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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

7 March 1956

MEMORANDUM FOR: Mr. Allan Evans (OIR)
Colonel H. J. Lemley, Jr., USA (AC/SI)
Captain B. E. Wiggin, USN (ONI)
Colonel Willis B. Sawyer, USAF (AFOIN-2B2)
Colonel Charles H. Dayhuff, Jr., USA (JIG)

SUBJECT : NIE 22-56: Outlook for Political Stability
in France

1. The attached terms of reference were agreed on at the meeting of the IAC representatives on Wednesday, 7 March.
2. All agencies are invited to contribute to any section within their competence to do so.
3. It is requested that contributions be received in this office by the close of business on Wednesday, 18 April.

Paul A. Borel

PAUL A. BOREL
Deputy Assistant Director
National Estimates

Distribution "B"

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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SUBJECT: TERMS OF REFERENCE: NIE 22-56: OUTLOOK FOR FRANCE

THE PROBLEM

To assess the situation in France with particular reference to prospects for short and long term internal political stability; to evaluate France's foreign and domestic policies in relation to Western security; and to estimate the effect of probable developments upon France's probable courses of action with respect to major international issues.

SCOPE

This estimate will examine France's current problems with a view toward estimating short and long term prospects for internal stability and French courses of action with respect to major international issues. In reviewing basic political factors principal

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attention will be devoted to the prospects for fashioning parliamentary combinations capable of governing or -- in their absence -- the prospects for increased public and parliamentary disorder and a possible recourse to extreme solutions. The impact of developments in North Africa and the current trends in Soviet tactics will also be viewed in relation to France's stability and international posture. We propose to examine the French economic situation in so far as it affects or is affected by political problems. We further propose to re-examine French military strength and capabilities not only in connection with North African problems, but also in relation to French commitments to Western defense.

QUESTIONS BEARING ON THE PROBLEM

I. CURRENT POLITICAL SITUATION AND TRENDS

1. In what ways does the present French situation differ from that which obtained a year or two ago?

2. What is the present composition of the various National Assembly blocs and alignments? How fluid are they? What is the likely course of alignments over the next year or two?

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3. In addition to the new distribution of seats among parties, do any general trends emerge from the election results?

4. What is the political outlook of the Poujadist group? What is the nature of its support in the country? How stable is that support? How unified is the parliamentary delegation? What is the policy of the moderate right toward the Poujade faction? What is the likely course of Poujadism during the next several years?

5. What are emerging as the principal elements in Communist policy in France? Do the Communists have any expectation of bringing about a Popular Front in which they would participate in policy-making? How long would they support a government in which they did not participate? Will they try to discredit parliamentary government or attempt to use it to enhance their respectability and advance their program even without participation in the government? Assuming continuation of a leftist non-Communist government, what capabilities do the Communists have for influencing its policy through parliamentary maneuvers? Through grass roots pressure and collaboration with left-wing Socialists? Through infiltration? What policies are they likely to follow in the trade unions?

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6. How does the Socialist leadership envisage its role in the new assembly? How firm is Mollet's control over the party? Will he be obliged to adjust his policies to retain the support of his own extreme left? Will he be obliged to move left to compete with the Communists? Can he move toward the right and pick up support there if he loses some on the left? What will be the most difficult problems for the Socialists to deal with if they remain in the government? What will be their policy if the Mollet government falls?

7. What is the present condition of the Radical Socialist group? What are Mendes-France's probable intentions? Might the Radicals withdraw from the Socialist-led government and work out some alternative arrangement with the other groups of the center and moderate right?

8. What are the roles now being played, or likely to emerge, in the National Assembly by the MRP, Moderes and other groups of the center and moderate right?

9. What is the general public reaction to the new assembly? What is the parliamentary situation likely to develop? What will be the effect on public order?

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10. What are the chances for early new elections? Constitutional reform? A right-wing coup d'etat? A Popular Front Government? A violent swing to the left?

II. ECONOMIC TRENDS

1. What changes have occurred in the economy since the last estimate? What are the prospects for continued economic growth and for financial stability?

2. What will be the effect upon the budgetary problem of the increased leftist strength in the Assembly? Are greater social benefits likely? More nationalization? Tax reform? Reductions in any significant budgetary items?

3. Is any large-scale economic reform program likely?

4. What are the significant factors in the economic relations of North Africa to France? What importance does each side attach to them? What will be the effect upon France and North Africa of possible changes in those relations?

5. What is the effect of US dollar aid and expenditures in France upon the French economy? What will be the effect of reductions in receipts from these items?

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6. What will be the effect of probable economic developments and government economic policy upon social and political trends?

III. MILITARY TRENDS

1. What changes in French military capabilities have occurred since the last estimate?

2. What forces are presently committed outside France? Is any shift of forces between the metropole and overseas territories likely to occur? What is the state of morale and discipline among native troops? What will be the effect upon France's NATO commitments of a failure to settle the North African controversies?

3. What has been the reaction of the French military establishment to the new NATO strategic concept? What is being done to implement it?

4. What is the public attitude toward NATO? Toward its military objectives? Toward expansion of NATO's political and economic aspects? What political obstacles exist toward implementation of NATO-military policies and toward the expansion of its activities in the political and economic field?

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5. What would be the reaction of the French military leaders and French forces toward an increase in international tension, including the imminent danger of war? In the event of a further reduction in international tension?

6. What military policies is the French government likely to adopt in the event of an increase in international tension? In the event of a further reduction in international tension? In the light of present trends in the nuclear capabilities of the great powers, what policies are likely to emerge in France toward the NATO military alliance and the announced nuclear strategy of NATO?

IV. PROBABLE DEVELOPMENTS

1. What is the likely course of internal French politics during the next year or two? During the next four to five years? Will there be any dramatic shift to the right or left? If so, will constitutional government be abandoned in the process?

2. In view of the probable development of internal French politics, and public opinion, and in view of French problems in the international and colonial sphere, what policies is France likely to follow regarding:

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- a. National defense;
- b. International disarmament;
- c. The cold war;
- d. The Soviet Bloc;
- e. The North Atlantic Alliance;
- f. Western European integration;
- g. The German problem;
- h. The Saar;
- i. The North African territories;
- j. French west and central Africa;
- k. Middle Eastern questions, especially the Arab-Israeli affairs; and
- l. Far Eastern questions, i.e., Vietnam, Taiwan, recognition of Communist China?

3. In light of all of the above, what will be the position of France in the Free World four or five years hence? Will progress have been made toward stability, greater internal unity, greater ability to meet her commitments, and the capacity to play a more effective (though perhaps lesser) role in the Free World?

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V. POST MORTEM

What major deficiencies, if any, exist in our intelligence coverage of France?

VI. VALIDITY STUDY

Briefly, assess the validity of NIE 22-55.

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