

France And U.S. May Hold Talks On Nuclear Strategy

By JOHN M. HIGHTOWER
WASHINGTON (AP)—French ambassador Herve Alphand expects France to start talks with the United States next year on co-ordination of nuclear strategy with U.S. nuclear strategy.

The small French force is due to become operational in a few months. The problem of its co-ordination with the U.S. and NATO strategy is one of several critical issues, involving France and the Atlantic alliance, which are due to reach a crisis probably next year.

Such a crisis, could lead to or might even compel a meeting between French President de Gaulle and U.S. President Johnson.

Of a possible Paris-Washington summit conference in the near future, Alphand said: "Nothing has been decided about a meeting. I think it would certainly be very useful to have one one day, but probably not before we have much clearer views about some very important problems that we have to discuss."

U.S. SKEPTICAL
U.S. officials are skeptical about any kind of Johnson-de Gaulle conference without a lot of diplomatic spadework beforehand to provide some kind of basis for agreement. At the moment it is even difficult to see where such work would begin.

Alphand himself may play an important role in the search for a basis for some resolution of French differences with the U.S. and with other NATO allies. After nine years as ambassador in Washington he is going home at the end of the week to become the top career diplomat in the French foreign office.

In a pre-departure interview he stressed his view that despite differences France and the U.S. share many fundamental interests in common.

"During my long mission here we have had many differences of opinion on important matters," he said. "But on essential matters we were always on the same side."

STOOD TOGETHER
He recalled how the U.S. and France stood together with other Allies when Soviet Premier Khrushchev wrecked the East-West summit conference at Paris in 1960, how they formed a common front in dealing with Berlin crises and how de Gaulle lined up with the late president Ken in the 1962 Cuba missile crisis.

The problems coming to a head next year are these — so far as diplomats and informed American officials can see:

1. Co-ordination of French nuclear strategy with that of the U.S. as soon as the French strike force is operational.
2. Reorganization of the NATO command structure in Europe. Alphand judged that this would almost certainly come up next year for Paris-Washington consultation and general consultation among the Allies. A major French concern in this connection is to see that French forces serving NATO purposes in Europe are under French command.
3. More sweeping Atlantic alliance revision, which could be initiated in the planning stage in 1966 though the N.T.O treaty itself is supposed to run unchanged until 1969.
4. Parallel with these French-U.S. differences is the project on which the U.S., Britain and West Germany have been working for several years along with other interested allies, for creation of a NATO nuclear weapons force. France is adamantly opposed to such a force which would be an effort to handle West German interests in nuclear weapons under a U.S.-dominated NATO umbrella.

West German Chancellor Ludwig Erhard is due here in a few weeks to talk with Johnson administration leaders about this problem. The British Labour government, which was once actively interested in throwing Britain's nuclear force into NATO, now is lukewarm. Should West Germany show declining interest, the whole project might be allowed to die, but that seems unlikely, in the view of U.S. officials.

Britain's cooling-off is due to

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growing British concern with the Soviet Union to block the spread of nuclear weapons to other countries.

So deep are the differences between France on the one hand and the U.S., Britain and other allies on the other that the whole non-proliferation project has failed, like other aspects of disarmament, to enlist French co-operation even in talks at Geneva.

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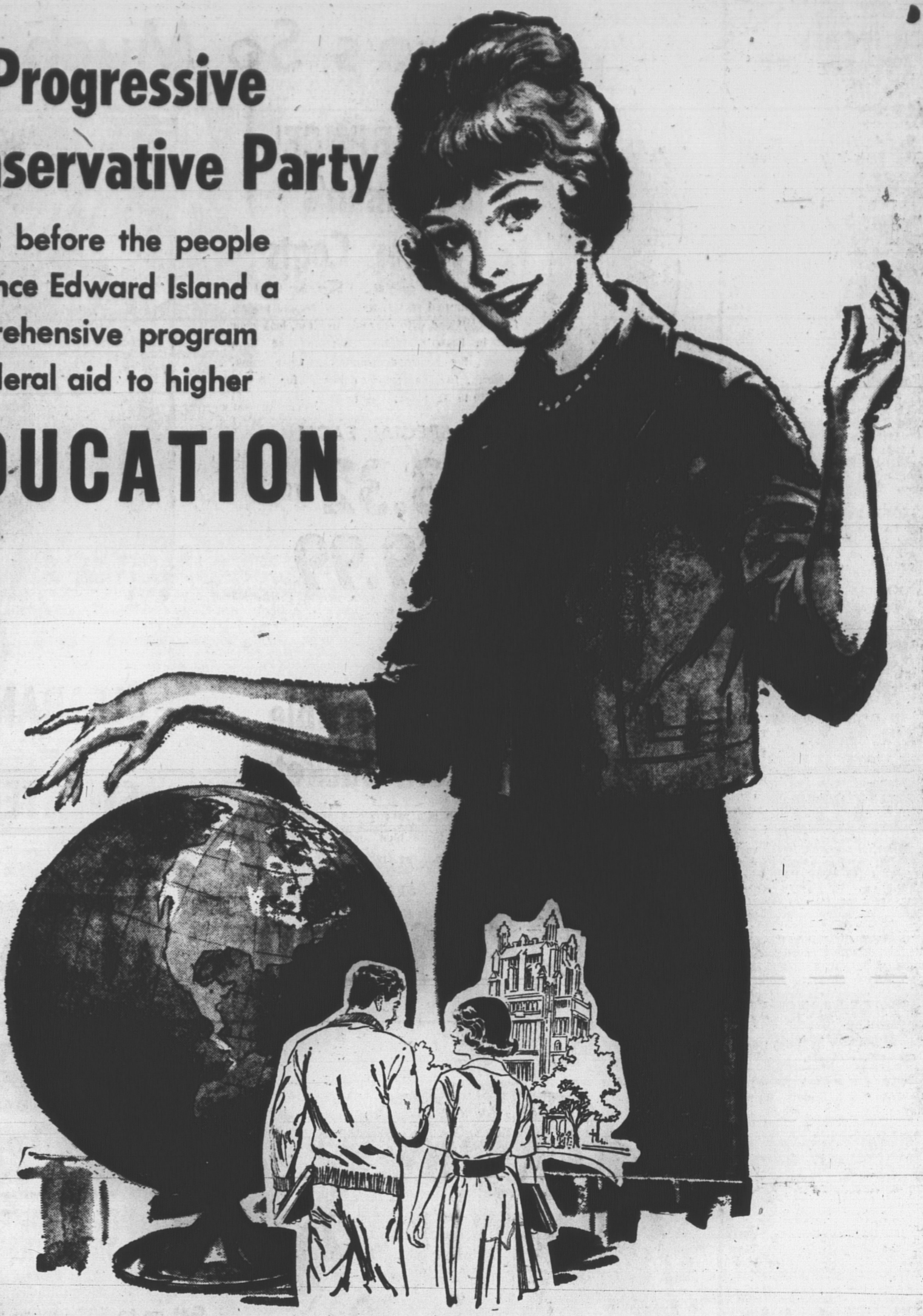
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