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A Canard Shot Down

Before French Generals Challe and Zeller were sentenced to 15 years in prison for their part in the abortive April revolt in Algeria, a shameless canard that had gained wide currency and some belief in France was disposed of.

This was the report that the American Central Intelligence Agency — the much belabored C.I.A. — had promised to support Challe, the acknowledged leader of the revolt.

Testimony in the trial came nowhere near confirming such a promise. The farthest any witness would go was to say that, in discussions before the putsch, the United States had been mentioned along with a half-dozen other countries as a possible source of supply for food, fuel and other necessities. That was all.

It did not appear in testimony, but Challe, in reply to a point-blank question as to whether or not he had any C.I.A. promise, is said to have replied: "Don't insult me by asking if I could have harbored any such ideas."

The C.I.A. was a sitting duck for

Using speculation after the Cuban fiasco and the Communists obviously took advantage of the opportunity to stir up French suspicions of the United States. The first published report suggesting a C.I.A. connection with the revolt came from behind the Iron Curtain.