

5/16/66

State's Overoccupation With deGaulle Felt Here

By Chalmers M. Roberts
Washington Post Staff Writer

In anticipation of a White House ceremony marking the thousandth anniversary of Christianity in Poland, the State Department sent over a presidential draft speech largely confined to plaudits for freedom of religion.

Walt Whitman Rostow, President Johnson's new foreign affairs aide, intercepted the draft and told the Chief Executive that some remarks on reconciling differences with Eastern Europe would be far more appropriate.

Rostow and Bill D. Moyers, the Presidential Press Secretary who is more and more involved in foreign affairs, then produced the May 3 speech given in the Rose Garden. It made the point that an integrated Atlantic alliance was the first necessity for an East-West reconciliation, in effect a reply to—but not an assault on—French President de Gaulle, who argues that his disengagement from the alliance is the better approach.

The incident is illustrative of a widespread feeling in Washington that the State Department is so consumed by anger at de Gaulle that it is spending far more time trying to counter his ploys than in looking at the longer-range problems he has forced to the surface.

Mr. Johnson himself is so consumed with the problem

News Analysis

of Vietnam that he has given only nominal attention to the problems of the alliance in general and of NATO in particular. White House officials may object to the word "nominal" but they offer no firm evidence to the contrary.

True, the President has asked former Secretary of State Dean Acheson to draft a policy paper. Acheson is spending parts of four days a week at State with a small staff but there is a high degree of skepticism in the Department that the product will be anything beyond a call to stand firm against what are considered de Gaulle's depredations and to continue current policies.

Acheson's report is said to include the problems of nuclear sharing, East-West trade and East-West relations in general, all in a look ahead for a decade or so. His report is expected sometime in June.

One long-term problem Acheson is considering is the technological gap between the United States and Western Europe. American officials tend to think the Europeans exaggerate this problem but they do not deny the widespread belief across the Atlantic that it exists and that de Gaulle has played upon it with great effect in his campaign to lead Europe out from

under what he calls the American "hegemony."

Except in the military and space fields, however, the gap is chiefly a business-industrial problem, and American officials find it hard to see what sort of Government program Acheson could devise.

The State Department's immediate concern—and the same is true at the Pentagon—relates to the logistic and cost problems de Gaulle has created by his withdrawal from the integrated features of NATO. Half a dozen working groups are now busy in Paris in hopes of coming up with firm proposals for the NATO Council meeting in Brussels beginning June 6.

The critical question, however, to many observers outside government is whether de Gaulle's actions will indeed force a new long-term American policy toward Europe, both West and East, or only short-term answers to the logistical problems.

Hence many inside and outside the Administration are intrigued by the addition to the State Department's Policy Planning Staff of Columbia University Prof. Zbigniew Brzezinski, who has called for major new initiatives by the United States. The question now is whether, once inside the Government apparatus, he can sell any such bold approaches as he has talked of while an independent outsider.