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NLF MR Case No 06-06
Document No #9

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MEMORANDUM

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

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ACTION
January 27, 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR SECRETARY KISSINGER

FROM: A. Denis Clift *ADC*

SUBJECT: WILSON VISIT -- US-UK Defense Cooperation

The memorandum for your signature to the President at Tab I would forward background information and talking points for his meetings with Prime Minister Wilson on the following subjects:

- Super Antelope - UK Polaris Improvement
- US-UK Nuclear Consultations
- Mildenhall Agreement on Consultations regarding French
- Diego Garcia

It is our understanding that Wilson will wish to confirm the Mildenhall Agreement in his talks with the President (State memorandum at Tab II). The President, in turn, has the opportunity to seek U.K. confirmation of the February 1974 US-UK understanding on Diego Garcia.

This memorandum supplements the overall talking paper for the Wilson visit, forwarded on January 25.

RECOMMENDATION

That you sign the memorandum for the President at Tab I.

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Authority	MR Appeal NLF 06-06 #9
By	SO NARA, Date 10/13/09

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MEMORANDUM

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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

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INFORMATION

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E.O. 13526 (as amended) SEC 3.3

MPO 06-06 #10

DOE Ltr 9/27/07. Date 5/5/09. OSD Ltr 8/25/11

By dal NARA Date 12/14/11

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: Henry A. Kissinger

SUBJECT: WILSON VISIT - - US-UK Defense Cooperation

In the field of US-UK defense cooperation, and in particular nuclear weapons cooperation, we have several understandings with Great Britain involving: the UK Polaris improvement program, US-UK consultation on the use of nuclear weapons, US-UK consultations on nuclear contacts with the French, and an understanding on U. S. use of Diego Garcia.

You and Prime Minister Wilson should touch briefly on these issues to confirm the satisfaction of both sides with the existing arrangements, and to gain reaffirmation from the Wilson Government of the private understanding regarding Diego Garcia.

Background

Polaris Super Antelope. For cost reasons, the British under former Prime Minister Heath took the decision at the end of 1973 to proceed with improvements to their Polaris system rather than switching to the Poseidon system.

Super Antelope is the complex warhead and penetration aids system being developed by the British for their Polaris SLBMs. It involves two specially hardened Polaris RVs and a package of penetration aids (20 replica decoys), designed to look like many incoming RVs to enemy ABM radars. The stated objective of Super Antelope is to assure British penetration of the Moscow ABM complex in an extreme "go it alone" scenario.

The U. S. role in Super Antelope is limited to provision of test support and analysis (at the Nevada Test Site and Eastern Test Range) and to modifying the shipboard weapon system and the rest of the Polaris missile to accept the new British-built front end.

U. S. technical experts who participated in the joint US-UK design review found the British designs to be quite complex and cost estimates overly ambitious. For this reason we have been concerned that a U. S. decision

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to support the British in Super Antelope not appear to be an endorsement of the British decision or of their estimates, lest we be implicated in the almost inevitable problems that will arise. Of particular concern are the logistics problems which would result from British deployment of a unique missile system (in contrast to the current situation where the commonality of U.S. and British SLBMs permits them to depend on the U.S. for logistics support.)

Thus, when the U.S. responded to Heath's January 1974 request for U.S. assistance in the full development of Super Antelope, the President's message noted that "innovative aspects of the project may pose problems," in order to put the onus for success or failure clearly on the British. However, we are continuing to assist the UK on Super Antelope.

US-UK Nuclear Consultation. On January 9, 1975, you wrote Prime Minister Wilson (copy of letter at Tab A) to confirm that the Memorandum of Understandings on consultations between our two Governments ~~with regard to consultation~~ on the use of nuclear weapons remains fully in effect.

The memorandum provides generally for consultations with the British before any U.S. use of nuclear weapons, and specifically for advance consultations before nuclear weapons are used by U.S. forces operating from U.K. bases or territorial waters.

Mildenhall Agreement. On August 3, 1969, President Nixon and Prime Minister Wilson discussed the possibility of nuclear weapons cooperation with France in a meeting at Mildenhall, England. The resulting agreement has two parts:

-- First, that the United States and Great Britain will keep each other fully informed of any contacts with the French on nuclear defense cooperation.

-- Second, and less firmly, that we will harmonize any contacts with the French on this subject so that due regard is given to Alliance cohesion, NATO institutions (such as the Nuclear Planning Group) and the hope that France will return in due course to full cooperation in NATO.

During Prime Minister Wilson's visit here, the British wish to reaffirm this understanding, particularly with respect to the undertaking to keep each other informed. (After doing so, we will work out channels to inform the British of some of our post-Martinique contacts with France.)



