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14th November, 1967

To: ABC for Political Affairs
From: Special Adviser for Policy Planning
Subject: The Position of French Representatives on the
Harmel Exercise

1. In reply to the Secretary General's question relative to the attitude of French representatives on the basic aspects of the Harmel Exercise, first in the Ministerial meeting of December 1966 and, subsequently, in the Special Group, I should like to submit the following data.

2. M. Couve de Murville, in December 1966, (cf. C-8(66)69, pages 15/16) said that "the time had come to consider the future rôle of the Atlantic Alliance, particularly after 1969, and he readily agreed to the Belgian Delegation's proposal that a solution to these problems should now be sought". He expressed his belief that the Alliance would continue after 1969 and expressed France's agreement that this would be desirable. Continuation of the Alliance, he said, meant that political consultations would continue. "It must be made clear, however, that these consultations by no means implied that the aim was to define a common foreign policy. Indeed, he thought that none of the other countries of the Alliance would be any more inclined than France to favour integration in the field of international policy."

3. In the meeting of the Council on 19th February, 1967, France was represented by M. de la Granville. His intervention can be divided into three parts. As regards the Harmel Exercise, he confirmed the statement of M. Couve de Murville, and spoke in particular of "l'intérêt très vif que nous y portons". He fully assented to the work programme outlined on that occasion and said again that the Atlantic Alliance remained indispensable to the security of France. The second part of his intervention concerned the report which Permanent Representatives would have to submit on their work: "Nous devons laisser les Représentants permanents dans leur sagesse définir quelle est la formule la meilleure pour trouver le système qui les aide au mieux à élaborer ce rapport que nous nous sommes engagés en décembre dernier à fournir en première instance à la réunion de juin et en fin de compte à la réunion ministérielle de décembre." In the third place, he warned against the inconveniences of too much publicity but did not specifically say that France was against such publicity.

4. It is therefore obvious that in the two decisive meetings of the Council on the Harmel Exercise the French Representatives adopted a quite positive attitude, not only on the principle of the thing, but also on certain procedural points, e.g. a report to Ministers. Besides, the summing-up of the Secretary General following the discussions of 15th February was made and circulated without any objection on the part of France and, indeed, with its approval.