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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

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10/11/63

The White House
DATE: October 7, 1963

SUBJECT: Franco-American Relations and Europe

15451

PARTICIPANTS:	<u>US</u>	<u>France</u>
	The President	Mr. Couve de Murville
	Mr. Ball	Ambassador Alphand
	Ambassador Bohlen	Mr. Lucet
	Mr. Tyler	

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The President said that one of the unintended results of the Franco-German Treaty of last January was that it made it appear as though France and the United States had basically different aims. The treaty really looked as though it were something more than the healing of old wounds, but rather as though it were outside of, and directed against, NATO. The President said he shared the desire to bring Franco-US relations closer. If these appeared to diverge on defense and European problems this was certainly bad for Germany. It would be good if we could normalize our relations on NATO and economic matters. The President asked how far apart we really were.

The Foreign

The President went back to the subject of NATO and said he could not see where the disagreement lay. He did not disagree with anything Couve had said about NATO so far. He said it was true there was less danger of war but at the same time it was difficult to do anything in the way of reduction of forces because of German nervousness. He wondered where all this took us in our relations with France. The Foreign Minister said that with regard to France and NATO there was only one sensible thing to do: To leave things as they were and never to speak about them. France was being reproached for having only two divisions instead of four and for having a nuclear program. But this did not weaken NATO. If war were to come, French divisions and her ships would be fighting on the side of the United States. The President said that when the United States does anything people worry about it. He thought that this principle should work both ways and not just against us. Ambassador Bohlen said that what really counted were new acts by France taken without consultation with her allies and contrary to the spirit of NATO, e.g., her latest withdrawal of ships, and earlier initiatives. Mr. Ball said that this point should be stressed. If we move or shift troops, then we do it against a considerable background of doubt and apprehension which has been stimulated by France claiming that we have it in mind to withdraw from Europe.

Mr. Ball said that one of the difficulties with General de Gaulle's statements on the defense of Europe was that although they sounded precise, the time factor was not defined, so that he made it sound as though the United States was going to pull out now.