

Paris Gained Points on Wording

Franco-Soviet Text Lacks Surprises

By Waverley Root

Washington Post Foreign Service

PARIS, June 30 — The joint Franco-Soviet declaration issued in Moscow today is almost exactly what was expected.

Its reference to Vietnam does not seem to have been stiffened by the bombings of oil depots close to Hanoi and Haiphong.

It does not prepare for any "reversal of alliances"—a French move from the western to the eastern camp—as French spokesmen said in advance it would not.

In wording and acceptance of broad political lines, the French perhaps achieved a slight edge, but in general both countries stand where they did before the De Gaulle visit to the Soviet Union. The Russians did not receive French support for calling the all-European security conference they have been talking about. The chief French objection is that it would be difficult to call it without letting in East Germany.

German Issue Skirted

The difficult question of Germany was almost entirely avoided. De Gaulle is already on record as favoring acceptance of the Oder-Neisse border, and is believed off the record to be strongly opposed to nuclear armament for Germany, but the Russians did not succeed in getting him to affirm

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either of these positions. As it is believed they wanted him to do.

As for the practical accords, accepted and projected, their real value will only become assessable later. The proof of the pudding will be in the eating.

After the usual polite introduction, the declaration gave first place to the situation of Europe, concerning which the primordial question for the two countries, it said, was "European security and the German question"—a compromise in phraseology, for the Russians like to talk about "European security" without mentioning any names, while the French prefer to utter the word "Germany" out loud. But there was no compromise on positions. About them, "the two parties exchanged their views"—in other words, both stood pat.

The French received other satisfactions in phrasing. "normalization" of East-West relations is their phrase for the breaking down of the two camps in Europe. The declaration spoke once of establishing "a normal situation in the whole continent," and again of the first objective in Europe being "normalization, and then the progressive development of re-

lations among all European countries, with respect for the independence of each and nonintervention in internal affairs." There were also three references to "all Europe"—De Gaulle's "Europe from the Atlantic to the Urals," though the Urals did not appear, and hardly could, after the general's visit to Siberia.

Wording Subtle

There was a subtlety of wording in "the two governments are in agreement in believing that the problems of Europe must be considered first in a European framework." This accepts De Gaulle's thesis that European problems have to be solved among Europeans—that is, without the United States—but the word "first" pays tribute to his feeling, expressed in his first statement in Moscow, that the solutions which Europeans find first should be of a kind which America can approve afterwards.

On Vietnam, the two countries noted that "the situation is becoming more and more preoccupying, because of the aggravation of the war"—possibly a faint echo of the Hanoi-Haiphong bombings—but they limited themselves to repeating their well known view that "the only possible way out is a settlement on the basis of the 1954 Geneva Accords,

excluding all foreign intervention."

The declaration's statement that "it is necessary for the powers which possess (atomic) arms to discuss means capable of assuring real disarmament in this domain" reflects de Gaulle's call for a five-power conference—the United States, the Soviet Union, France, Great Britain and Communist China—on this question.

As for the specific agreements, specificity is what they lack. The desire to increase economic changes was expressed—but so far it has not proved feasible even to implement the economic treaty of 1964. Technical and scientific cooperation is referred to at length in the declaration, and was the subject of two separate agreements signed by the two foreign ministers today which in principle, but in principle only, call for the launching of a French satellite by a Soviet rocket.

The mixed committee charged with furthering this project is to meet once a year, which does not sound very urgent. Somewhat puzzling is a reference in the declaration to "the results already obtained in cooperation between France and the USSR for the peaceful utilization of atomic energy"—something which has previously been played very close to the chest.