

**April 27, 1971**

**Letter from Henry A. Kissinger to John S. Foster Jr.,  
Memos and Letters on Offers to French of Military  
Cooperation**

**Citation:**

"Letter from Henry A. Kissinger to John S. Foster Jr., Memos and Letters on Offers to French of Military Cooperation", April 27, 1971, Wilson Center Digital Archive, Nixon Presidential Library, National Security Council Institutional Files (NSCIF), box 222, NSDM 103 [2 of 2]. Obtained and contributed by William Burr and included in NPIHP Research Update #2. <https://wilson-center.drivingcreative.com/document/112250>

**Summary:**

Memorandum and letters confirming that the French have been informed of the United States' offers of military assistance with their nuclear program.

**Original Language:**

English

**Contents:**

Original Scan

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## NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

TOP SECRET/SENSITIVEACTION

April 27, 1971

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. KISSINGER

FROM:

Helmut Sonnenfeldt *HS*

SUBJECT:

Status Report: Military Cooperation with France,  
NSDM 103 and 104

John Foster has written to M. Blancard, French Ministerial Delegate for Armament, on April 20, conveying our decision to assist the French in the areas of missile reliability, quality control, propulsion, and missile testing. Foster plans to follow up with a discussion in Paris when he goes over to attend the meeting of the US-French Cooperative R & D Steering Committee on May 12 (Tab B).

On the other two issues, the State cable which you cleared went out last week, instructing Embassy Paris to inform the French of our redefinition of advanced computers as applied to French assurances regarding end use. As for nuclear safety, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense John Morse has written to his contact in the French Atomic Energy Commissariat, signaling that we are ready to reopen discussions in this area. The French may now initiate a formal request to the US government for nuclear safety discussions. If they do not, we shall take the initiative and propose such discussions to France.

Thus, the French have been informed of all three Presidential decisions in the appropriate channels. We have no reports as yet on the French reaction.

On related follow-up questions, the USC is working actively at coordinating contingency press guidance, should these issues become public. Draft statements of what we should say to the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy are also in preparation. We expect both these items to be forwarded to the White House by the end of this week.

I have drafted a brief reply to Packard, asking that you be kept up to date (Tab A).

## RECOMMENDATION

That you sign the acknowledgment to Packard at Tab A.

Clearance: Wayne Smith *WMS*

Concurrence:

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REF ID: A71111

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NSC 27940

THE DEPUTY SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20301

23 APR 1971

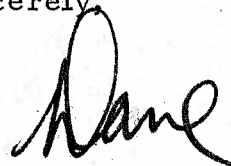
Dr. Henry A. Kissinger  
Assistant to the President for  
National Security Affairs  
The White House  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Henry:

A meeting of the U.S.-French Cooperative R&D Steering Committee is to be held in Paris on 12 May 1971. The senior U.S. representative will be Dr. John S. Foster, Jr., Director of Defense Research and Engineering, and the senior French official is expected to be M. Blancard, Delegate Minister for Armament. In pursuit of the part of NSDM 103 (Military Cooperation with France) relating to missile assistance, Dr. Foster proposes to discuss that subject during the visit. The discussion will be in accordance with the 20 April letter to M. Blancard, copy attached. This letter was coordinated at staff level with representatives of the State Department and NSC staff prior to dispatch.

In the event of any change from the above plan I will advise you.

Sincerely,



Attachment

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20 APR 1971

M. Jean Blancard  
Delegate Minister for Armament  
14 Rue Saint Dominique  
Paris 7, France

Dear Monsieur Blancard:

You will recall our several discussions relative to the United States providing technical assistance to French ballistic missile programs. I am pleased to inform you that President Nixon has approved such cooperation in principle and has authorized the Department of Defense to work out the details and to proceed.

I believe we can have useful discussions in the majority of the areas you have mentioned, particularly those in which you have expressed the strongest interest -- such as missile reliability and quality control, missile propulsion, and missile testing.

I am sure you will understand that there will be limitations we must observe. These will principally constrain the extent of our assistance in the areas of guidance, accuracy and nuclear hardening. As I understand the nature of your requests and problems, however, these limitations will not affect the majority of the issues you wish to discuss. In fact, I believe you will find the United States position forthcoming and based upon a desire to be of positive assistance.

As you know, we currently plan to meet the second week in May, in Paris, for a continuation of our bilateral talks. I suggest we make an opportunity then to discuss the matter further. As follow-on, we could send a team to France to answer initial questions and work out methods and procedures for implementing future cooperation. Before this, however, it may be best to schedule additional discussions with a member of my staff, to outline the initial areas and subjects to be covered, thereby permitting us to select a team suitable for the purpose. Perhaps you could give this some thought and we can settle the details when we meet.

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We intend to hold closely knowledge of our exchanges on this subject;  
I assume you will continue to accord it similar treatment.

Sincerely,

John S. Foster, Jr.

John S. Foster, Jr.

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