

NATO Talks Reveal Widening Gulf

Allies Feel America Is 'Stale'; U.S. Finds Europe 'Isolationist'

By Anatole Shub

Washington Post Foreign Service

PARIS, Dec. 17—The ministerial meeting of the North Atlantic Treaty Council just concluded will probably go down as the one in which everyone suddenly became conscious of the Atlantic Ocean.

U.S. Secretary of State Dean Rusk first focused attention on oceans when he declared, on arrival, that the Pacific represented the "western flank of the NATO area." When Vietnam-shy Europeans protested or sneered, Rusk refined his point somewhat. He was not saying that Vietnam was part of the NATO area—only that Europeans under the NATO treaty are as obligated to defend Califor-

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nia as Americans are committed to Bavaria.

While nobody expected an attack on California right away, the Secretary did be-

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lieve Europeans should bear the treaty in mind when considering that China was testing atomic bombs and refining missile systems. Some time in the 1970s, perhaps, all this might be very relevant—if anybody had any clear idea of what was actually going on in China right now, which nobody including Rusk, professed to have.

The "Pacific flank of the Atlantic" discussion, although it provoked more amusement than serious thought, appeared nevertheless to be symptomatic of the relations between Amer-

icans and Europeans today. Never before in the 17-year history of the Alliance has the Atlantic been, so clearly, the ocean that divides America from Europe.

Feel U.S. Lags

To United States officials, the Europeans seem caught up in "isolationism" because they fail to share Washington's views and hopes on Vietnam. To many Europeans, the U.S. Administration seems trapped and sapped—trapped in a hopeless peripheral war, and sapped by it of the energy, creativity and intellectual flexibility needed to approach the new realities on the old Continent.

Europeans here have been struck by how much energy Secretary Rusk and Defense Secretary McNamara devote-

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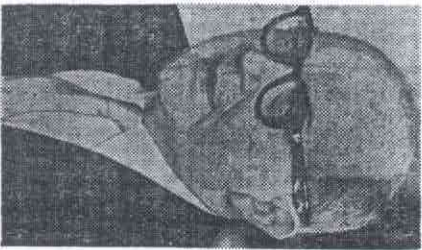
NATO Talks Show Wide Gulf

ed to reighting old arguments, repeating old formulas, and reminding the Allies of past Cold War crises.

As one European put it, "The bright young Kennedy team of 1961 with its new ideas, approaches and style has become the conservative old Establishment—and has as little to say as the Eisenhower-Dulles group to the problems of today and tomorrow."

There is a growing interest here in Sen. Robert Kennedy (D-N.Y.) as well as Michigan's Gov. George Romney and other Republicans, but the Johnson Administration, in practice, is being written off as incapable of anything fresh in the European field.

The hard fact is that nearly all the Europeans are now freely proclaiming and acting on doctrines considered heretical when French President de Gaulle first outlined them alone. The essence of de Gaulle's perception was that, with America tied up in Southeast Asia and the Soviet Union worried about Northeast Asia, the time had arrived for Eu-



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DEAN RUSK

... restates old arguments

Europeans to begin arranging their own future, ending the Cold War and moving toward a settlement on the old Continent.

While Secretary Rusk still considers "détente" a passing slogan rather than a reality, about the only Europeans who still agree with him publicly are Dutch Foreign Minister Joseph Luns and former German Foreign

Minister Gerhard Schroeder, now Defense Minister.

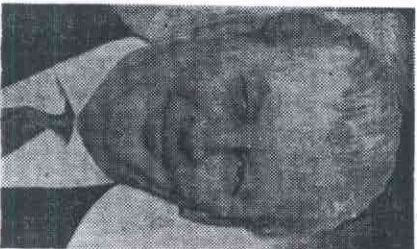
But the new "Grand Coalition" government to which Schroeder now belongs seems most intent of all the European powers today to seek "European" accommodations without waiting for "grand designs" from Washington. Foreign Minister Willy Brandt's meeting with Gen. de Gaulle yesterday was described as a success by both sides, and Chancellor Kurt-Georg Kiesinger will be here in four weeks. The Germans and French have already settled the old row over French troops in Germany and set up a joint nuclear research institute. Kiesinger will doubtless have more goodies in his valise next month.

Bonn's eagerness for rapprochement with France, striking as it is, pales by comparison with its desire to enter serious negotiations with the Soviet Union. What united Kiesinger, Brandt, Christian Democratic strongman Franz-Josef Strauss and Social Democratic strongman Herbert Wehner is the determination to scrap the old hollow formulas on German reunification and get down to hard political brass

tacks—to see, in other words, what kind of deal or deals can be struck with the Russians.

Although not so dramatic as in Bonn, there are signs of change in Britain as well—signs that Harold Wilson is wearying both of the Commonwealth and of the "special relation" with the United States which has turned out not so special after all. London has not "gone Gaullist," not yet at any rate. But Wilson has appeared increasingly to recognize that de Gaulle's price for British Common Market entry involves more than farm prices—and the betting now seems almost even that the British leader is preparing to pay that price.

A perceptive and informed French commentator, Andre Fontaine of Le Monde, observed this week that, with the disappearance of the "Soviet threat" to Western Europe which initially provoked the transoceanic alliance, there were now only two real possibilities: either a Soviet-American freeze of the European division, or the dissolution of both hostile blocs in a new



KIESINGER

... ready for a deal

European system. There is little doubt which of the two alternatives Europeans would choose. As for the Americans, they are not thinking about such a choice but rejecting the premise—by pretending that Europe is and feels as threatened by the Russia of Brezhnev and Kosygin as by the Russia of Stalin and Beria.