Diego Garcia. The official position taken by the Wilson Government on U.S. use of Diego Garcia is that the UK Government has agreed to proposals made by the United States for a relatively modest expansion of the facilities on the Island of Diego Garcia which the U.S. enjoys jointly with the U.K. under an existing agreement. U.S. use of the facilities other than for routine purposes will be a matter for joint decision by the two governments.

In February 1974, President Nixon and Prime Minister Heath exchanged letters (copies of correspondence at Tab B) in which the British Prime Minister said that he would give his personal and sympathetic consideration to any proposal which the President might make to use the Diego Garcia facilities in an unusual situation, and he said that he would ensure that a very rapid response would be given. President Nixon stated his agreement with this understanding and gave his assurance that should such a need arise, he would consult with the Prime Minister at the earliest possible stage.

This private understanding has not yet been reaffirmed with the Wilson Government. Your meeting with the Prime Minister presents a good opportunity to reach agreement on reaffirmation of the Diego Garcia understanding.

TALKING POINTS

Polaris Improvement

1. The British nuclear deterrent makes an improvement contribution to the security of the West.
2. I am pleased that the UK Defense Review has led to the decision to maintain and improve your nuclear deterrent forces.
3. We are pleased to continue to provide Polaris - improvement assistance to you under the Super Antelope program.

US-UK Nuclear Consultations

1. I welcomed your letter of December 16 proposing that we confirm that the US-UK Memorandum of Understandings regarding Consultations on Nuclear Weapons.
2. I was pleased to send you my reply of January 9 confirming that we regard the memorandum as remaining fully in effect.



Mildenhall Agreement

1. In connection with the close cooperation between our countries on the entire range of nuclear issues, I think it would be valuable to reaffirm at this meeting our mutual intention to be guided by the Mildenhall Agreement in any contacts we have with the French on nuclear cooperation.
2. The essential point of this agreement is that we will each keep the other fully informed of any discussions with the French bearing on nuclear defense questions. In the course of this, we will naturally seek to harmonize our approaches to take account of our mutual interest in NATO and Atlantic cohesion.
3. I believe an oral understanding between us on this point should suffice. If an exchange of letters should be needed, that can be handled at a lower level.
4. As to substance, the French are interested in information of a technical character on Soviet ABM defenses, and missile guidance and reliability. We are reviewing these fields and will determine later how we might meet French interest.

Diego Garcia

1. I appreciate the continuing cooperation of your Government on Diego Garcia.
2. I will shortly be making a Presidential Determination -- required by the Congress -- that will permit the Department of Defense to reprogram some \$18 million in funds, permitting us to proceed with the initial improvements at Diego Garcia.
3. In February 1974, our predecessors, by exchange of letters, reached an agreement regarding U. S. use of the base facilities; i. e.,
 - the British Prime Minister would give personal and sympathetic consideration to any proposal which the United States might make to use the base facilities in an unusual situation and would ensure a very rapid response to such a request;

-- the U.S. President gave the assurance that should such a need arise, he would plan on consulting with the Prime Minister in a positive spirit at the earliest possible stage.

4. I suggest that we reaffirm this understanding in an exchange of letters.

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

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January 9, 1975

Dear Mr. Prime Minister:

Thank you for your letter of December 16, 1974 concerning the Memorandum of Understandings between our two Governments with regard to consultation on the use of nuclear weapons. As you have noted, these Understandings were last confirmed by an exchange of letters between Prime Minister Heath and President Nixon on April 7, 1971 and May 4, 1971, respectively.

In order to eliminate a possible ambiguity in the text of the Memorandum, I agree to your proposal that paragraph three of the Memorandum be amended as follows:

"It should be noted that the agreement for joint decision by the President and the Prime Minister covers those United States Forces which would operate from land bases in the United Kingdom or in United Kingdom territorial waters [redacted] It follows therefore that other United States forces (i. e., those not operating from land bases in the United Kingdom or in United Kingdom territorial waters [redacted] would be covered only by the more general understandings referred to in paragraph 2 above."



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E.O. 13526 (as amended) SEC 2.3

100-06-06-#11
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By date: NARA Date 12/14/11

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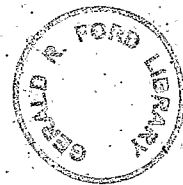
I am enclosing the amended version of the Memorandum.
I am pleased to confirm that the United States Govern-
ment will regard the Memorandum of Understandings
as remaining fully in effect.

