subject of the Anglo-French dialogue on nuclear weapons. It is designed for use with both President Mitterrand and M. Chirac, although it will be noted that the Prime Minister is recommended to draw on one point (c.) only if the President indicates awareness of the meeting in September between the Secretary of State for Defence and the French Defence Minister.

2. I am sending copies of this minute and the brief (without attachment) to Mr Goodall, FCO and Mr Nicholls, MOD.

C L G Mallaby

C L G MALLABY

18 November 1986

Atts.



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ANGLO-FRENCH NUCLEAR WEAPONS DIALOGUE

Our Objective

1. To express support for the developing Anglo-French dialogue on certain nuclear weapons matters.
2. To stress that, following Camp David, the British Trident programme is unaffected by Reykjavik.

Arguments to Use

- a. United Kingdom and France share common interests as European nuclear powers.
 - b. Right that the present dialogue should continue to develop.
 - c. Discussion between Defence Ministers in September was a useful step. Glad that they are seeking ways to carry dialogue forward.
- (Note: To be used with President Mitterrand only if he indicates awareness of September meeting between Defence Ministers.)



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d. The outcome of Reykjavik has not in any way affected
British plans to modernise the UK deterrent with Trident;
President Reagan confirmed at Camp David US support for this
programme.

e. (If pressed.) Trident programme well down the road: any
change now would entail considerably more expense and unacceptable
delays. But other areas in which fruitful Anglo-French exchange
is possible.



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BACKGROUND

The Secretary of State for Defence raised the question of a possible dialogue on certain nuclear weapons matters with his French counterpart, M. Giraud, on 15 September. The 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 subsequently wrote to M. Giraud (copy attached), setting out detailed proposals for discussion. Although officials have been discussing possible agendas, M. Giraud has not yet replied but he recently told our Ambassador that he was keen to press ahead with discussions and looked forward to reverting to the subject during the Anglo-French summit.

2. The question of the lines of communication to be used to discuss this issue may be a problem for the French, since a number of parts of the French Government have a hand in this field. M. Chirac was made aware of the discussion between the two Defence Ministers shortly afterwards. We now understand that President Mitterrand too has been informed, in general terms. It is not certain that he knows of the Younger/Giraud meeting. In view of the sensitivities of "cohabitation" it would be sensible for substantive exchanges to continue to be between Defence Ministers.

3. During his lunch with the Prime Minister on 16 October, M. Mitterrand raised the general question of possible collaboration between Britain



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and France on the next generation of nuclear weapons. The Prime Minister said that the phasing of British and French strategic programmes might not make this a practicable proposition, and that the advantages in range and sophistication that Trident would confer would last well into the next century. But she would be ready to consider the scope for possible cooperation in some areas.

4. M. Giraud also raised with the Defence Secretary last week the possibility of collaboration on the next generation of submarine launched ballistic missiles, as an alternative to Trident. Mr Younger will make clear to M. Giraud on 21 November that there is no alternative to Trident (noting that President Reagan confirmed his full support for the programme at Camp David).