

NSC BRIEFING

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

21 September 1957

FRENCH GOVERNMENT CRISIS

- I. When French cabinet failed to agree on Algerian basic statute, Bourges-Maunoury had unprecedented series of conferences with parliamentary leaders on 20-21 September.
  - A. Conservative forces (Independents, Peasants, some Radicals) fear a federative Algerian assembly and a central Algerian executive will lead to an independent Algeria.
  - B. Moderate left and center (Socialists, Popular Republicans) disturbed at concessions premier has made to right on proposed statute.
  - C. Extreme right and left reject proposed statute for opposite reasons.
    1. Communists want independence for Algeria; Poujadists oppose any concessions.
- II. Compromise announced 21 September would postpone decision on whether central executive would be elected or not.
- III. <sup>VE</sup> Bourges-Maunoury cannot get an assembly majority, alternatives are:
  - A. Resignation of Bourges-Maunoury.
    1. Premier's advisers reportedly recommend this course.
  - B. Defeat on confidence vote.
  - C. Vote of censure by deputies on current economic issue.
    1. Use of economic issue to kill government (popular method since World War II).
    2. Would preserve some face by avoiding open admission of national disunity on Algerian issue.

- IV. Majority may depend on effectiveness of President Coty's present efforts to sell need for "national resolve."
  - A. President has not heretofore acted as forcefully as predecessor Auriol.
  - B. Some possibility he may influence Independents to give ground.
- V. Should he get by now, Bourges-Maunoury must face new, tougher fight in one-two months.
- VI. Little speculation so far on possible successors.
  - A. Defense Minister Morice and Jacques Soustelle, former Governor of Algeria, have been mentioned.
    - 1. Both of these appear too committed to nationalistic attitude on Algeria.
  - B. Another prolonged search would be likely, ending with a center or possibly a Socialist premier.