

~~SECRET~~ 27 October 1955

NEW FRENCH CABINET CRISIS

- I. Premier Faure has posed vote of confidence on approval of his government's "general policies":
 - A. North African question is major issue.
 - B. Vote expected early Friday 28 October.
- II. Faure's position precarious despite recent victories on Moroccan and Algerian questions:
 - A. Socialists seem determined to vote against him.
 - B. Foreign Minister Piney pessimistic, particularly after El Gloui's surprise switch to support of Moroccan ex-sultan Ben Youssef.
 - C. Extreme right probably more antagonistic to government, because Ben Youssef's return to Moroccan throne now more likely.

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D. Growing concentration on domestic issues increases possibility of overthrow:

1. Opponents would prefer to bring Faure down on side-issue rather than directly on "early elections" issue.

III. One "trick" possibility is that government coalition elements which favor early elections may be willing to vote against Faure in order to assure his overthrow by a constitutional majority (312). Such a defeat would give Faure and his cabinet the chance to dissolve Assembly (which automatically means new elections).

A. Popular Republicans and Pinay's Independents want elections soon.

B. Faure's Radical Socialists rival-- Mendes-France--has just managed to put party on record as opposing dissolution

until electoral law is revised.

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1. Faure might decide to out-maneuver Mendes-France by forcing dissolution now.
- IV. If Faure is determined to fight, he may try to have Socialists abstain.
- A. Would have better chance for relative majority.
- V. Major factors favoring stability are still in force. These include:
- A. Geneva conference.
 - B. Reluctance of individual deputies to attempt to form new government.
 - C. Difficulty foreseen in getting assembly approval of new government.
 - D. General reluctance of deputies to take step which might end their tenure prematurely.
 - E. Likelihood that composition of new assembly--elected under present rules--would be much the same.

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