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3rd March 1987

Dear André

When we met in November, you responded to my earlier suggestions for developing our exchanges on nuclear matters with some ideas of your own which I undertook to consider. Some additional proposals have been aired in the recent meetings between General Saulnier and Admiral Fieldhouse. I thought it might be useful in advance of, and by way of preparation for, our meeting next week if I were to comment on these and indicate how I now saw the agenda for our future discussions in this important area developing.

As a result of our meetings last Autumn, I believe we have identified a wide range of topics in which we have both expressed an interest and which we might now usefully explore. For convenience I list these in the Annex to this letter, together with a number of suggestions for a suitable forum in which they might be

Monsieur Andre Giraud

TOP SECRET



discussed. At the same time, as you will recall, a number of subjects have come up which I have indicated we would not think it appropriate to pursue, either because of existing procurement programme arrangements, or because of, in our case at any rate, agreements with the United States on information sharing and technical subjects which constrain discussions with a third party. For example, it is clear that the timing and nature of the decisions which our two governments have taken in regard to our ballistic missile carrying submarine programme are such that collaboration on development or production of weapons systems in this area is not now a practical possibility. Nor would we feel able to embark on discussions of certain highly sensitive intelligence areas (eg specific target sets); on nuclear propulsion technology, including noise reduction; on net assessment of strategic weapons penetrativity; or on penetration technology. Moreover, for the time being at least I am not prepared to discuss operational aspects of our SSBN deployments.

I suggest that at our forthcoming meeting we should aim to agree the list of suitable topics and a mechanism for initiating more detailed discussions. The list is a long one and it will not be sensible or practicable to tackle it all at once. Moreover we may well find some areas of discussion more fruitful than others. I therefore envisage a phased approach, directed initially at identifying the more promising areas, with our advisers reporting



back to us at regular intervals. The precise modalities will need to be addressed at an early meeting of our senior officials.

I look forward very much to seeing you next week.

*Yours sincerely,
George Younger.*

George Younger

TOPICS TO EXPLORE

1. Intelligence Assessments eg on civil defence, anti-submarine warfare and the Soviet concept of ballistic missile defence. Exchanges on these matters might best be handled through normal bilateral intelligence links.
2. Survivability and Security of Sub-strategic Nuclear Weapons covering, for example new concepts for the protection of weapons in storage. It would be suitable for this to be pursued through defence staff channels.
3. Nuclear Weapon Concepts covering inter alia the general philosophy of targeting. Again it would be appropriate to pursue such matters through defence staff channels, though there might be occasions when they could be included on the agendas of bilateral Pol/Mil as well as Defence Staff talks.
4. Nuclear Weapon Effects and Testing Technology. Some bilateral discussions have already taken place on nuclear weapon effects. An exchange on weapon testing technology would represent a valuable extension in the technical area. This might include analysis and measurement techniques and information related to determining the location, magnitude and characteristics of nuclear



tests. On the UK side the Ministry of Defence Scientific Staff would lead.

5. Future Theatre Sub-strategic Nuclear Weapons covering the UK's future requirements and French development and procurement plans. The UK lead would be with the Defence Staff assisted by Scientific and Research Staffs.

6. Nuclear Safety, Security and Supporting Technologies building on existing exchanges. The Ministry of Defence Scientific Staff would lead for the UK.

7. Nuclear Accident Response covering, for example, organisational aspects of nuclear weapon accident response, technical aspects of monitoring and decontamination, and concepts for ensuring the security of weapons once deployed (ie countering the terrorist threat). The UK lead on these subjects would be with the Defence Staff, bringing in technical expertise as necessary.

