

US Officials Gloomy Over New French Arms Proposal

By JOHN M. HIGHTOWER
WASHINGTON (AP)—Study of new French proposals for solving the German rearmament dilemma has left official Washington in a gloomy mood about the future of European defenses.

The general conclusion is that any satisfactory solution of the German problem will require substantial adjustment of national interests of several countries. In particular, it is said, there must be concessions by France from the plan circulated last weekend by French Premier Mendes-France.

The prospect is that whatever adjustments are made will be slow and painful to work out. Next week's nine-power conference at London—including the Western European allies, Canada and the United States—is more likely to be a kind of preliminary discussion of the whole issue than a conference which will produce final decisions.

Yet top American officials are hopeful that final decisions can be reached fairly soon—even negative ones if they are inescapable. Some are emphatic in saying decisions must be reached soon because of a conviction that West German sovereignty and rearmament can not be held in suspension much longer without fostering a spirit of extreme German nationalism.

Just yesterday, London dispatches said, German Chancellor Adenauer called for a quick declaration to end the occupation and give Germany full sovereignty.

The critical issue presented by the Mendes-France memorandum, as officials here analyze it, is whether the French Premier is really willing—to let West Germany rearm without seeking some safeguards which would amount to giving her a kind of second-rate power status.

There is great concern here, for example, that the French plan would mean a definite delay for West German membership in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

The implication of public statements by Mendes-France and the provisions of his still secret memorandum have been taken to mean that he would prefer to stall off an equal role for West Germany in NATO while accepting her in a regional West European defensive alliance made at Brussels in 1948. Every other member of the Brussels pact, revised to provide controls against excessive armament on the part of any member, would be also a member of NATO.

The possibility foreseen here is that Mendes-France would like to get West Germany into the Brussels pact and then put up to the French Assembly at some later time the NATO issue. France would have a veto over German membership in NATO, as would each of the other 13 members.

This could mean that the central issue of German association with the whole Western alliance system might be tied up in French parliamentary knots for a long time just as the European Defense Community (EDC) project was until the French Assembly killed it off.

Britain and the United States have agreed that linking Germany with a strengthened Brussels treaty would be a useful step in the solution of the German armaments problem, but they have looked for the main solution to be found quicker in the NATO arrangement.

The chief value of the expanded Brussels Pact as seen here is that it would tend to ease French fears of a revived Germany by balancing British power on the continent against future German arms.

Britain was a signer of the Brussels agreement, along with France, Belgium, The Netherlands and Luxembourg. Plans are to take in West Germany and Italy.

France has been insistent on guarantees of long-term British continental commitments if Germany is to be rearmed. When the EDC single army proposal was first put forth in 1951 by French leaders, U.S. officials eyed it suspiciously as a means of stalling action on American demands for West German rearmament.



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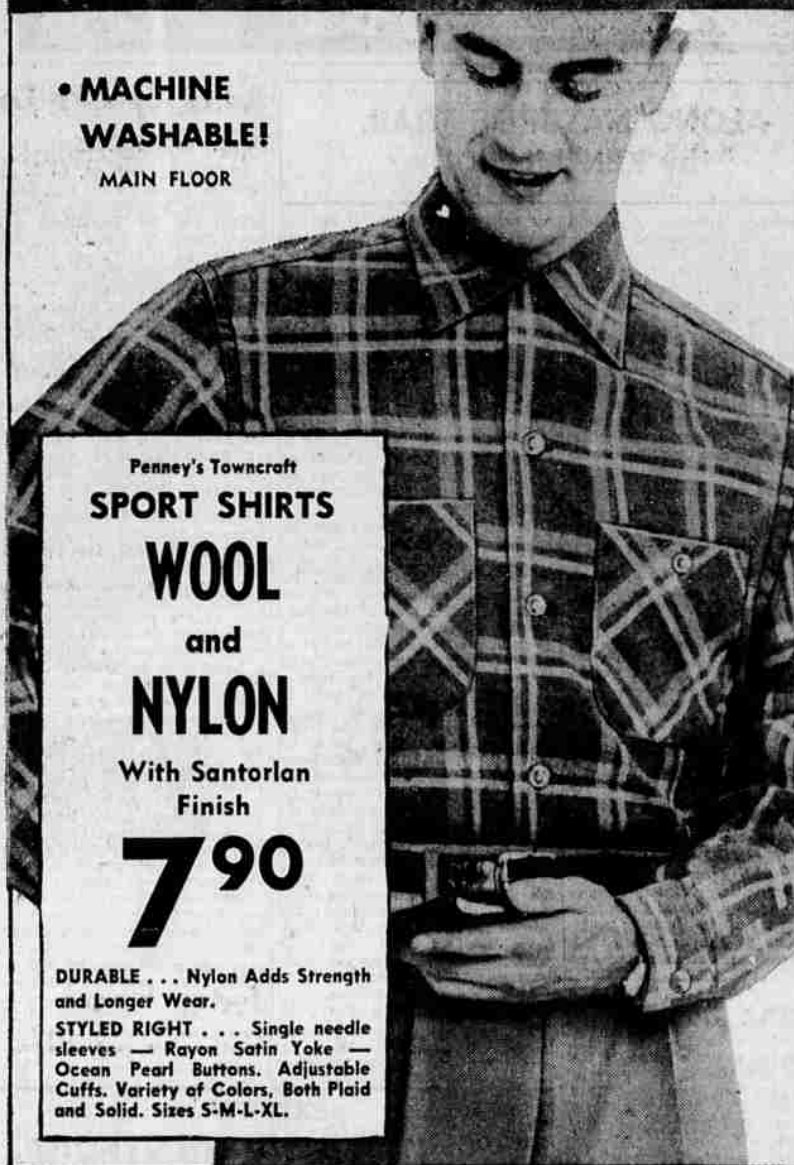
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