THE POSITION OF FRANCE IN WORLD AFFAIRS

8 March 1960

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THE POSITION OF FRANCE IN WORLD AFFAIRS

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COLONEL HAWKINS: Gentlemen: Today we start studying individual countries in our course on Contemporary International Politics. The first one we take this morning is "The Position of France in World Affairs."

Not too long ago there were quite a few of us who felt that France was down for the count, and I think there were even some who thought that France had already been counted out. However, recent events have certainly proved this to be false, and the reasoning in back of this and the present position of France deserve our attention and deserve careful examination.

To guide our thought in this field today we have a very distinguished historian from Cornell University, the Professor of Modern European History.

It is a pleasure to present to the class, Dr. Edward W. Fox of Cornell.

DR. FOX: General Mundy, Colonel Hawkins, Gentlemen: It is a pleasure to come and talk with you about France. It is a subject that is very close to my heart as well as to my interest. I think it is only fair to you to warn you that I am very likely to take a favorable view of French affairs. I was not one who counted France out. I would like to think, however, that my belief that France is not out was based on more than an attachment, which I am really quite ready to own to, but an understanding of the country which has come from sympathetic study.

To discuss the present subject, "The Position of France in World Affairs," I think it is necessary for me to give you my picture of world affairs in order to provide my remarks about France with some frame. I shall try to do that briefly, and while I don't think that what I have to say will come to you as any very great surprise, I think it is necessary as a background.

It seems to me probable that world affairs in the near future will be dominated more by what our recent guest from the Soviet Union

referred to as competition between the two blocs or his country and our country. Further, I think there is a very good probability that we will not be engaged in a major war, but that instead we will be continuing what we have called and probably will continue to call the cold war, or as Chairman Khrushchev referred to it, as "peaceful competition."

The elements in the "competition" are really quite complex, but certain main ones are easily identifiable, and a very important key to them would seem to be industrial production, or national wealth. To a large extent this competition will be directed toward countries which are not either the U.S.A. or the U.S.S.R. or their immediate and closest associates but with the more--I was going to say uncommitted, but in fact more or less--committed parts of the earth.

I have a feeling that we may be exaggerating a little bit at least the immediate importance of some of the so-called uncommitted countries, because the industrial potential of different parts of the world is not equal. I hardly need to tell you that industrial potential is made up of a good many factors; raw materials, human skills, traditions, organizations, and so on. So what I am coming to, quite obviously, is that in the near future one of the real keys to the outcome of the competition between East and West will be the position of Europe. It is only in this context that I see the position of France as being particularly meaningful.

I feel quite sure that there are two processes that are going on that will contribute to the outcome of the particular phase of our competition. First is the unification of Europe and second is the development of unified Europe as a factor in world politics. Quite simply: Will a unified Europe be closer to us or will it tend to take a more independent position? It seems to me that the chances that what we think of as Europe--or perhaps we should call it Western Europe, or Europe West of the Iron Curtain--will be unfriendly to the United States or that it will be friendly to the Eastern bloc are so slight as hardly tc be a serious consideration for the immediate future.

I might stop for one minute here and suggest to you that I view all of these problems in the world as insoluble in the ordinary sense of the word. I think we will arrive at no "solutions;" what will happen is that the problems will change. Our efforts should therefore be directed toward changing our most difficult present problems to different ones that will be more favorable to us. I think it is a mistake to try to deal with any of the major questions confronting us today in terms of finding full solutions.

So that what I see in the development of Europe, then, is not that Europe will come to rest on our side but that we and Europe and the U.S.S.R. are all going to develop. The essential question is along what lines this will occur.

Now, I think that there is no question that Europe is already united. Some of the economic experts, as you probably know, are a little doubtful about the Common Market. They seem to think there is some chance that this may not succeed. Personally, I would be quite astonished if the Common Market didn't continue to develop. The French standard of living, for example, is now fastened securely to the Common Market. It is an active, living organism. I don't think it can stand still, and I think there is no doubt that we already have the nucleus of a united Europe. Furthermore, I think this will change and develop and that our proper concern in the matter is the way in which it will change. Since change in one direction or another is inevitable, the significant question is: What routes are open?

