

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

~~TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE/EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY~~

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT'S FILES

FROM: HENRY A. KISSINGER

SUBJECT: Meeting with Prime Minister Heath, Henry A. Kissinger
and Sir Burke Trend, Thursday, February 1, 1973,
4:00 p.m. to 4:45 p.m., The Oval Office

The President and the Prime Minister discussed the issue of the modernization of the British nuclear submarine deterrent.

The Prime Minister referred to the three options which Britain had: one, hardening of the nose cones. This was not enough to be credible. Two, a Poseiden missile with MIRVs on the British submarine. And three, Poseiden missile with British warheads on it, a system called Super-Antelope. From the British point of view, Antelope was not enough because of the lack of range. There had to be an interchange of views at a high technical level. Britain must decide whether its deterrent could be continued under the present arrangements or whether it needed a new weapon. In the past, the United States had taken the view that an independent British deterrent was in the United States' interest. The French seemed ignorant of the real implications of the question. Debre might leave after the election and turn to nuclear matters himself. It was hard to know how to proceed with the French.

President Nixon emphasized that he was sympathetic with the idea of cooperation with the British. This presented problems with the Congress and also with the Soviets, but it had never made sense to him not to have this kind of cooperation with our closest allies. There was a question how the French fit into it. We had to have some fresh thinking about NATO, its structure and its role. In the new strategic situation, massive retaliation was not a viable strategy anymore. Therefore, a separate British nuclear deterrent was important.

The President mentioned that in Phase II of SALT, the Soviets would put a lot of emphasis on the question of forward-based systems. We would have to have the direct participation of the British in our own studies. The same was true of the forthcoming MBFR negotiations.

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E.O. 12958, as amended, Sect 3.5

NLN 02-54/3 per ltr. 4/14/2010

By JMR NARA Date 5/4/10
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