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U.S. Would Match

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Soviet Troop Cuts

New Policy Offered by McNamara

Pullback of Units In East Germany Cited as Requisite

By Chalmers M. Roberts
Washington Post Staff Writer

The United States would withdraw some of its forces from Europe if the Soviet Union reduced its troops in East Germany, Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara said yesterday.

The Secretary said so in reply to a question put to him by Sen. Robert F. Kennedy (D-N.Y.) while testifying on NATO and the Atlantic Alliance before the Jackson subcommittee on national security.

McNamara did not spell out his views, which on the public record represent a major new position for the United States at a moment when there is increasing European interest in a possible East-West accommodation.

Kennedy Question

But it is understood his view is that any such cuts by the Soviet Union should be matched by the Western allies. He did not mean, it is understood, Soviet cuts would be matched simply by trimming American forces alone.

McNamara was asked by Kennedy whether the United States was "pursuing" with the Russians the idea of a mutual reduction of forces in the rival NATO and Warsaw Pact organizations. The Secretary replied that that was a political question for Secretary of State Dean Rusk.

Then Kennedy asked whether "we would be willing to lessen our presence" if the Soviets withdraw part of the 20 divisions McNamara said they maintain in East Germany. McNamara replied that he was certain the Western deployment was related to that of the Eastern bloc. Then he added:

"The direct answer to your question is yes."

McNamara earlier had told

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Sen. Henry M. Jackson (D-Wash.) that he would favor cutting American forces only in a reciprocal move with the Communists.

In his prepared statement the Secretary had said that despite Vietnam, the balance of payments and other problems, "it should be clearly understood that the U.S. has no plans to diminish its combat capability in Europe or to remove major units from the Seventh Army in the present circumstances."

State Department officials reacted to the McNamara statement with high caution. They stressed that they would want to be certain there would be no "one horse for one rabbit" move, as one put it. And they raised the long-time objection to such military mutual thinning out that the Soviet forces would be moving back only a few hundred miles compared to several thousand for the United States.

Thus once again McNamara appeared to be the prime Administration mover for breaking the East-West deadlock whereas Rusk and his associates are far more cautious.

'Signs of Movement'

McNamara agreed with President Johnson and Rusk that NATO's continued military strength was an essential "backdrop of security" for any new negotiations. But he also declared that there are "clear signs of movement" and "new circumstances" of "political fluidity" in Europe. NATO, he added, thus must not be an obstacle to change.

McNamara did not mention it but there have been rumors that Moscow might cut its forces in East Germany, perhaps in the aftermath of French President de Gaulle's current visit to the Soviet Union.

Sen. Jacob Juvits (R-N.Y.) asked McNamara whether he would say flatly that in no case would there be any West German control of nuclear weapons. The Secretary said he would indeed make that statement, adding that Germany had never asked for any such delegation of nuclear weapons from the United States.

Later McNamara said he

had tried to be categorical in his reply to Javits to make certain that all NATO allies understood the American position so that they would not become "potential victims of Russian propaganda." He said the Soviets had used as a "red herring" the theme that the U.S. wants to supply the Germans with such weapons.

Other Reasons Seen

McNamara said that he did not think this was the real reason Moscow so far has refused to join in a treaty to ban proliferation of nuclear weapons despite the Kremlin contention to that effect. Rather, he said, the Soviets use this theme "to sow seeds of dissension."

Here he was referring to the proposed multi-lateral nuclear force (MLF) in which the Germans would have a role and to which the Soviets strongly object. McNamara said this idea was "still open."

But in reply to a Kennedy question he hinted that the Germans and other allies might find an adequate substitute in the so-called McNamara Committee. This group is now working on a plan, to be ready in December, for joint allied planning and decision making on the use of nuclear weapons.

The committed, he said, was not developed as an MLF substitute "but whether they'll consider it makes a collective force unnecessary, I don't know."

Response to Eviction

McNamara also detailed the redisposition of American forces made necessary by de Gaulle's eviction notice. But he refused to read France out of the alliance, noting that de Gaulle has said France intends to remain a member though he is quitting NATO's integrated command structure.

"Briefly put," he said, the effect of de Gaulle's action "on the military posture of the alliance will be in no way disabling." He flatly denied that NATO had ever considered French soil vital as a fall-back position since "our military strategy is and remains the forward defense of Western Europe which means, in Central Europe, a defense at the frontier of Western Germany."

Once again he denied that troop cuts in Germany for use in Vietnam would be either permanent or in any way impair NATO's strength. He also tapped the witness table viggorously as he said he expects the Germans to meet fully the offset costs of American forces.

McNamara estimated that the United States is now spending about half its $54 to $55 billion defense budget for the joint defense of Europe and the United States. The balance of payments cost in Europe in fiscal years 1965-66-67 he put at $375 million a year with an anticipated drop in 1968 and 1969 to less than $200 million due chiefly to the off-set purchases of arms here by the Germans, British and Italians.

Dillon Warns Against Quibbling With France

In testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee yesterday, C. Douglas Dillon said that it would be "undignified and would serve no useful purpose" for the United States to "quibble" with France about her decision to ask U.S. forces to leave French soil.

Dillon, who served as U.S. Ambassador to France from 1953 to 57 and as Secretary of the Treasury from 1961 to 65, asked the Committee to remember that France was not withdrawing from the NATO Alliance even though it was rejecting participation in its military structure.

In response to questioning by Chairman J. William Fulbright (D-Ark.), Dillon expressed agreement with two ideas expressed by former presidential adviser McGeorge Bundy in testimony before the Committee on Monday. Dillon agreed with Bundy that the Multi-Lateral Force proposal was out-dated and added that he had never been "particularly enthusiastic about that concept."

Dillon also supported Bundy's statement that West Germany should declare that it will accept the present Oder-Neise boundary line with Poland as part of a European peace settlement. Dillon said German refusal to accept the current boundary was "not a very good bargaining point to save for the future."

The State Department yesterday affirmed its traditional position on the question of the Oder-Neise border.

"So far as I know," Department spokesman Robert J. McCloskey said, "our position remains as always stated, that delineation of the Western frontier of Poland should await a peace settlement."