

for example, the statement appeared to have been made that we could not afford any successor system which the Americans might develop; yet any Anglo-French alternative would need to be highly sophisticated and would be bound to be at least as expensive. To his knowledge no calculations or costings had been attempted. Reference had also been made to the possibility of a limited discussion on delivery systems, in the hope of avoiding the more delicate area of warheads; this was almost certainly an impracticable separation of subjects.

3. Finally, SIR CHARLES ELWORTHY said that it appeared from the Minutes of the Ministerial meeting that instructions would be (and perhaps already had been) given to our Ambassador in Washington to make unofficial enquiries with the Americans of their reaction to our opening discussions with the French. In his view any such discussions could well precipitate a complete shut down of American co-operation. His anxiety was in no way relieved by the fact that the minutes were classified only Secret and did not have any code word or other instructions as to special handling.

4. In discussion the following points were made:

a. Delivery systems and warheads connected with the deterrent were a highly technical subject, in any discussion of which it was essential to have proper scientific and military advice; this applied particularly to the sophistication of the delivery systems and warheads now being developed to frustrate ABM Systems.

b. The Chief of the Naval Staff had already minuted the Secretary of State on more than one occasion pointing out the dangers of "hazarding quantifiable advantages" of our present systems and co-operation with the Americans, against the tenuous possibilities of alternatives which might never come to realisation.

c. The United States retains the capability to cut off our Polaris effectiveness at short notice and there were only too many lobbies in America, including such people as Senator Mansfield, who would need no encouragement to stop co-operation with Britain. Once interrupted, return of this co-operation might take a long time. If there were to be any discussion with the United States, Mr Kissinger was the most reliable contact to use.

d. It was agreed that the Chief of the Defence Staff should send a minute to the Secretary of State stating plainly for his information and for the record their grave reservations and apprehension about the course which Ministers appeared to be taking.

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e. It was further agreed that the Chief of the Defence Staff should have a private discussion with the Secretary of the Cabinet to endeavour to discover more clearly the feelings of Ministers on the subject, whether they themselves had any reservations about the course proposed and what action was now to be taken or indeed had already been taken. It was also agreed that the Chief of the Defence Staff would discuss the matter with Mr Macklen (DCA(PN)), provided the latter was in a position to do so.

5. Summing up, SIR CHARLES ELWORTHY said that they would wish to record their grave apprehensions of the dire consequences likely to result from any move towards Anglo-French nuclear co-operation and to discussion of the possibility with the United States without full and proper consideration of the likely consequences at every stage. He would endeavour to have an early meeting with the Secretary of the Cabinet to discover more in the matter and would arrange for a suitable minute to be prepared for the Secretary of State as they had discussed.

6. The Committee:

Agreed the remarks of the Chief of the Defence Staff in his summing up.

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Admiral Sir Peter Hill-Norton, CNS
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