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SECURITY CLASSIFICATION APPEALS PANEL
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By [Signature], NARA, Date 11-14-03

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APPROVED BY:S/S-O:MR.EMMONS
PM:MR.SPIERS(SUBS)
EUR/BMI:MR.GOLDSTEIN(SUBS)

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SUBJ: NUCLEAR CONSULTATION WITH THE BRITISH

THE FOLLOWING LETTER FROM PRESIDENT NIXON SHOULD
BE TRANSMITTED URGENTLY TO PRIME MINISTER HEATH
PRIOR TO HIS DEPARTURE FOR THE U.S.:

DEAR MR. PRIME MINISTER:

YOUR LETTER OF NOVEMBER 9, 1970 PROPOSES THAT SIX
AMENDMENTS BE MADE TO THE MEMORANDUM SETTING FORTH
THE UNDERSTANDINGS BETWEEN OUR GOVERNMENTS WITH
REGARD TO CONSULTATION ON THE USE OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS IN
ORDER TO MAKE THESE UNDERSTANDINGS APPLICABLE ALSO TO
UNITED STATES ANTI-SUBMARINE WARFARE NUCLEAR WEAPONS
STORED AT [REDACTED]

AND ALSO TO CONSOLIDATE IN THIS MEMORANDUM
THE UNDERSTANDING CONCERNING THE STORAGE OF U.S.
NUCLEAR WEAPONS AT [REDACTED]

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I AM AGREEABLE TO THE AMENDMENTS AS PROPOSED AND SHALL CONSIDER THE UNDERSTANDINGS EXISTING BETWEEN OUR GOVERNMENTS WITH REGARD TO CONSULTATION ON THE USE OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS, AS SO AMENDED, TO REMAIN FULLY IN EFFECT. I AM ENCLOSING THE AMENDED VERSION OF THE MEMORANDUM.

SINCERELY,

RICHARD NIXON

THE RIGHT HONORABLE
EDWARD HEATH, M.B.E., M.P.
PRIME MINISTER
LONDON

ENCLOSURE: MEMORANDUM

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

1. OUR UNDERSTANDING ON THE USE OF BRITISH BASES IS THAT THE PRESIDENT AND PRIME MINISTER WILL REACH A JOINT DECISION BY SPEAKING PERSONALLY WITH EACH OTHER BEFORE CERTAIN FORCES EQUIPPED WITH U.S. NUCLEAR WEAPONS AND OPERATING FROM BASES IN THE UNITED KINGDOM [REDACTED] WILL USE NUCLEAR WEAPONS, NAMELY SAC, BRITISH STRIKE COMMAND (EXCLUDING AIRCRAFT OF SUCH COMMAND EQUIPPED WITH BRITISH NUCLEAR WEAPONS), FORCES IN THE UNITED KINGDOM WHICH ARE ASSIGNED OR EARMARKED FOR ASSIGNMENT TO A NATO COMMANDER, U.S. POLARIS SUBMARINES IN BRITISH TERRITORIAL WATERS AND U.S. FORCES [REDACTED] THE BASIC UNDERSTANDING IS CONTAINED IN THE COMMUNIQUE OF JANUARY 9, 1952, COVERING THE TRUMAN-CHURCHILL TALKS:

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"UNDER ARRANGEMENTS MADE FOR THE COMMON DEFENCE, THE UNITED STATES HAS THE USE OF CERTAIN BASES IN THE UNITED KINGDOM. WE REAFFIRM 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

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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 JUNE 7, 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."

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 MARCH 9, 1953. EDEN HAD ASKED FOR AN ASSURANCE OF CONSULTATION BY THE PRESIDENT WITH THE PRIME MINISTER PRIOR TO U.S. 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 REAFFIRMED THIS UNDERSTANDING WHEN HE WROTE TO THE PRIME MINISTER ON OCTOBER 27, 1960, IN CONNECTION WITH THE HOLY LOCK BERTHING:

"WITH REFERENCE TO THE LAUNCHING OF MISSILES FROM U.S. 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 U.S. WILL TAKE EVERY POSSIBLE STEP TO CONSULT

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WITH BRITAIN AND OTHER ALLIES. THIS REAFFIRMS THE ASSURANCE I GAVE FOREIGN SECRETARY EDEN ON MARCH 9, 1953."

3. IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT THE AGREEMENT FOR JOINT DECISION BY THE PRESIDENT AND THE PRIME MINISTER DOES NOT EXTEND TO ALL U.S. FORCES UNDER SACEUR AND SACLANT BUT ONLY COVERS THOSE FORCES BASED IN THE UNITED KINGDOM WHICH ARE ASSIGNED OR EARMARKED FOR ASSIGNMENT TO A NATO COMMANDER. THE OTHER U.S. NUCLEAR FORCES UNDER SACEUR AND SACLANT WOULD ONLY BE COVERED BY THE MORE GENERAL UNDERSTANDING TO CONSULT IF TIME PERMITS. THE AGREEMENT FOR JOINT DECISION DOES, HOWEVER, EXTEND TO ALL U.S. FORCES OPERATING [REDACTED] WHETHER OR NOT THEY ARE UNDER SACEUR OR SACLANT.

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4. THERE IS ALSO AN UNDERSTANDING IN RESPECT OF U.S. NUCLEAR WEAPONS, DESTINED FOR RELEASE IN EMERGENCY TO MARITIME AIRCRAFT OF [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] WHICH WAS SET OUT IN AN EXCHANGE OF LETTERS BETWEEN PRIME MINISTER WILSON AND PRESIDENT JOHNSON IN 1965. IN REPLY TO MR. WILSON'S LETTER OF AUGUST 5, 1965, PRESIDENT JOHNSON CONFIRMED IN A LETTER DATED 11 NOVEMBER 1965 THAT "THE NUCLEAR WEAPONS INTENDED FOR USE BY NETHERLANDS ASW FORCES WOULD NOT BE RELEASED FOR USE IN ADVANCE OF THE JOINT DECISION ON RELEASE FOR USE TO UNITED STATES AND BRITISH FORCES OF UNITED STATES ASW NUCLEAR WEAPONS ALSO STORED IN THE UNITED KINGDOM UNDER THE SAME NATO PLAN." ROGERS

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