

# NATO Temporarily Paralyzed by JFK's Death

By JOSEPH W. GRIGG  
United Press International  
PARIS (UPI) — The flags of the 15 Atlantic alliance powers flap in a brave display of Allied unity outside the grey NATO headquarters building in Paris.

Out at Supreme Allied Headquarters (SHAPE) 10 miles west of the city, officers in a kaleidoscopic variety of uniforms of NATO member countries work over top-secret plans and try to understand each other's languages.

But, behind this facade of unity, President Johnson has inherited leadership of an alliance strong militarily, but politically in disarray.

It is paralyzed temporarily by John F. Kennedy's death. It waits anxiously to size up the new man in the White House.

Western officials ask what will happen to the fragile balance achieved by Kennedy and Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev, based on the Cuba understanding, the Moscow test ban agreement and the mutual canceling out of thermonuclear terror?

America's Allies have been

reassured by Johnson's pledge he will continue the Kennedy administration's foreign policies.

His plans to meet with the West's top leaders early next year have been welcomed.

But the alliance is riddled with disputes. Its 15 member nations often are at cross-purposes. President Charles de Gaulle of France is seeking to ease the United States out of the driver's seat.

The alliance is hesitant and unsure of itself, as seldom before in its 14 years' history.

Today, the Atlantic alliance awaits guidance, purpose and, above all, leadership in what will be one of the most critical eras in world history—an era that could see the cold war end and the United States-Soviet nuclear standoff give way gradually to a long-term accommodation between the Communists and the West.

"The place held by the United States in the world explains why all mankind is worried when the American republic is shaken," wrote leading French commentator Raymond Aron in the Paris Le Figaro after Ken-

edy's death. "How long will it take Khrushchev to give Lyndon Johnson the same respect John F. Kennedy won for himself in October, 1962 (the Cuba crisis)?"

**Strains and Stresses**  
The new President has not been pitched into any dramatic new crisis in the alliance—rather a complex of strains and stresses that add up to a situation of deep uncertainty.

**Holds Up Bugbear**  
Curiously—almost paradoxically—De Gaulle at the same time holds up constantly the bugbear that the United States some day may get tired of defending Europe and pull out its troops.

De Gaulle is not alone in voicing this fear. The West Germans—not to mention two-and-a-half million West Berliners—are haunted perpetually by it.

The recent "big lift" operation, in which the U.S. 2nd Armored Division was airlifted from Texas to Germany and back, had exactly the opposite effect in Europe from what Washington intended. It simply increased fears that the United States was planning troop cuts, despite formal American reassurances to the contrary.

Former President Dwight Eisenhower's simultaneous suggestion that the bulk of the crack U.S. Seventh Army should be pulled out of Germany added fuel to Allied nervousness in Europe.

NATO's troubles do not all stem from De Gaulle.

**Are Sharply Divided**  
The United States and Britain are sharply divided on Washington's recent efforts to persuade NATO countries not to grant long-term credits to the Communist Bloc. Britain insists on trading with whom she sees fit and as she sees fit, except in strategic goods.

President Kennedy's proposal for an Allied mix-manned nuclear force of surface ships has met with little genuine enthusiasm—except from the West Germans, who are suspected to see in it a backdoor means of entry into the "nuclear club."

The United States long has felt it carries too heavy a military load in the Alliance and that some NATO member countries do not pull their weight.

**Spent on Defense**  
The United States, Washington does not fail to note, spends nearly 10 per cent of its gross national product on defense, compared with 7.9 per cent by France, 7.5 per cent by Britain, and 6.3 per cent by West Germany. Some smaller NATO countries spend only two to three per cent.

They recall that in the latest Berlin crisis De Gaulle without hesitation ordered a French troop convoy down the Autobahn to back the strong United States stand.

They recall, too, that De Gaulle was among the first Western leaders to announce his decision to fly to Washington for President Kennedy's funeral. He intended this as a striking show not only of esteem for the dead President but of genuine friendship for the United States. De Gaulle then hastened to make a date to confer with Johnson in Washington early next year.