The obvious routes open for the development of Europe, it would seem to me, are the formation of a neutralist "third group" or the continuing development of the existing nucleus within NATO. While the first would tend to be friendly to us, the very logic of its existence would force it to remain uncommitted, and to try to maintain peace between the two large powers. This is not to me a particularly attractive solution of the problem; but at the moment it appears the more likely one and the alternative solution, that of the expansion of unified Europe and its integration in a much larger context, could be achieved only by vigorous American leadership. I have learned from a few conversations our Government is very much interested in this possibility but I have been unable to discover that we have any highly developed plans for its realization.

If Europe remains unified only in the smaller sense, the issue will be how fast and in what manner the so-called Inner Six can assimilate the Outer Seven. This is not going to be easy to achieve because of the British Commonwealth interests and there is a possibility that the small Europe will tend to grow within its present boundaries. If it does that it will not be realizing Europe's industrial potential to any important or even necessary extent. It also will be developing traditions of independence, of neutrality, between the two great power blocs.

Now, the significance of Europe in this total picture is quite simply that the total potential of Europe is comparable with that of either the

U.S.S.R. or the U.S.A. The oil production, unless the Sahara could be brought in, wouldn't be comparable to ours, obviously, and steel production would be perhaps not quite as great as ours. But general figures suggest that this is a unit that is of essentially the same economic magnitude as the U.S.A. or U.S.S.R. I don't think I need to say any more about the significance, then, of what happens to Europe in the next 25 years, or whatever is in any sense the foreseeable future.

Then, if it is of great interest to us to have the area first developed to its real potential, (which can be done only by continuing the process of integration) and then to bring this developing community into closer and closer alliance with ours, I am convinced that the relationship will have to become more than an alliance. If this is our goal, we must ask ourselves what elements within the picture will contribute to one or the other of these possible courses of action. This is where I come to France, because, aside from the fact that my subject is France, the question of any form of unification of Europe is necessarily focused on France. I don't mean to suggest that you can integrate Europe with any single country. You can't. Integration obviously involves all countries. But, I think one reason that we cannot count France out, no matter how down she may seem to be, is quite simply that Europe cannot be unified without France. This is a geographical fact.

The question is whether France is capable of playing a role that will help the integration and will help it along the lines in which it will be most favorable for us, and how we can deal with France? Does France have the essential political as well as economic, intellectual, scientific potential and all the others we can readily identify?

It is my impression that the French are not only fully committed to immediate unification--this is beyond debate but in addition are essentially commited to the larger concept of unification of Europe and of the Atlantic community. It is also my conviction that they are in a position to play an important role and to take their full share in shaping this development.

I would like to discuss for the remainder of my time some of the reasons why I think they can do this and some of the places where I think there may be some difficulties. In the first place, the basis of the Common Market is obviously the coal and steel pool. It is the heart of the present economic industrial unification of Europe. The key to this is the Ruhr, but it does involve French iron ore, and it also

involves French production techniques and French market, and, quite possibly, some other assets from overseas. This is a subject that I'll have to touch separately. There isn't any doubt that, if you had to weigh the industrial potential of Germany and France, that of Germany is obviously heavier. There is no question that if, in a nightmare situation, Western Germany were to be taken out of the European alliance the Common Market would be destroyed and integrated Europe would be quite meaningless. But to take France out would have about the same effect. The starting point, therefore, of any European community must be cooperation between the two.

The once critical question of whether France can meet her share of the economic development and modernization seems to me to be in the process of being answered now. At first the French seemed to be behind. They seemed to be very slow in modernizing their economy and industry after the Second World War. But the figures since 1952 show a major revolution going on in France. I understand that some of you will visit France and will see some of the new plants. There are plants that are the most modern of their kind in the world. There is a higher degree of automation, I am told, in the new Renault automobile factory than there is in any single American automobile factory. This is not my business, so I am taking this on advice of friends who are experts in the field. But, whether this is quite literally true or not, it clearly demonstrates that the French are capable of very considerable advance. My friends in business and industry have become deeply interested not only in the French market, but also in opportunities for investment in France. All of this suggests, then, that the French can meet the demands of the Common Market. Actually, the forebodings of the economists who feared that the French economy would not be able to stand the competition of the Common Market have not been borne out at all. According to official figures, the real income in France has dropped slightly in the last six months. There is a chance that these figures are slightly misleading; but whether the real income is slightly off in France or not, there is no question that business in France is booming as it hasn't before in the memory of living people and there seems to be no end in sight.

