

## Letter from Charles de Gaulle to Lyndon B. Johnson (7 March 1966)

**Caption:** On 7 March 1966, General de Gaulle, President of the French Republic, sends a letter to the US President, Lyndon B. Johnson, to inform him of France's decision to resume total control of sovereignty within its national territory and of its intention to withdraw its forces from the integrated command of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO).

**Source:** Western European Union Assembly-General Affairs Committee: A retrospective view of the political year in Europe 1966. March 1967. Paris: Western European Union Assembly-General Affairs Committee.

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**URL:** [http://www.cvce.eu/obj/letter\\_from\\_charles\\_de\\_gaulle\\_to\\_lyndon\\_b\\_johnson\\_7\\_march\\_1966-en-d97bf195-34e1-4862-b5e7-87577a8c1632.html](http://www.cvce.eu/obj/letter_from_charles_de_gaulle_to_lyndon_b_johnson_7_march_1966-en-d97bf195-34e1-4862-b5e7-87577a8c1632.html)

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Dear Mr. President,

Our Atlantic Alliance will in three years' time complete its first term. I wish to tell you that France is aware to what extent the defensive solidarity thus established between 15 free western nations contributes to ensure their security, and especially of the essential rôle played in this respect by the United States of America. France therefore plans, as of now, to remain, when the time comes, a party to the Treaty signed on 4th April 1949 in Washington. This means that, unless in the three coming years events change the basic facts directing East-West relations, she would, in 1969 and beyond, be determined, as today, to fight on the side of her allies in the event that one of them should be the object of an unprovoked aggression.

Nevertheless, France considers that the changes which have taken place since 1949, or are now taking place, in Europe, Asia, and elsewhere, as well as the development of her own situation and forces, do not justify, so far as she is concerned, the arrangements of a military nature made after the conclusion of the Alliance either in common in the form of multilateral conventions or by special agreements between the French and the American Governments.

This is why France is determined to regain on her whole territory the full exercise of her sovereignty, at present diminished by the permanent presence of allied military elements or by the use which is made of her airspace; to cease her participation in the integrated commands; and no longer to place her forces at the disposal of NATO.

Regarding the application of these decisions, it goes without saying that she is ready to determine with the allied governments, and above all that of the United States, the practical measures concerning them. Furthermore, she is ready to reach agreement with them as to the military facilities to be accorded mutually in the event of a conflict in which she would take part on their side, and as to conditions of co-operation between her forces and theirs in the event of common action, especially in Germany.

On all these points my government will therefore establish contacts with yours. But, in order to comply with the spirit of friendly frankness which must inspire relations between our two countries, and, if I may add, between yourself and myself, I wanted, first of all, personally to tell you what were the reasons, for which purposes, and within which limitations, France had considered herself compelled to modify the form of our Alliance, without altering its substance.

Please accept, Mr. President, the assurance of my highest consideration and the expression of my most cordial sentiments.

Signed: C. de Gaulle