**Stem From Leader**  
Yet, many of NATO's chronic headaches stem from the stubborn old French leader.

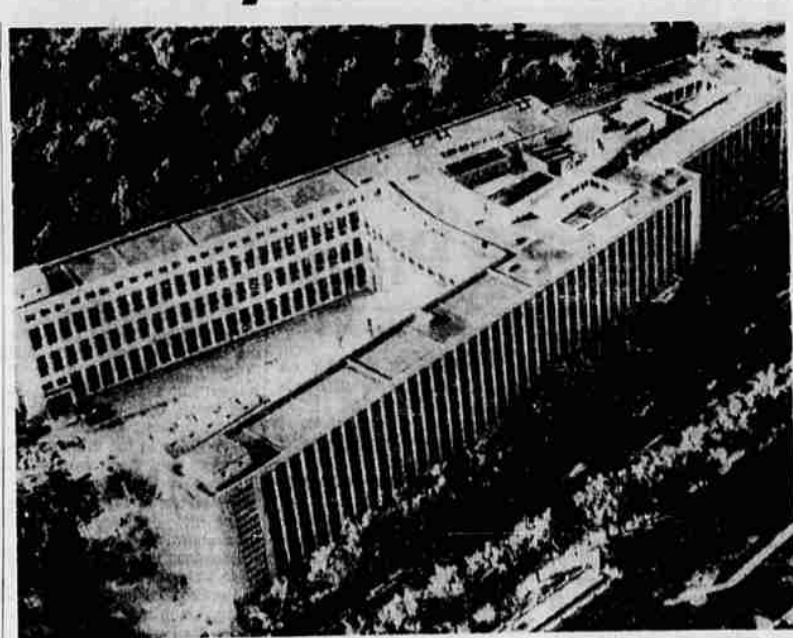
De Gaulle recently rejected Kennedy's plan for a mix-manned Allied nuclear force of surface ships equipped with Polaris missiles. Disregarding Britain's desire and America's wishes, he blackballed the British from Europe's Common Market. He refused to sign the Moscow Nuclear Test Ban Agreement and proclaimed he would continue nuclear testing in the atmosphere as long as he saw fit.

De Gaulle continues to take a lone wolf stand in the Alliance by refusing any part in the West's "dialogue" with the Soviets. He also has withdrawn the bulk of his armed forces from NATO command. He refuses to let nuclear warheads be stockpiled in France unless he controls them.

But most disquieting, of all to many Western officials is De Gaulle's basic attitude to NATO.

**Regards NATO Obsolete**  
While proclaiming himself a loyal member of the Western Alliance and friend of the United States, De Gaulle has made it clear he regards NATO, as established in April, 1949, as obsolete.

De Gaulle's argument is this: When NATO was founded 14 years ago, Europe was barely rising from the ashes of World War II. Its war-ravaged economies were entirely dependent on American aid. Today the situation has changed radically. Western Europe is prosperous, proud and strong and it is the United States that is having money troubles. The 1949 NATO setup has served its purpose and is out-dated. The Alliance's whole structure needs drastic



SITE OF NATO—Paralyzed temporarily by death of President John F. Kennedy, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, housed in the grey headquarters building in Paris shown above, is waiting anxiously to size up the new man in the White House. (UPI)

Militarily, the Alliance is not in bad shape.

Admittedly, it never has reached the relatively modest goal of 30 divisions which former Supreme Commander Gen. Lauris Norstad set as a minimum for defense of the central front in Europe.

In 1961, at the height of the Berlin crisis, Allied forces on this front reached a peak of 25 divisions. Today they are only 23 divisions, many of them not up to full strength.

But Allied estimates of Communist armed strength also have been revised radically downwards since the 30 division "minimum" was set. Instead of the 170 Soviet divisions it once was assumed are permanently under arms, Western officials now estimate the total about 60 divisions.

**Has Better Aircraft**  
U.S. Defense Secretary Robert S. McNamara said in New York on Nov. 18 that NATO has more men and more combat troops on the ground in Central Europe than those of the Communist Warsaw Pact. He said NATO has more and better aircraft than the Communists.

Still more important, McNamara said, the United States today has a nuclear force in Europe equivalent to 400 million

tons of TNT and "thousands" of warheads.

The NATO Council of Ministers meets here for its annual pre-Christmas stock-taking session Dec. 16. Its mood will be one of expectancy—of waiting U.S. leadership of the Alliance.

It will want to hear again that the United States is determined to defend Europe—particularly isolated West Berlin—with its full nuclear might.

**Want Renewed Pledge**  
It will want a renewed pledge that no U.S. troops will be pulled out of Europe.

It will want to hear that the new administration continues supporting the European Common Market and the Kennedy round program of across-the-board tariff cuts.

It will want to know that the new administration will continue working for East-West disarmament, particularly in the nuclear field.

Above all, America's Allies will be awaiting proof that Johnson can be counted on—as Kennedy proved he could be—to stand up to Khrushchev in a showdown while missing no chance of hastening a cold war settlement that would banish the thermonuclear nightmare for all times.

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