But even if there would seem to be no cause for concern on the economic side, there would remain the serious question of what kind of government France will have week by week, month by month, and year by year? Will the government continue to be unstable? Will it continue to be open or will it again become open to Communist infiltration? Will the change of cabinets in the government make it impossible to know what an agreement with a French Government will mean

six months or a year or three years hence? In short, is there enough political continuity and stability in France for France to take part in this great common venture?

I think there are two answers to this question. In the first place, I am quite sure that as the Common Market develops, as the process of integration goes on, the concept of the individual nations of France, Germany, Belgium, Holland, and Italy is going to change. I think one of the things that studying history has suggested to me is that it is very hard for us as human beings to see even in past events, and certainly in the events we are witnessing ourselves, the speed of change. I think it is very difficult to realize how fast things are moving. We suddenly find that we have been overtaken by something that we didn't even know was on the way. I think this is the kind of thing that is going on in Europe now. I think that five years hence the notion of independent action on the part of the French Government in any major field that will concern us will turn out to be rather a thing of the past. I don't know just what the constitutional forms will be. I'll talk about the French constitution briefly. I think that the French, and the Germans, and the Italians, all of them are going to become so committed, in so many ways, to one another, and will have developed so many international organs of control, of means of operation, that we will gradually find that we are dealing with a unit rather than the separate pieces.

To take a very tough analogy, and one that wouldn't hold in close detail, it would seem to be the transition that took place on this Continent from our start as 13 States that considered themselves sovereign, and probably at the beginning had more power independently than in the collective body, and the development from that to a Federal Government which is, by all odds and all agreements, the most powerful political unit within our borders. But this is the kind of transition that I think can happen much more rapidly today.

The concept of an independent France, the model of France we have today in her President, the tall and rather dour General DeGaulle, is very good for the cartoonists. This is undoubtedly the way General DeGaulle feels about it; by the time General DeGaulle has finished his service as President, in whatever means and route he departs from the office, we won't by that time be dealing with a totally independent France.

The second thing that I would like to point out (and this is a much longer and more complicated picture) is the relation of the French

people to the problems, political and economic, with which they have been contending. Here I would like to suggest that a good deal of what has seemed to be instability and/or responsibility, and whatever other adjectives one would want to pile up on the unsatisfactory record of French politics, may be not so much a weakness as it would seem to be. Nor is this an apology for instability or irresponsibility in government. Instead it is an attempt to call to your attention the fact that the French have been contending with some extremely difficult problems; in view of this I am not inclined to find the Fourth Republic proves the ordinary things that are said it does prove. For example, I don't think that it proves, as is commonly assumed, that the constitution was very bad. Nor do I think that it proves that the French are incapable of running a democratic government, which their British neighbors are quite sure is the case. I don't think it proves that France has no sense of its relation or responsibility to the Western World.

One can find examples of these weaknesses in France just as one can find them in England. And I regret to say that if I look around enough I can see some of them in our own country. I suspect that this has to do with the human animal brought up in the Western tradition. Actually what we are witnessing in the recent history of France is a people of more or less our own tradition who are confronted with--I was going to say different problems, but I think that isn't accurate--problems similar to ours but in a very much more acute form. And I think that we have not been sufficiently sympathetic to fully understand their situation. Further, I sometimes think we and some of the other Western powers have been inclined to take a rather moral tone toward the French in these matters, instead of trying to understand exactly what it was they were contending with and why it was almost impossible for them to arrive at what seemed to us to be satisfactory solutions.

To give you concrete examples, let me begin first with the situation of the French, at the end of the Second World War. We have to start a story some place--these stories can always be pushed back and back, but, if we take this as a starting point, we find ourselves at the beginning of an epoch in French history. In 1945 the French had a number of assets and liabilities. They found themselves with an industrial plant that had not only been totally outmoded, but also had been terribly abused during the occupation. In other words, they found themselves in need of modernizing and expanding their entire industry. This they set out to do, but the initial results were not very impressive. Although it began as a bootstrap operation they did get a

great deal of aid from us, fairly early, which they succeeded in putting to good use. There was, however, a tendency to measure their achievements by the standards of countries that had a very considerable head start, rather than by their progress from the point at which they started.

