

SANITIZED COPY

1587

~~██████████~~
EXEMPT NLK-31-336
EXEMPT NLK-77-704
THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

France 8a

MEETING IN THE CABINET ROOM
FRIDAY, MAY 11, 1962 . . 4:30 PM

Present: The President, Ambassador Alphan
M. Malraux, M. Lebel, Mr. Bundy

After pleasantries, about M. Malraux's visit to the National
Gallery, the President asked M. Malraux if he would like to state
the general views of his government on major problems.

The President interjected that as he understood it, the French
thought that the British should choose between the Commonwealth
or the Common Market. A sharp choice here would make things
difficult for Prime Minister Macmillan, who had to contend with his
Labor opposition. The United States itself had urged that those
applying for membership in the Common Market should pay the full
entrance fee, but the question in his own mind was whether in fact

SANITIZED

E.O. 12356, Sec. 3.4

NLK-89-49

SDF NARA, Date 9/90

Sherrill Xerox copy dated 1/16/62

80



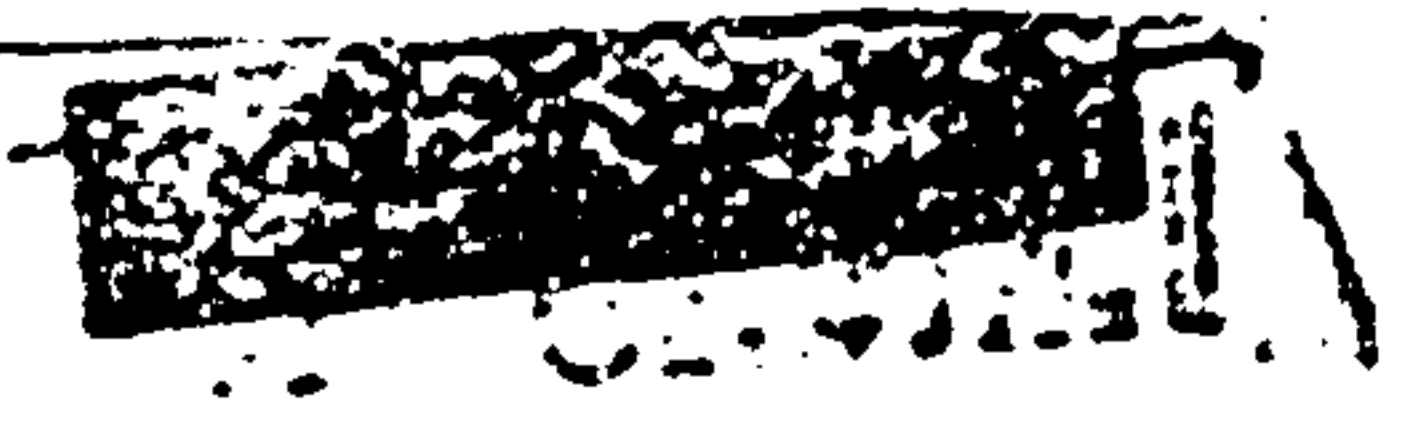
General de Gaulle did not fear and oppose British entry into the
Common Market.

[Large redacted area consisting of multiple horizontal dashed lines.]

The President said that one does deal in terms of desire
in these matters, and that this was exactly what troubled him.
The United States favored British entry into the Common Market
not as a matter of simple U. S. interest. Indeed British entry
would be against the economic interest of the United States and was
desirable only on the larger political ground of holding the Germans as
a part of Western Europe.

[Large redacted area consisting of multiple horizontal dashed lines.]

The President said



~~TOP SECRET~~

8a

that it was difficult to force a man to choose between an old wife and a new mistress, to which Alphand remarked that except for a short period one might keep both, while Malraux contented that to arrange one's affairs with both might involve boring troubles. The President repeated his view that the Common Market would be helpful in tying the British in, but said that perhaps in the French view this additional attraction was no longer needed -- perhaps the French believed that the Germans were already safely attached. He repeated again that if the United States could support the entry of the United Kingdom at a time when it was losing gold on the balance of payments, it was a fair question why the French should be so reluctant.