Sincerely,

Gerald R. Ford

The Right Honorable
Harold Wilson
Prime Minister
London

Enclosure

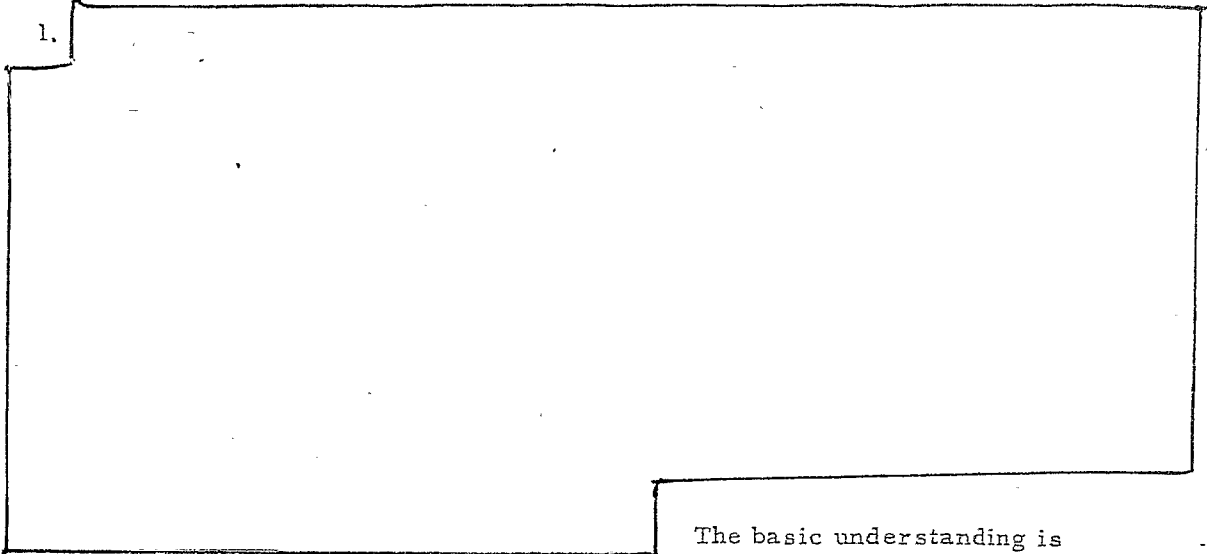


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UNDERSTANDINGS WITH THE BRITISH ON THE USE OF
BRITISH BASES AND NUCLEAR WEAPONS

1.



The basic understanding is

contained in the communique of 9 January 1952, covering the Truman-Churchill talks:

"Under arrangements made for the common defence, the United States has the use of certain bases in the United Kingdom. We re-affirm the understanding that the use of these bases in an emergency would be a matter for joint decision by His Majesty's Government and the United States Government in the light of circumstances prevailing at the time."

Procedures for carrying out this basic understanding were agreed upon in the Murphy-Dean Agreement of 7 June 1958, which was approved by the President and the Prime Minister. The covering document, the Report to the President and the Prime Minister, repeats almost literally the language of the Truman-Churchill communique:

"2. The basic understanding between the United Kingdom and United States Governments, regarding the use of bases in the United Kingdom by United States forces, provides that such use in an emergency shall be a matter for joint decision by the two Governments in the light of the circumstances at the time."

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By dal NARA Dec 12/14/11

2. There is a second, more general understanding with the British that we will consult with them before using nuclear weapons anywhere, if possible. The basic understanding on this point is contained in a memorandum of conversation of a meeting between the President and Eden on 9 March 1953. Eden had asked for an assurance of consultation by the President with the Prime Minister prior to US use of any nuclear weapon:

"He (the President) said that the United States would, of course, in the event of increased tension or the threat of war, take every possible step to consult with Britain and our other allies."

The President re-affirmed this understanding when he wrote to the Prime Minister on 27 October 1960, in connection with the Holy Loch berthing:

"With reference to the launching of missiles from US Polaris submarines, I give you the following assurance, which of course is not intended to be used publicly. In the event of an emergency, such as increased tension or the threat of war, the US will take every possible step to consult with Britain and other allies. This re-affirms the assurance I gave Foreign Secretary Eden on 9 March 1953."



This assurance is to be taken as applying with respect to fleet ballistic missile submarines (Poseidon equipped) in the same manner and to the same extent as with respect to Polaris submarines.

3. It should be noted that the agreement for joint decision by the President and the Prime Minister covers those United States forces which would operate from land bases in the United Kingdom or in United Kingdom territorial waters [redacted] It follows therefore that other United States forces (i. e., those not operating from land bases in the United Kingdom or in United Kingdom territorial waters [redacted] would be covered only by the more general understanding referred to in paragraph 2 above.

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