As a result of their experience under the occupation, the French state emerged in the postwar world with a very large moral commitment to social responsibility which was accepted by the entire nation. At the end of the war, therefore, they set up a social security system which some of you may not realize is comparable to that of England. Certainly, in terms of the national income, the French social security effort is quite as large as the English one. I think that France could not have done otherwise and avoided civil war. Although this was virtually inevitable, it did pose an almost insoluble problem, because the French had not brought their industrial capacity up to a level that would support this kind of extensive social service.

We in this country in the early years had rather confused reactions to the new developments in France. On the one hand we were very much inclined to tell the French that they had better treat their workers better or they were going to turn their entire proletariat into a Communist party. Perhaps I should take one minute to point out that virtually all the workers were voting Communist at this point. While this does not mean that all of them were members of the Communist party or had any feeling of loyalty to Moscow, it was still a disquieting phenomenon, and the number of card-carrying members who felt loyalty to Moscow was larger than could be contemplated with complacency. And the relation between the Communist voters and Party members is one of the complex points of French politics. All experts, although they don't necessarily agree on quantitative estimates, recognize that a very large part of the people who vote Communist in France are doing this as a social protest and not as a vote for Moscow. But the hard core of card-carrying members has probably run as high as half a million people. And even though it is probably below 100,000, it is still a potential danger.

Having assessed this danger and warned the French that they were not doing enough for their workers, we then tended to go on to chide them for the unbalanced budget which was the direct result of their social program. And this inflation, in turn, was one of the principal causes of the notorious instability of French Governments. The continual fall of cabinets was due to the fact that any cabinet that was in office a few months had to meet commitments for which it simply didn't have funds.

There is a chance, however, that France, say, after 1952 or 1953, when the economy began to revive at a fairly gratifying pace, would have begun to balance her budget and that she would have begun to pay her own way and be able to manage her affairs with a little more stability if her first economic revival had not coincided with the crises in her colonial empire. The disastrous climax of the war in Indochina was followed almost immediately by the transfer of the army to Algeria. Here the costs were tremendous in terms of French capacity. So that the French were continually putting out, in addition to their domestic expenses, vast sums of money on overseas wars. Whether this was wise, and what else they could have done, are very difficult questions.

In retrospect, one has no doubt that, if France had dropped all her imperial commitments in 1944, 1945, or 1946, if she had done as the constitution of the Fourth Republic implied she would do--allow all of the overseas territories to have autonomy in one form or another--she might have avoided all of these problems. This was a kind of decision that was very hard to come to. It was a decision in which her friends were not particularly helpful, because again there was a tendency to attack France on two sides. There was a tendency to call France an imperialist power, and a very considerable tendency, in both England and this country, to feel that imperialism was outmoded and, indeed, a very bad thing. At the same time, there were periods when we were sufficiently concerned about the maintenance of the perimeter of the free world, of containing the Communist powers, that we were willing to back France, and for a while to give her very substantial financial support in her war against Indochina.

So that the French and we together were caught in an ambiguous position. We were "anti-imperialist" but we were also committed to the maintenance of the perimeter of the free world. We had the luxury of being able to criticize imperialism without having to meet its responsibilities. The French, again, were caught facing the responsibility directly. They didn't handle it particularly well, and they paid a very high price for their failure. And the same thing has occurred in Algeria.

All of this was so obvious that it was possible, in 1956, following the general election, to predict that the new assembly, represented by Guy Molet's coalition government, had no chance of resolving the basic French problems, and, therefore, that, as soon as there was a desperate crisis in North Africa, which was virtually inevitable, there would be a collapse in France and DeGaulle would be called to power.

Now the question is: What can be seen now? Can we foresee any hope, or do we have to foresee further difficulties? This, I think, brings me to the question of North Africa, which is a very difficult one, and I won't try to deal with it in detail. At the moment I think it is quite clear to observers--I was in France in September, and I have checked with people who have been there since--that there seems to be very little doubt that the bulk of the population of metropolitan France feels about the war in Algeria now as the American public felt about the war in Korea at the time of President Eisenhower's first election. I think that they are through with the war and they have come to the place now where they don't care how it is resolved.