The President continued that our feeling was that General de Gaulle apparently preferred a Europe without Great Britain and independent of the United States -- a powerful force which France would speak for. This view brings France and the United States into conflict. We have felt that the defense of Europe was essential to the United States. A Europe beyond our influence -- yet counting on us -- in which we should have to bear the burden of defense without the power to affect events -- would not be desirable. General de Gaulle should make no mistake: Americans would be glad to get out of Europe. Just before the President took office, President Eisenhower had recommended to him

~~TOP SECRET~~

8a

TOP SECRET

a cut of 2/3rds in the number of U. S. divisions in Europe --
although of course the nuclear guarantee was to be maintained. The
President instead had built up American strength. He wondered
whether General de Gaulle's fundamental attitude was based on his
experience with Americans in World War II, and he repeated that
Americans would be happy to leave Europe if that was what the
Europeans wanted.

[A large rectangular area containing horizontal dashed lines, likely a redacted section or a placeholder for a table or list.]

TOP SECRET

~~SECRET~~

[A large rectangular area with horizontal dashed lines, intended for handwritten text.]

we did not fear that

The President interjected that such a third force would be neutralist.
instead,

We were concerned about whether there was to be a wholly
 separate, independent force unrelated to American responsibility
 and interest.

~~SECRET~~

[REDACTED]

80

[REDACTED]

The President said that we have no sense of grandeur, and no tradition of leadership among the nations. Our tradition is fundamentally isolationist. Yet since world War II, we have carried heavy burdens. In our international balance of payments we have lost \$12 billion, and the drain on our gold continues. We have engaged in a heavy military buildup, and we have supported development of the Common Market. When there was trouble in Berlin last year, the burden came on us. We have called up 160,000 men while France brought in two new divisions, and now France was reducing the period of military service. We find it difficult to understand the apparent determination of General de Gaulle to cut across our policies in Europe. If it is desired that we should cease to carry the load in Europe, nothing could be better from our point of view -- it has now cost us about \$1,300,000,000 to maintain our forces in Europe and the savings on these forces would just about meet our balance of payments deficit.

The President said that he and all of the leading members of his Administration were great admirers of de Gaulle -- and also of

[REDACTED]

800

~~SECRET~~

Adenauer. Yet there seems to be a conscious French effort to eliminate us from the affairs of Europe. After Vienna, the President had increased the defense expenditure by \$5 billion and unbalanced his budget. Yet on a whole series of matters -- Congo, NATO, and Berlin itself -- the French were pursuing an opposite policy. Apparently there was a fear that the U.S. wished to dominate Europe. Yet such an idea was wholly wrong. As for the atomic difficulty, that came because on every other matter there was trouble. The reason seems to be a basic French drive to be wholly independent of the Anglo-Saxons. The President is not an Anglo-Saxon but he would be glad to take the U.S. out of Europe if that was what the Europeans wanted.

M. Malraux remarked that he did not think that de Gaulle's feelings toward either England or the U.S. were derived essentially from his experiences in World War II. The President replied that he had read General de Gaulle's books.

[A large rectangular area containing horizontal dashed lines, likely a placeholder for a signature or additional text.]



86

[Large redacted area consisting of a grid of dashed lines.]

The President replied that the Americans also were committed to the defense of the West. The line of defense for all of us was in Germany. How could each country defend itself merely by its own means within its own borders? We must defend our interests together at the place where defense is necessary.

[Redacted area consisting of a grid of dashed lines.]



[REDACTED]

80

The President asked how American policy cut across this basic French purpose.

[Empty lined area for notes]

The President said he had been speaking of the defense of Europe.

[Empty lined area for notes]

[REDACTED]

TOP SECRET

8a

The President said that our policy is very simple: it is to sustain and to assist countries which wish to be independent. This effort was going on all over the world and it placed a great strain on the resources of the United States. We would like to have the help and support of our friends in Europe in this work. But the President repeated that he did not see how this work could go forward if, in fact, General de Gaulle's dream was that of independence from the United States and Great Britain in a Europe/which France was the leader. The President repeated that if this were to be the policy of the European continent, the United States would like nothing better than to leave Europe. M. Malraux said the President might be right about the dream of de Gaulle, but that a dream is not the same thing as what one does in reality. He asked, speaking not as a Cabinet Member but as a historian, whether the United States could in fact leave Europe. The President replied that we had done it twice and that to stay there even now was very expensive. We were there now because of our obvious responsibilities, but some Europeans seem to regard our presence in a more sinister light, as a kind of unwarranted interference in their internal affairs.

