

U.S. Offers NATO New

Arms Plan Joint Development, Production Urged By McNamara

By Mohsin Ali
Reuters

PARIS, May 30—United States Defense Secretary Robert S. McNamara proposed today the joint development and production of weapons by members of NATO.

As McNamara announced the plan for a NATO common market in defense production, French sources indicated that France will not take part in the major NATO military exercise scheduled for the fall of 1966.

French NATO sources said the theme of the exercise did not conform with the strategic doctrine of NATO under its charter, but added that certain French personnel whose work is closely linked with NATO will take part.

Speaking on the eve of a two-day meeting of the pact's defense ministers, McNamara said they would discuss the "movement toward what in effect would be a NATO common market for defense products."

McNamara did not elaborate further, however. He said he had suggested the same idea to British Defense Minister Denis Healey.

The Secretary, who arrived in Paris today from London, also told Healey he would like the United States to buy defense material in Britain which would be equal in cost and quality to material produced in America.

In recent months there has been strong British criticism of alleged American pressure in selling American-made military material within the 15-nation alliance.

French sources said that France's reservations concerning the 1966 exercise

sprang from the 1964 maneuvers.

France protested at the time that the theme of the exercise was not in keeping with the strategic principles of the alliance and indicated it would not take part in future exercises if they continued to be at variance with alliance doctrine, they added.

Many top officials of other NATO delegations were surprised by the disclosure.

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NATO Joint Arms Production Urged

Earlier this week, French squadrons took part in NATO's biggest annual flying exercise, "Royal Flash" in Western Europe.

The NATO exercise has in the past, among other things, basically tested NATO strategic and tactical doctrines.

Current British and United States thinking, supported by several other members of the Atlantic alliance, is that NATO should have a forward strategy with flexible nuclear response.

France, forging ahead with her own nuclear strike force, continues to stand by NATO's original strategy concept of "massive retaliation."

France withdrew from the Southeast Asia Treaty Organi-

zation exercise "Seahorse" held earlier this month in the South China Sea. The withdrawal was attributed to disagreement with American policy over Viet-Nam. France also sent an observer to the SEATO ministerial conference in London this month in place of Foreign Minister Maurice Couve de Murville.

Last week, France announced she was withdrawing a number of her military officials from SEATO headquarters in Bangkok.