

15 NATO Countries Fix Aims

Brussels Session Attains Accord on East-West Policy

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BRUSSELS, June 7—The first day of the full 15-nation NATO conference today was marked by a measure of agreement on dealing with the Soviet and behind-the-scenes bargaining on how to keep French forces in Germany.

These were the two major developments:

- U.S. Secretary of State Dean Rusk and French Foreign Minister Maurice Couve de Murville showed an unaccustomed similarity of thought on how to deal with the problem of East-West relations.

Both agreed that the time is not ripe for an East-West conference on European security, and neither thought that the North Atlantic Treaty Organization as such would be the proper agency for promoting a more relaxed atmosphere between East and West.

- Belgium's Foreign Minister Pierre Harmel suggested a possible compromise formula for inter-Allied negotiations on the future role of the 73,000 French soldiers and airmen in West Germany. The formula was being refined in informal talks late tonight, with the prospect that the 15 foreign ministers would resume formal discussion of the problem Wednesday.

The ministers' evaluations of East-West prospects consumed most of the day's formal deliberations.

The Couve de Murville Rusk meeting of minds on a

See NATO, A23, Col. 1

NATO session with overtones of crisis attracts wide press coverage.

Page A22.

possible East-West security conference seems to have killed in advance the proposal for such a meeting which Danish Prime Minister Per Hækkerup was, and apparently still is, planning to put before the NATO ministers Wednesday.

Rusk took a highly skeptical view of the usefulness of holding any East-West conference now, and Couve de Murville said, "I agree with Mr. Rusk particularly on the dangers of a too hasty conference."

Worlds Apart Again

But they were worlds apart again when Rusk said flatly that the United States intends to be in on any European security settlement. Couve de Murville said that the process of "normalizing" relations with the East has to be begun "by the countries directly interested, that is to say the European countries."

They were together again, though not exactly on the same track, about the much touted idea of converting NATO's mission from preparing to stave off a possible Eastern attack by arms to staving it off by making a non-aggression pact with the potential adversary.

Rusk said the NATO Council could be a proper chamber for concerting Allied views on East-West relations, but he made it clear that any actual negotiations, which he did not suggest in any form, should be handled in some other way.

Couve de Murville declared that "reducing East-West tension is not the business of the North Atlantic Alliance and the Warsaw Pact, but of our different individual countries."

He felt the time might be ripe for closer relations between Eastern and Western countries because of the stirrings in the East, and the desire of the once satellite countries for emancipation from Russian tutelage which is bringing about "the disappearance of a Communist bloc." And above all, "Russian expansion has been stopped in so far as it constitutes a

threat."

Rusk Highly Cautious

But Rusk took a highly cautious view of the widespread European hopes of improving relations with the Soviet Union.

He said he did not think this is the end of an era in Kremlin policy, citing as evidence the 1961 Berlin crisis, the 1962 Cuban missile crisis and the current war in Vietnam with Soviet arms appearing in both North and South.

Couve also cited the Berlin and Cuban crises, but as proof that the efficacy of the nuclear deterrent has become a fundamental reality which has put an end to the danger NATO was created to counter. "What is dangerous today," he said, "is the status quo."

West Germany's Foreign Minister Gerhard Schroeder and Britain's Foreign Minister Michael Stewart echoed Rusk's views with various degrees of emphasis.

During his speech Rusk touched on a growing problem: The technological gap between the United States and its European Allies.

He spoke hopefully about new procedures for bringing some of the Allies in on research and development work in the military field but he gave no details.

The issue of French troops arose almost as soon as the 15 ministers convened this morning. Dutch Foreign Minister Joseph Luns formally presented — in effect, to the French — the decisions reached informally yesterday by the 14 other Allies.

Couve de Murville made no objections to the decisions on transferring various NATO military headquarters out of Paris. On the political headquarters, the NATO Council, Couve said France would be happy if it stayed in Paris,

but if the others wished to move it out, France would wish "good luck" to the country accepting it.

Couve formally rejected, however, the proposal of the 14 that a five-nation committee should negotiate with France on the future role of the French troops in Germany.

A Bit More Flexibility

He then restated, with a bit more flexibility than previously, the French standpoint:

That the political aspects would be dealt with in next week's bilateral Franco-German talks, and that therefore the troops' military role should be negotiated between the NATO commander, Gen. Lyman Lemnitzer, and the French Chief of Staff, Gen. Charles Ailleret.

An intense discussion followed, in which Rusk, Stewart, Schroeder and others took part, with all — including Couve de Murville — agreeing that the troops' role

involved both political and military considerations. The argument was over which should have priority.

At this point, just before the lunch recess, Harmel observed that all seemed to agree that it was a question of directing the NATO Council to identify the problems, and dispatching them to responsible negotiating groups.

Harmel agreed to attempt to make this formula more precise, and informal discussions went on throughout the

day among the various Allies on precisely how to frame it.

According to some sources, Harmel's basic idea would be to have the permanent NATO Council work out the basic political conditions, and then turn the military aspects over to Lemnitzer and Ailleret. The Council would then in turn approve the arrangements worked out by the generals.

In the maneuvering over the Harmel formula, it appeared once again — as it had yesterday in the decision

to delay transfer of the NATO Council — that the moderate-minded Allies seeking a workable compromise with France were eroding some of the hard positions brought here by the U.S. and West German delegations.

At the same time, it appeared to many that Couve de Murville was adopting a flexible stance. The prospects therefore appear favorable for a compromise to be adopted by the Fifteen Wednesday.