

France to Stay NATO Member

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PARIS, Dec. 15 — France today indicated for the first time that it will remain in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization after 1969—the year in which members will be free to withdraw from the 1949 treaty.

French Foreign Minister Maurice Couve de Murville told the 15-nation NATO Council: "The Alliance will continue after 1969, and we agree that it should, because it is an element for stability and peace. Therefore, political cooperation will continue among us."

France withdrew last spring from NATO's integrated military organization but has remained a member of the North Atlantic Alliance.

Couve de Murville also outlined today a French conception of the alliance's future—which seemed in conflict with recent American ideas. Political cooperation, the French Minister said, "Does not mean that we must define a common foreign policy. That is not possible. We did not emerge from military integration, which no longer corresponds to the world situation, in order to enter political integration."

Thus, Couve de Murville signaled French rejection of United States efforts to commit the current meeting of the NATO Council to a common document on improving East-West relations. It was unclear whether the United States would attempt to issue the document anyhow, with the signatures of other allies, or would drop the project.

Couve de Murville agreed with British Foreign Secretary George Brown, West German Foreign Minister Willy Brandt and other ministers that the task of relaxing tensions between East and West could not be done on a bloc-to-bloc basis, between NATO and the Communist Warsaw Pact. Brandt said after the meeting

methods are now required.

Harmel said that "the economic, moral and political cohesion of Europe, which is without a doubt greater than 20 years ago, should be expressed within the Alliance itself."

The Harmel proposal was generally approved by today's speakers, but there were differing interpretations as to its aim. United States sources took the view that the study would be confined to non-military aspects of the Alliance. European delegations believe the aim is to lay the groundwork for an autonomous European political-defense community, linked loosely with the United States in the Alliance. The Europeans think circumstances may now be more propitious for the so-called "dumb-bell" concept, with NATO as a bridge between the United States and a more independent, united Europe.

United States Secretary of State Dean Rusk devoted much of his 35-minute speech today to Vietnam, which he said was "a manageable problem" compared with others solved in the past.

Recalling Communist China's five atomic tests and efforts to develop a missile system, he reminded the European members that the North Atlantic Treaty covered aggression against the continental United States—and thus the treaty area extended almost to Hawaii. He said there were 375,000 U.S. troops now in Vietnam, and declared that U.S. manpower needs there could be served without withdrawing major combat units from Germany.

Rusk did not make any appeal for European assistance in Vietnam.

Rusk was also cautious on the subject of a treaty to bar the spread of nuclear weapons. Canada's Paul Martin and others had urged rapid conclusion of such a treaty, with Martin declaring that the Soviets were now more ready to sign it than ever.

Rusk, however, said that there had as yet been no agreement on common language, and noted that a treaty had to satisfy other nations besides the NATO and Warsaw Pact countries. These outside nations, he said, were reluctant. But it was indicated that the United States still expects the Soviet Union to sign a treaty permitting possible creation of a European nuclear force.

that the Council was generally agreed that detente with Eastern Europe could best be approached bilaterally.

France's clarification of its view on NATO's future came in a day of discussions in which European self-assertion seemed the predominant element. Much of today's discussion turned on a proposal by Belgian Foreign Minister Pierre Harmel, urging a study of how new circumstances affect the long-term objectives of the Alliance and what