

NSC BRIEFING

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- I. Inconclusive 20 April first-round local election results generally failed to serve as barometer for national issues such as North Africa.
 - A. Popular vote percentages for major non-Communist groups remained very close to those of last elections (1951) in same cantons.
 - B. Some slight encouraging signs are poor showing of extreme rightist slates and ^{very} small decline (off. 4% since 1951) in Communist popular vote percentage.
 1. This may reflect fewer abstentions both as compared with last cantonals and recent National Assembly by-elections.
 2. However, Communists will probably recoup in the 27 April second round.
- II. Nevertheless, Independent Party may be tempted to regard minor election gains as grass roots support for its adamant position.
- III. Coty's selection of popular Republican Georges Bidault was largely to give appearance of some action and he may now be expected to wait until after the second round of elections when serious party negotiation more feasible.
 - A. Resistance Union leader Metterrand is currently being speculated on as the next choice.
 1. As advocate of "genuine French-Africa" community he might gain Socialist, Radical and Popular Republican support.

2. However, opportunism as Mendes-France's Interior Minister and unsubstantiated pro-Communism charges by the right leaves Independent support doubtful.

IV. Pinay, was informally sounded out by Coty last week, but refused presumably because it was too early.

A. He says he told Coty he would try only if National Assembly gave him "full powers" for two years, which it obviously wouldn't.

B. While previous premiers have been granted such powers on specific issues for a shorter period of time the deputies would probably be reluctant to agree to such a demand this early in crisis.

V. Coty said to feel that Guy Mollet is his ace in the hole.

A. Believes Mollet is most likely candidate to find compromise on Algeria and deal with labor unrest.

B. However, Mollet's previous compromise with the right was based on Socialist Minister for Algeria Robert Lacoste's pacification policy in Algeria which the rest of the party is now moving away from.