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Authority *949506*
By *TJ* NARA Date *2/4/00*

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE
UNDER SECRETARY FOR POLITICAL AFFAIRS

Downgraded to: ~~SECRET~~
EO 11652: XGDS *(1) (S)*
Authorized By: *[Signature]*
August 4, 1978

January 9, 1961

Recategorized as
Category "A"
September 21, 1966
/s/ Warren A. Henderson

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TO: The Secretary
THROUGH: S/S
FROM: M. - Mr. Merchant *[Signature]*

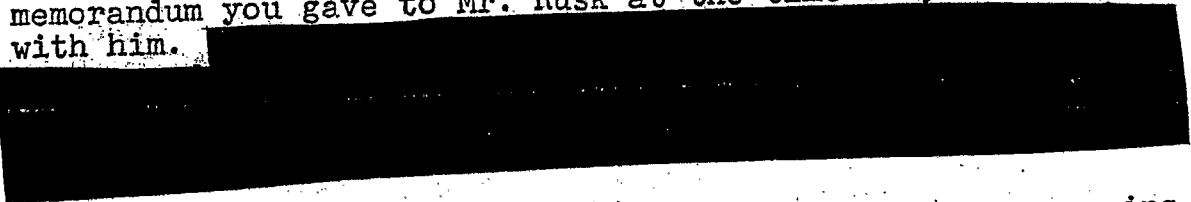
In accordance with your instructions, I called in Ambassador Caccia this afternoon to inform him of the content of Mr. Rusk's letter to you dated January 7 relating to understandings with the British on the use of nuclear weapons and British bases.

I first read to him my memo of my conversation with Sir Frederick Hoyer Millar in Paris on December 15 on this subject. I went on to say that we have been anticipatory in our action in that you had discussed with Mr. Rusk this general subject on the basis of a memorandum factually setting forth our understanding of our engagements in this area with the British.

I then told the Ambassador that Mr. Rusk had informed you that he had discussed this with Senator Kennedy and that the Senator "considers that the understandings in question would continue pending a prompt exchange on the matter immediately after Inauguration." I concluded that "this does not reflect any present misgivings on the Senator's part about the understandings but rather his agreement that it would be well for the Prime Minister and the new President to give it their attention after Inauguration."

I then handed to Sir Harold an original and a carbon of the attached memorandum which is factually identical with the memorandum you gave to Mr. Rusk at the time of your discussion with him.

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Sir Harold took down verbatim the statements concerning Senator Kennedy's response which are given in quotation marks above. He also said, after reading the memorandum cataloguing

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our agreements and understandings, that this conformed to his own understanding with the unimportant historical point that the Truman-Churchill communique of January 9, 1952 reaffirmed in more precise terms an agreement originally reached between President Truman and Prime Minister Attlee in 1950.

The Ambassador thanked me for the communication with the above information.

Attachment:
Copy of memo given to Ambassador Caccia
by Mr. Merchant - 1/9/61.

M:LTM:sp

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Wes Warren A. Henderson

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 will use nuclear weapons, namely SAC, British Bomber Command, and SACEUR- assigned forces in the UK. (U.S. Polaris submarines in British territorial waters should now be added to this list.) The basic understanding is contained in the communique of January 9, 1952 covering the Truman-Churchill talks:

"Under arrangements made for the common defense, 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 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."

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The President reaffirmed this understanding when he wrote to the Prime Minister on October 27, 1960, in connection with the Holy Loch 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 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 SACEUR-assigned forces (strike squadrons) based in the UK. The other U.S. nuclear forces under SACEUR and SACLANT would only be covered by the more general understanding to consult if time permits.

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