We have heard a good deal about the role of the French of Algeria and their attitudes, and we have seen examples of their behavior, and we have heard a good deal about their relation to the army. Here I think there are one or two things that have to be stated quite clearly. I don't have any sympathy at all for the political views of the French of Algeria, but I think in estimating the situation it would be sheer folly not to realize that they are a desperate people. They foresee either total victory against the FLN or they see their own annihilation by incredibly gruesome methods. And further, the significance of this conviction lies not in its accuracy but in the desperation with which it is held. Nor would I wish to imply that the Algerian French exaggerated their danger. What can be done in such a situation? If there appears to be no solution now, we should remember that history is developing and changing, and I am quite sure that five years hence we are going to have a very different situation. I am a little reluctant to predict, but I'll hazard a guess as to what will happen. My guess is that the bulk of the Algerian French (which includes, as some of you may know, quite a number of people of Spanish and Italian and other Mediterranean stocks but fairly assimilated to French culture) will simply be transported to France. I say this, not from any inside knowledge, but because I can't for the life of me imagine any other way of handling the situation. I don't believe that the army can put down the civil war, because I don't think the army can fight on equal terms with the rebels.

The French army, we all know, has been charged with some pretty serious crimes against FLN prisoners, but we also should know the kind of violent protest that is provoked in France when the Army does use torture even though these extreme methods are simply an attempt to match the methods of the rebels. I don't think that the military will ever be given a free hand to fight the kind of war the rebels are fighting. The war the rebels are fighting, of course, is a

direct challenge to any form of established law and order. It is primarily a civil-social war among Arabs. The French are really in this as a third party. There is very little doubt that the rebels will end, if they are not totally subdued, by massacring the people of the French standard of living, and the victims will include far more Arabs than French. In the first place, I assume the French will be gotten out in large numbers. But there are some 2 million Arabs who live a totally French life, on a French standard of living, and another 2 million who live closely associated with them primarily as household servants. These people will be the principal victims of the social revolt in Algeria.

To put down the Arab revolt would necessitate a scale of operations and fanatical determination which I doubt even the extremists seriously contemplate. So that it seems to me that here is another "insoluble" problem, but I think it is a problem that will be changed, simply because metropolitan France won't continue this kind of effort. I cannot however predict exactly how or when the final decision will come.

I'll try to sum up very briefly some of these remarks. It seems to me that in the present situation our chief interest is in Europe and in the key process of European integration. The critical question is whether France can play her role; and I would like to add that I think it must be a key role. The reason I think it must be a key role is that I think there is no other country in Europe as capable of giving the kind of leadership to the development of Europe and the participation of Europe in an Atlantic community as the French are.

One thing I am very much impressed by, as I read the newspapers and try to get a sense of the world in which I am living, is that the West has an asset that is not replaceable; that is, people of democratic tradition. We can talk about uncommitted parts of the world, but one thing that we are learning rapidly is that whatever we can do in terms of aid--and I am not the slightest opposed to point 4 aid in various parts of the world--we don't make Democrats. Democrats are an asset which we have only in our own country and in Europe, and, if we lose Democrats, they are lost permanently, but it is going to take a very long time--we don't know how long, but generations, anyway--a very long time to foster new democratic roots.

Democracy flourishes in France, (and I'd be glad to deal with this in terms of questions) but I am very much impressed with the fact that the French view of life, their value of life, their ways of doing things

politically, are strikingly similar to our own. They are not identical. No people have exactly the same ways and views; but the basic reactions in France are very similar to ours. Their miserable record in the last years is to my mind attributable primarily--not exclusively, but primarily--to the fact that they have been facing agonizing questions from which they could not escape either by postponement or evasion. They have had to meet all of the most agonizing problems that are facing democracies today, that we ourselves are going to have to face. They have been facing them almost all at the same time, with very limited resources, and with commitments that are contradictory and hard to handle all at one time.

