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NSC BRIEFING

6 April 1954

POLITICAL MOTIVATION FOR FRENCH REQUEST FOR
NAVAL AIR SUPPORT

I. New phase in French position on inter-
vention

A. Charge of Chinese intervention not
made by French before 4 April request
though obviously known for months.

B. Dien Bien Phu has apparently con-
vinced French drastic steps necessary
to ensure Geneva position.

1. French now recognize permanent
loss of privileged position in
Indochina.

2. Alternatives if Geneva fails:

a. A Dunkirk -- militarily
infeasible

b. Negotiations with a
strong Ho

c. UN intervention -- slow

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and uncertain.

- d. American intervention
- 3. Dien Bien Phu and imminence of Geneva counterbalance fear of provoking Chinese attacks.
- II. If US rejects request:
 - A. France would be freer at Geneva to make concessions -- EDC as well as Indochina
 - B. France could better press for US concessions at Geneva.
- III. If US is involved militarily:
 - A. US position then same as on Korean truce talks.
 - B. French public more amenable to war.
 - C. France could turn operation over to US if conference failed.

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