

Report on a visit to SNIAS headquarters at Châtillon and on an agreed quantitative measure of control of production at the SNIAS factory at Bourges (Paris, 11 September 1975)


Caption: On 11 September 1975, the Head of Division II of the Agency for the Control of Armaments (ACA) sends a document to the Director containing comments on the report on the mission to SNIAS (Société nationale industrielle aérospatiale) in Châtillon and to the SNIAS factory in Bourges on 21 and 22 May 1975. The Head of Division notes that the request to see the Pluton missile was refused, even though it had not been included in the French response to the ACA questionnaire. In general the mission went well, despite the fact that the establishments had been given less than 24 hours warning that the visits would be taking place. This affected the preparation of production figures and so should be avoided in future since a successful inspection relies on both national members and heads of missions.

Source: Agency for the control of Armaments. Division II. Report on a visit to SNIAS Headquarters at Chatillon and on an agreed quantitative measure of control of production at the SNIAS factory at Bourges(France) on 21 and 22 May 1975 . Paris: 11.09.1975. Copy N°1 of 3. pp. [s.p]1, 8-9. Archives nationales de Luxembourg (ANLux). <http://anlux.lu/>. Western European Union Archives. Armament Bodies. ACA. Agency for the Control of Armaments. Year: 1974 - 01/01/1974- 31/12/1975. File ACA-186. Volume 1/1.

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W. E. U.

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DIVISION II

W.E.U. SECRET

REPORT ON A VISIT TO SNIAS HEADQUARTERS
AT CHATILLON AND ON AN AGREED QUANTITA-
TIVE MEASURE OF CONTROL OF PRODUCTION
AT THE SNIAS FACTORY AT BOURGES (FRANCE)
ON 21 AND 22 MAY 1975

Copy No. 1 of 3

SECRET

LEITZ
3050 Rapid 2
Made in Germany

11 September 1975

cf. Programme II/75/8

From: Head of Division II

To: the Director

Copy: Head of Division I

COMMENTS ON THE REPORT ON THE MISSION TO
SNIAS AT CHATILLON AND BOURGES ON 21/22 MAY 1975

1. Pluton. "The request to see Pluton was politely refused and was not pressed" - to quote the Report at page 8. In all the circumstances I accept the action as correct. At the time of the inspection the 1975 French response to the Questionnaire had not been received, although it was understood unofficially that Pluton would figure in it. In the event, when the reply was received in June no mention of Pluton was made in Table IV (production) although detailed figures were given in Tables IB, II, IIA and III. Until this discrepancy in reporting is corrected an inspection of the production of this missile is hardly feasible and it appears prudent to allow the French authorities time to coordinate their replies to the different parts of the Questionnaire more fully.

3/11/9
2. I understand General Philibert has already been in touch with the appropriate authorities to this end and no doubt the situation will be clarified in the coming months. However in view of the importance of the Pluton programme, when it is adequately reported consideration should be given to a further mission to Bourges, the date depending on the details of Table IV.

3. General Comments. The mission proceeded well in general and particularly well considering that the establishments apparently had less than 24 hours warning. As a result the only production figures proffered at Bourges were those of M. Soler the SIAR (i.e. French Government inspection) representative. I shall therefore reemphasize, to all taking part in missions, the need to avoid embarrassments of this nature and the special responsibilities for positive checks this need places on both national members and heads of missions.

4. I am circulating these comments for inclusion in the front cover of the Report.

ABK
Am.

COMMENTS ON PRODUCTION FIGURES

There was a discrepancy of 68 between the replies to the Agency Questionnaire for the years 1972 to 1974 and the actual delivery figures for the Exocet (MM 38) missile.

ACA reply 180 - Production 248 (38 % error over three years).

PHYSICAL CHECK

A visit was made to the Exocet assembly lines and the storage area. A request to see Pluton was politely refused and the request was not pressed.

The production rate of 12 to 14 per month for Exocet seemed to be reasonable with the existing facilities. A maximum of 20 per month may be possible.

CONCLUSION

Despite the short notice, every effort was made to meet the Agency Team's requirements.

The difference of 300 regarding Milan production covers the total export for 1974 and appears to be a single omission. As this figure represents only 5 % of the total production over three years, no further action is recommended.

The difference of 68 regarding Exocet production was due to the non-reporting of the initial production in 1972 (quantity 24) followed by errors in 1973 and 1974. Whilst this is not a large figure, it represents some five months of production or 38 % of the total production for the years 1972 to 1974.

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It will be necessary to study closely, future production figures reported, in order to establish whether there are any further trends towards inaccurate reporting and to take appropriate action.

One day's notice to such a large missile factory and headquarters is obviously not enough and it is suggested that 7 to 10 days is the minimum required to ensure that early notice is given to such a factory in future.

It is recommended that the next inspection should be carried out in 1978 and that the time available be increased from one day at Bourges to one and a half days. Half a day at Chatillon is considered to be adequate.

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