I think this is essentially the explanation of their failure to run their political life more effectively. It can be summed up, I think, in saying that every major problem that France faces can be solved today only by serious sacrifice (or at least acceptance of real discomfort and inconvenience) by a major section of the population, say one-sixth of the electorate. The Fourth Republic had to try to meet every one of its major problems by getting a democratic electorate to agree that a good segment would have to absorb a heavy penalty, or dislocation, for a given length of time. Now, we do know that, if populations will absorb what seems to be difficult adjustment, they may soon be very much better off. Human beings, constituted as they are, don't like to do this even if they are sure to be better off in the foreseeable future. This is what the French have had to face, and the combination of parties in their assembly were simply ad hoc organization of mutual defense.

The Algerian French, for example, don't want a rational solution of the war in Algeria because, at the very least, it will mean that they will have to be transported to another country to start another kind of life. They might be better off than in Algeria, but they don't want to be at the cost of being uprooted. Some of them are rich and have important property; the bulk of them actually don't have any very heavy financial investment; but they do have the personal investment represented by their homes. The Poujadists about whom you heard a great deal some while ago, are, in effect, being asked to go to work and earn enough money to pay taxes. These are the small shopkeepers. They like being small shopkeepers. It is pleasant to live in a small French country town. Many of them did not possess the money to pay their taxes. When their miserable effects were sold at auction, even when there weren't buyers' strikes, the whole capital could be represented by $25, $50, or $100. There was nothing dishonest about this.

They were quite genuinely bankrupt but this really wasn't the issue. The issue was that they were not sufficiently productive to carry their share of the nation's obligations. To meet this they would have to go to work in a factory, in a chain store, as such stores developed, neither of which they wanted to do. It is almost certain that such a change would have left them much better off from a monetary point of view.

Well, I won't develop these examples further. This is, in short, the kind of picture I want to show. So I would end by saying that France's position in world politics is an important one. It is important because France is an integral part of the new, unified Europe, and the lead that the French give intellectually and politically will have a great deal to do with whether Europe develops into some form of North Atlantic community or not. I think that this is essentially what the French would want to do if they could manage their own problems and take their full share of international responsibility.

I think they have as good human resources to handle their problems democratically as any of the rest of us, give or take a little, that they are beginning to handle some of their physical problems, that if the North African situation can be solved they will probably prosper and develop a fairly stable government. Under these circumstances, when DeGaulle departs, my prediction is that the French will more or less ignore the paper constitution they have been left with and will return in effect to essentially the constitution that they had, a kind of unwritten constitution, which was essentially what they had in the Fourth Republic, and the Third before, and will operate as a democratic part of the Western World.

COLONEL HAWKINS: Gentlemen, Dr. Fox is now ready for your questions.

QUESTION: Sir, the one thing that you didn't mention about the Algerian possibility is that France is doing what she should have done years ago, building more schools, bringing the people up by their bootstraps to the present level, letting them take their place in government under French direction. I notice that in the last couple years they have poured an awful lot of money into Algeria, and I wonder, in their doing more of that, whether there is any possibility of solving that situation and not having to evacuate.

DR. FOX: That's a very good question. Gentlemen, I must apologize for not talking very extensively about Algeria either before

or in the question period, because I have not been to Algeria. I think I know metropolitan France pretty well. I have been in all but two or three departments and have studied it most of my life. I know Algeria only as it is reflected through France, through the French press, and through my friends who have been in Algeria in all sorts of capacities. My impression, however, is that the French have in fact put a heavy investment into Algeria in terms of schools, hospitals, and so on, and that this probably is not a solution in any sense. The reason I say this is, quite simply, that in about 1900 the native population of Algeria was in the order of 2 million. These population figures are very inexact. But it was something in that order.

As a result of French developments, which have come essentially in the 20th century, and which were initially French investment for profit, to be sure, but did involve large-scale farming and irrigation, which produced more food, and produced more jobs for people to work at, although they were ill paid, and provided modern sanitation, essentially for their own protection, the Arab population began to increase. Then in the thirties the French began to put in a good deal more in the way of schools and hospitals (at least in terms of their capacity at the time to do this sort of thing) and the population increased some more.

Now, as I understand, there are something in the order of a million "French," of whatever European descent, and with this, as I suggested, perhaps 2 million Arabs who are living in a completely French standard and way of life, and a couple million more who are attached to them; and beyond this you have 4 or 5 million people who are living totally outside of the economy. I don't know that anyone would be able to catch up with that population in terms of development of land, of hospitals, and of schools. This question of population explosion is a highly complicated one.

