Letter from Reginald Hibbert to Sir Michael Palliser on France's nuclear deterrent policy (Paris, 21 December 1981)

Caption: On 21 December 1981, Reginald Hibbert, the United Kingdom's Ambassador to France, sends a letter to Sir Michael Palliser, Permanent Secretary of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), in response to a question by the FCO on France's relative immunity to the anti-nuclear weapons protests which have spread throughout Europe and Britain. During the Euromissiles crisis, the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND), a British organisation, holds massive demonstrations calling for unilateral nuclear disarmament by the United Kingdom, international nuclear disarmament and tighter international arms regulation. The British Ambassador analyses the background of France's nuclear deterrent policy and explains the fundamental principles on which this policy is based.

Source: The National Archives of the UK (TNA). Foreign Office, Western Department and Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Western European Department: Registered Files (R and WR Series). WESTERN EUROPEAN UNION. British policy towards the Western European Union. 01/01/1981-31/12/1981, FCO 33/5232 (Former Reference Dep: WRU 22/1).

Copyright: (c) The National Archives of the United Kingdom

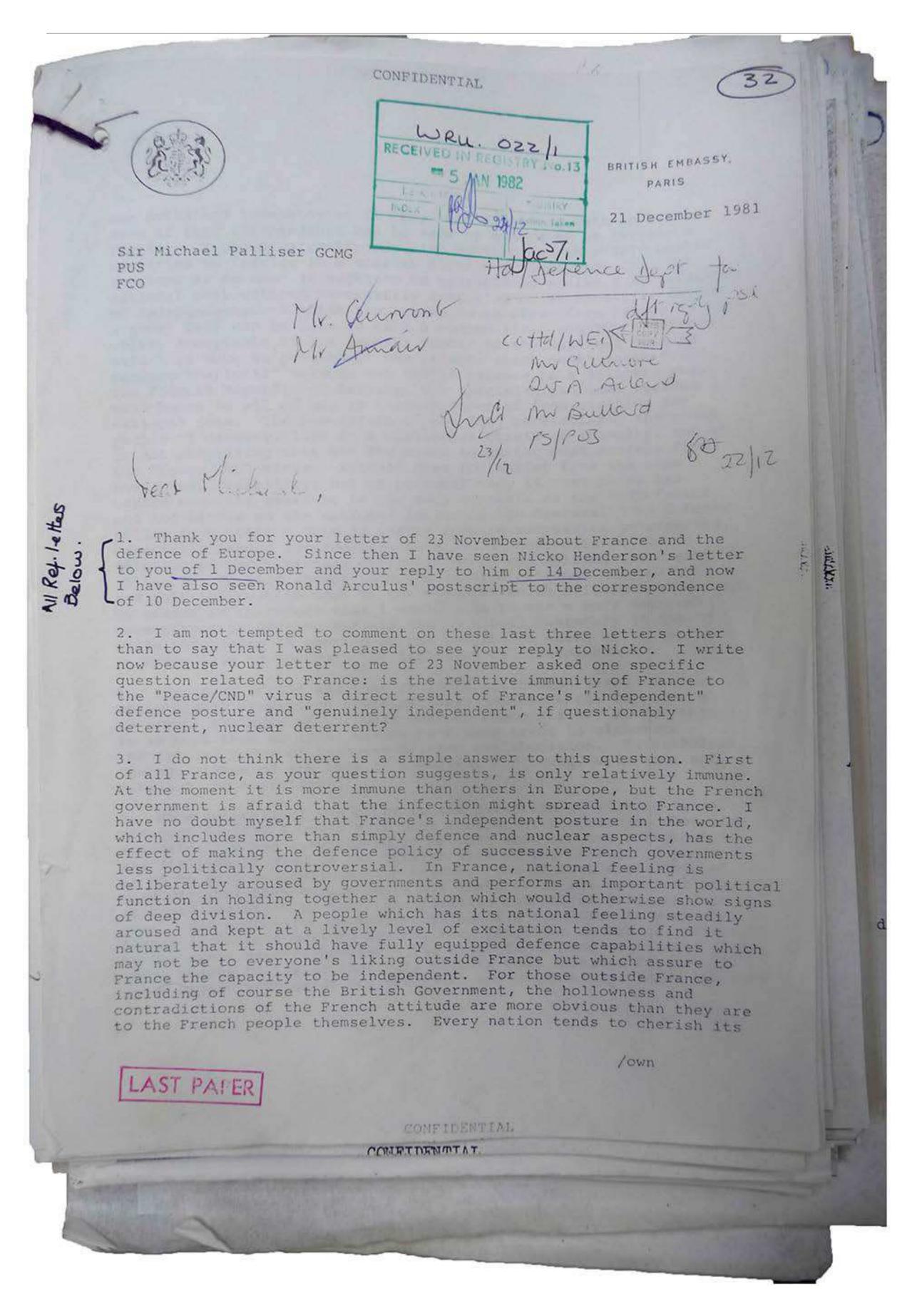
HRI.

