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EUR (Mr.) E. Beigel: rms
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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

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Approved in U
10/16/63

Memorandum of Conversation

Part II of V parts.

DATE: October 8, 1963
TIME: 10:30 a.m.

Mr. Ball's office

SUBJECT: Germany, the MLF and NATO

U.S.

France

PARTICIPANTS: Mr. Ball
Ambassador Bohlen
Mr. Tyler
Mr. Schaetzel
Mr. Beigel

Couve de Murville
Ambassador Alphand
Mr. Lucet, Director, Political
Affairs, French FonOff
Mr. Pelen, French Embassy

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Mr. Ball turned to Germany and asked how the consultative procedures were developing under the January 23 treaty. The Foreign Minister said that there are contacts at the level of Lucet and Wormser and their counterparts in the German Foreign Office. They meet monthly. In addition, the Foreign and Defense Ministers meet regularly, as well as representatives in the field of education. He said that things are going both well and badly: well in the sense of many common questions and much general goodwill; badly for the reasons he had mentioned yesterday, due to the rift between the U.S. and France which is apparent to the Germans, and their notion that they must therefore choose between the Gaulois and the Anglo-Saxons. Mr. Ball said that we have discouraged any idea that such a choice confronts the Germans. The Foreign Minister said that the idea is stupid, that there is no contradiction between good relations with both the U.S. and France, even if they may not be of the same nature. He said that there is a scare in Germany that the U.S. will leave Europe.

Mr. Tyler said that he was struck by the way in which Chancellor Adenauer had been indulging himself in recent days in speaking of his letter to Khrushchev, referring to any detente as pernicious, criticizing wheat sales to Russia, and calling for the resignation of Macmillan. He thought that Adenauer was playing into the hands of Soviet propaganda. It is quite regrettable that by striking this posture Adenauer opens the Germans to the Soviet charge that Germany is impossible to deal with, all of which does not help the West in general, nor Germany, nor France. He said that there is no choice in this matter and that we are all in it together.

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DEF (MLF)
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NATO

The Foreign Minister said that he also regrets these statements, pointed out that Adenauer is leaving office and added that this is another manifestation of the German scare to which he had referred. He recalled the Radford episode of July 1956. Mr. Tyler interjected that our relations with Germany have never been quite the same since that episode.

Ambassador Bohlen asked whether the French had earlier heard about the Adenauer proposal to Khrushchev for a ten-year political truce. The Foreign Minister said his recollection was that this had been a matter between Adenauer and Ambassador Smirnov. Ambassador Bohlen said that Carstens had mentioned this when he was here and later the Germans said that no such proposal existed. The Foreign Minister said that the idea probably originated with Ambassador Kroll in Moscow. He said that the French were looking into their files on this. He went on to say that domestic politics are a part of this picture and that the Germans are fighting with each other. He thought the internal bickering would become more pronounced, and that it involves both the U.S. and France. It results from the German obsession with the idea that the U.S. is going to let them down, which is not a very realistic idea on their part. The whole thing is exacerbated by the appearance of dispute between the U.S. and France.

Mr. Ball said it is further exacerbated by the French justification that their nuclear force is required by the possibility of U.S. withdrawal from Europe. We understand what the French mean, but if France does not make clear to others what it means in terms of the time span, these German fears will be reinforced. The Foreign Minister said there is always neighborly rivalry in Europe but the Germans should be reassured by these French efforts. He thought that neighborly rivalries are considerably less in Western Europe now than in the past.

Mr. Ball said that we are concerned about a revival of the inter-war German psychosis that they are being discriminated against. When the French nuclear force is tangible and in being, the German sense of being left out might become acute. We are trying to provide a political answer to this German problem through the MLF. The Foreign Minister responded that the only possible answer is to have a European arrangement and France had discreetly suggested this recently. Mr. Ball said that the U.S. recognizes as does France that there is no political basis in Europe now to decide on the question of federalism, and that we are both saying the same things in different ways. The U.S. recognizes this is not an overnight affair. We have always contemplated that the MLF might become a strictly European force at some point in time. Ambassador Bohlen noted that there is no contradiction between the French concept and the MLF. The Foreign Minister said

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that there is no great desire in Europe to have such responsibilities, that most Europeans do not want to do more and prefer to reassure themselves and have a safe conscience by being in NATO.

Mr. Ball recalled that the Foreign Minister had said to the President yesterday that NATO had been conceived when the distribution of power was different. He wondered if this meant that France had some proposals to make regarding NATO. The Foreign Minister said that at present there is no "European policy" and therefore it is hard to change things in NATO now. There is need for a consensus among European countries first. He said that France had taken certain measures, such as pulling back its divisions, withdrawing its fleet and beginning its atomic program, all for one purpose: to build something in defense terms in order to establish a sense of national responsibility. It is impossible in the French philosophical system to have a selective service, and since there are too many men coming into the armed forces, a reduction is being made in the length of service. All of these measures should not be taken to mean that France will not participate in the battle should war come. He said that later on, if more union develops and there is a desire to do something, then France will see what should be done. The future would also depend upon what the U.S. wants to do or to change. He had the impression that the U.S. does not wish to change anything except perhaps the logistics system, but nothing of greater moment. He concluded that it might be wise to stay where we are and not raise new problems, but rather to try to calm things. Mr. Ball agreed with this conclusion.

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