What is happening there is that the population is running ahead of French reforms and French construction. This is one point. The second is that what is really going on in Algeria is a major social revolution. It is class warfare and the FLN are not interested in participating in a European civilization; they are interested in destroying it.

A few years ago an official representative of the FLN spoke at Cornell. I was never so astonished in my life. He began his speech by saying, "We are not playing baseball. We will win this war because we will kill and be killed to the extent of 2 million if need be. The French simply haven't got the guts to do it. They won't kill 2 million of

us. We'll kill 2 million of them and we will be killed to the extent of 2 million ourselves. They are too civilized." I left that lecture hall with a feeling of discouragement.

QUESTION: Sir, in observing the drift of France to the position where DeGaulle took charge, it seems like a picture of its being inevitable that he be in charge, but it isn't anything positive that he wants to do but rather the negative business of thinking, "When things get bad enough we will retreat to him." Is that a true picture of what happened?

DR. FOX: Yes, as far as you have stated it, I think that is a true picture. I think that all democracies in the modern world are going to find that it is very difficult to make the kind of rapid and sometimes very painful decisions by completely free and democratic means. I think that, just as in the Second World War the British and we placed a very large amount of authority and responsibility in the hands of a very few men, I think that in crises any democracy is going to tend to do this. I don't think this should be confused with dictatorship in the fascist sense of the word at all. One can lead into the other, but I don't think they are the same thing.

I think that this is what the French did. They found that by their very democratic political methods they simply could not bring themselves to make the necessary decision when they got to an absolute impasse, and they brought in the one man that everybody in the country recognized as being absolutely honest, as being quite devoid of any vulgar personal ambition, and of being wholly impartial and dedicated to the nation. They knew perfectly well that when they brought him in he was going to make the same decisions that they had been unwilling to make themselves but they found this slightly less agonizing than having to perform "surgery" on themselves.

QUESTION: Sir, the figures published by the United Nations in their Demographic Year Book show a gap in the French population in the ages 12 to 18. It's almost unbelievable, it's of such a size. If those figures are correct, would you address yourself to the economic and European position of France as that age group moves into the work age, five years from now?

DR. FOX: Well, I can't reproduce for you the demographic pyramid. France has more old people than any other country in the western European complex, and also more very young people. I would have thought that the rise in the birth rate started earlier than your

figures suggest. But, since you have looked at it more recently than I have, I'll take your word for it--anyway it's 12 or 14. The gap that the French talk about themselves, and they talk about this a great deal, is between the people who were military age in 1914 and the older people, that is, the very old, as against the post-World War II babies. There they are very much concerned with the fact that the people of middle age, the people who are now productive in France, have a heavier burden of young and old to carry than any other population.

On the other hand, French demographers are very much encouraged by the extraordinarily rapid increase at the lower ages. You can't make 40-year-olds. You can't go ahead and create them. But there are a lot of babies, and Sauvy figures that by 1970 the population of France will be larger than that of West Germany. Of course, as the French population begins to go up--the French go to work at age 15 and 16--the postwar babies are going to start working in a productive sense within the next few years. Once that starts they will begin to have the youngest active population in Europe.

I don't know that this is an answer. Your question was much more precise than my answer; but it seems nearly certain that between 1965 and 1970 the French will move from a weak position demographically to a very strong one.

QUESTION: Dr. Fox, you stated that you believe that France would be committed to a larger integration of the Atlantic community, and yet during the past several years General DeGaulle has insisted on tripartite talks between the United States, the U.K., and France on problems not only outside of NATO but within NATO. Are these two positions consistent?