TOP SECRET

8a

[REDACTED]

The President replied that certainly the Russian threat is the reason that we stay. He then reviewed his own personal experience since becoming President. We had made a tremendous effort after Vienna and the President believed it was these military efforts which had led Khrushchev to veer away from the showdown which had loomed in Berlin at the end of the year. Yet General de Gaulle seemed to say it was his determination which had produced the results. The President did not enjoy making these great military efforts. The United States was carrying a very large load, and in particular he found it very hard to understand this latent, almost female, hostility which appeared in Germany and France, and an apparent sentiment that we might not be reliable in keeping to our engagements.

[Empty lined area for notes or continuation of text]

[REDACTED]

~~SECRET~~

86

The President asked why these French requirements made it necessary to oppose NATO and to oppose the diplomatic probes. What was the reason that we always wound up in such sharp disagreement?

The President believed that given the dangers and the heavy responsibilities which the United States faced in Berlin, we must make an effort to talk. Such talks might not work, but we ought to find out. The President did not find an overwhelming determination in other members of the alliance. He had asked the Chancellor how many divisions he would have in the first fighting in Germany, and the Chancellor preferred to talk about a naval blockade. Now we read in the papers of a Franco-German axis. If there was to be such an axis, the President would be glad to let it try to handle the Berlin affair.

The President repeated that we do not understand the posture of France.

.....The President repeated that we have done the military work while France had opposed probes, and this opposition had spread to Bonn. So we wind up

~~SECRET~~



with the alliance in disarray. The feeling in Bonn and Paris appears to be that the United States is not standing firm, and the President is getting tired of it.

[Redacted area consisting of multiple horizontal dashed lines.]

The President thought it was much more than that. The French position had indeed been regarded as opposition. If the U. S. were not carrying the load, then the President could understand a policy of every man for himself. But he knew from General Clay's cables that whenever there was trouble the call went out for the U. S. Yet he could get no cooperation from General de Gaulle. Back in December he had telephoned asking for a change of a few words in a communique -- with no result. The only reason the President could find was that somewhere deep down inside, General de Gaulle does not want the Americans in Europe -- perhaps, the President again suggested, as a result of his experiences in World War II.

[Redacted area consisting of multiple horizontal dashed lines.]



[REDACTED]

cc

The

President replied that all the difficulties in communication were due to him and not to Ambassador Alphan, who, he was sure, had communicated the President's feelings very accurately. The President reminded M. Malraux that his wife is deeply Francophile, and that he himself had a great respect for General de Gaulle. De Gaulle had done two great things: first, he had achieved the Franco-German rapprochement; second he had handled the French withdrawal from the colonies in such a fashion that it was a victory for France. He thought that General de Gaulle was right 80% of the time, but he did wish that de Gaulle might say that we were right 20% of the time. Alphan said with a smile that perhaps the proportions were reversed. To make his basic point more sharply, the President said that we feel like a man carrying a 200-pound sack of potatoes, and other people not carrying a similar load, at least in potatoes, keep telling us how to carry our burden. If others would carry their share, the President could understand it. But we had done most of the work and now we were carrying most of the burden of criticism. The President was not going to do both.

The President repeated that
When we ask

[REDACTED]

80



what others will do, we get a poor answer. They will make no
military effort, and we must make no diplomatic probe. ^{we are told that} We ought
not to speak for others, but only for ourselves. Yet the others
do not make a corresponding effort. In these circumstances,
should we continue?

[A large rectangular area with horizontal dashed lines, likely a redacted section or a placeholder for a signature or stamp.]

The President agreed, saying that his whole object was to find
out what the central difficulty was in our relations with France.

McG. B.

