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STATEMENT BY M. MAURICE COUVE DE MURVILLE

FRENCH MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

ON THE REQUESTS FOR MEMBERSHIP IN THE COMMON MARKET

MADE OVER THE ORTF ON OCTOBER 24, 1967

The Council of Ministers of the European Economic Community has, over the course of yesterday and today, held a first exchange of views on the problems posed by the requests for membership of Great Britain and of three other European countries. Insofar as it is concerned, the French delegation, in these discussions, took the position that these membership requests raised a number of questions, and even very important questions, and that it was appropriate for the Six, together, to study these questions among themselves and to try to arrive at common positions.

There are essentially three questions:

The first is that the entry of four new countries into the Community--that is, the enlargement of this Community--could entail a profound transformation of the present situation. There would be more countries, those countries would have more diverse interests, consequently things would no longer be the same as they have been for eight or nine years, and that is a problem that must be studied in order to try to draw its consequences.

The second question we have raised is that it is necessary that the country that joins be able to take the commitments requested of it and be in a position to keep them. This, naturally, is essentially valid for Great Britain, whose current difficulties we know, and it seems obvious to us that for Great Britain to be in a position to enter into the Common Market, these difficulties must be surmounted.

The third question is precisely that of the commitments that would be requested of the new members, that is, the conditions for their entry. As concerns everything regarding, for example, the common tariff, for Britain, the Commonwealth, the agricultural policy and its financial regulation and so on. We said to our partners: "All these problems that are raised have to be studied, for it is necessary that we know where we are and where we

want to go." And we invite the Community to put these problems to study and to try to define together common positions, after which it will be possible for us to take a stand on the requests for membership.

Then, what happened over the course of the past two days is that all those problems--which everyone more or less recognizes exist--all those problems have started to be discussed. There was a first exchange of views. That exchange of views will be continued at our next session, that is, on November 20, and then we will see at that time, and perhaps in subsequent sessions, how the discussions can develop and if we are in a position to arrive at common conclusions.

The future of the European Community is not at stake. What is at stake is the question of knowing what this Community will be, that is, if it will continue with six, or if, as many think, and as France for her part in no way objects to, it will extend to other countries, for right away, from the very beginning of the discussion I took the position that we had no objection in principle--and we also never formulated any--to the entry of new members into the Community. The entire problem is to know what is the situation of these new members and what commitments they would take.