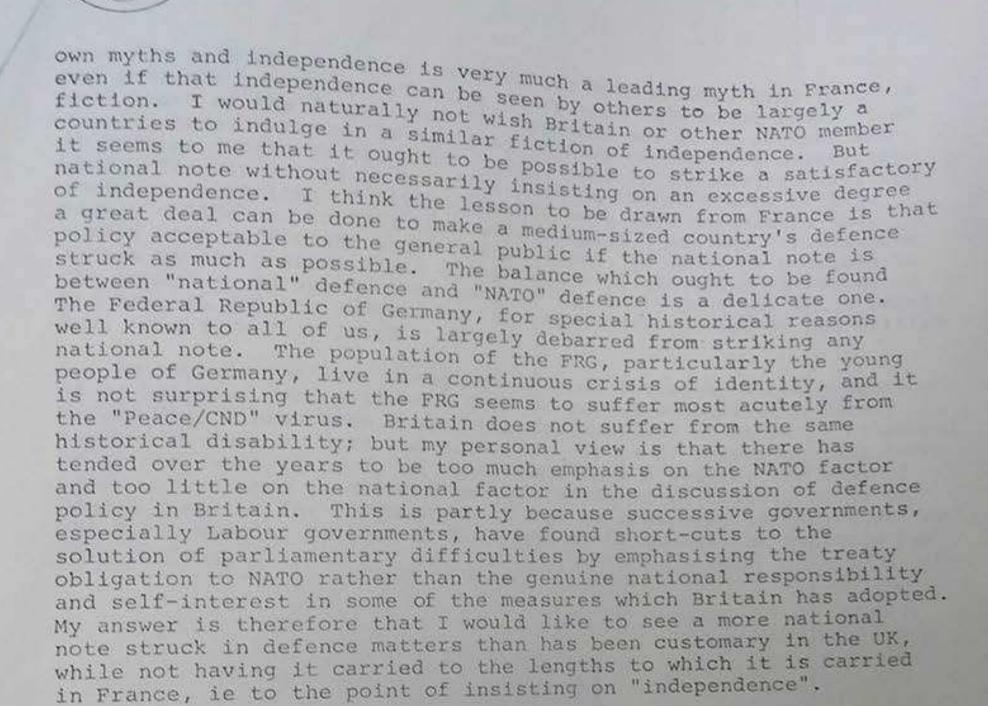
http://www.cvce.eu/obj/letter_from_reginald_hibbert_to_sir_michael_palliser_on_f rance_s_nuclear_deterrent_policy_paris_21_december_1981-en-38efc832-4a7e-48ca-a07f-ofd1f36e95d9.html



Last updated: 13/10/2016







- 4. Perhaps I should add that it looks as though French opinion, while highly sensitised about national independence, is prepared to accept the idea of European defence cooperation. So far this is no more than an idea: no-one in France tries to elaborate is no more than an idea: no-one in France tries to elaborate theoretical forms of European defence collaboration. Nevertheless, the acceptance of the idea is important and could, with time and patience, be exploited.
- 5. More generally I was happy to see paragraph 12 of your letter, although in fact I would have been content with something even less specific. It has long seemed to me that what is most important is the attitude of mind on the British side of the Channel if progress the attitude of mind on the British side of the channel if progress to be made in dealings with France. The desirable attitude of is to be made in dealings with France. The desirable attitude of mind was admirably expressed by Mrs Thatcher in her speech at the mind was admirably expressed by france in her speech at the colloquy organised by the Franco/British Council at Bordeaux last colloquy organised by the Franco/British Council at Bordeaux last colloquy organised by the Franco for a readiness to work with year. Her expression on that occasion of a readiness to work with France in defence matters has not been forgotten in France, although France in defence matters has not been forgotten in France, although that never been elaborated. The attitude of mind required is one it has never been elaborated. The attitude of mind required is one it has never been elaborated only NATO is good (because France will which ceases to insist that only NATO is good (because France will which ceases to insist that only NATO and which always holds the door never rejoin NATO as an organisation) and which always holds the door

/open

CONFIDENTIAL

10