DR. FOX: I am very glad you asked that question. This is an obvious point to be taken up. The first answer is that obviously they are not consistent. The second is that DeGaulle talks French independence but doesn't act accordingly. The reason behind that is, I think, first that DeGaulle really doesn't understand economic matters. The French, including his supporters, are quite clear about this. He has recently surprised everyone by supporting the more modern elements in French economic planning. But this should not be so surprising, since he is not a 19th century bourgeois but essentially a 17th century intellectual and he doesn't understand modern capitalism so therefore the concept of a managed economy is not repugnant to him. He is not much interested in it and he doesn't know how it works, but, in a recent cabinet shuffle in which Pinay left--and I gather in the

course of leaving deprived you of one of your scheduled speakers--the struggle behind the scenes was between the essentially conservative financial groups--Pinay represents the Banque de Paris et des Pays Bas, which is one of the strongest remaining private investment banks in France--and the Plan Monet people, largely the men from the famous Ecole Politechnique, who are the engineers in France. Both of these groups are from the political center. There is nothing radical about either one. But the Grand Patronat, which is vaguely similar to our NAM--it's a rather vague similarity--is sharply split between these same two groups. The bank and the owners want to hold development down to a slow pace, and the technicians, the Monet-Politechnique group, are very eager to go ahead rapidly. Pinay lost out in the struggle and DeGaulle backed the moderns. These are the people who are sending their production teams over here all the time and are terribly keen about our development.

The people around DeGaulle are all committed to as much economic integration and development as possible, and it would take an extremely strong and determined and reactionary individual to force any reversal at this point.

A different but important aspect of this general problem is that we have tended to stiffen DeGaulle's position and strengthen his hand by annoying and harassing him. By not treating him as an equal, or confiding in him, we have encouraged him to distrust and oppose our official policies; and in general the less cooperative DeGaulle was the more concessions he wrung from us. Because the French were weak militarily at the end of the war, and their government was unstable, and so on, we seem to have felt that we just couldn't place any confidence in them. But they were necessary to us, and I think that, the more we had taken them into our confidence and the more closely we had worked with them, the faster we would have brought them up to the level of strength and stability we wanted.

QUESTION: It is the opinion of a lot of people that France's economic budgetary problems are at least aggravated by the rather irresponsible attitude of the French people toward the payment of taxes. If this is correct, do you see any possibility for a change in this attitude?

DR. FOX: In the first place, this is not correct. This is one of the most serious myths that persists in the Anglo-Saxon world. The French collect--I am not talking about assess--a larger proportion of

the national income above the subsistence level than either the English or the Americans do. And they get it. It isn't a question of whether the French like to avoid paying taxes. It is taken right out of their income. Also, we don't know very much in this country or in England nowadays about the degree of nonpayment of taxes. This is another one of the problems that all democracies are coping with. There are one or two things that can be said about the French system that might be of interest or use to you. One that I already referred to is the case of Poujade. I don't know whether that reference was clear to all of you or not. Pierre Poujade was a strange grassroot politician, a right-wing demagogue, who started a party of those opposed to paying taxes. His followers were drawn largely from those whom I described a few minutes ago, who owed very little in taxes but didn't have enough money to pay even a small amount. A permanent official of the Ministry of Finance, M. Paul Delouvrier (who is now the civilian governor of Algeria), told me that it would cost more to collect taxes from the small shopkeepers than the taxes would produce. The government's efforts at enforcement were part of a campaign to force these people to earn enough money to pay taxes. It was, in effect, part of the plan to modernize the country and increase production.

Another interesting aspect of this problem is the French method of paying taxes. The law does not require the citizen to declare his income. Instead, he appears before a local official--the preceptor--with a statement of how much tax he intends to pay. The figure is supposed to be arrived at according to a formula, but only the result, not the full accounting is submitted. The preceptor considers the proposal and consults his file. He then usually says, in effect, "This is a perfectly silly amount." Then he doubles the figure and the two spend a certain amount of time haggling over the appropriate compromise. Finally the preceptor fixes the amount and the victim either pays it or takes the matter to court and, after revealing his income figures, gets a judgment. The French have a deep prejudice, however, against revealing their income. Delouvrier illustrated the depth of this prejudice by saying, the first time I met him, that "It would be perfectly possible for me--don't worry, I won't do it--but it would be perfectly possible for me to discuss my sexual life with you, even as far as my wife is concerned, but I couldn't tell you about my bank account," and added, "I understand with you it is rather the reverse."

COLONEL HAWKINS: Gentlemen, I am afraid we will have to draw this to a close. Professor, you have heard the conversation that was taking place when we came back into the room indicating how much you have stimulated our thoughts toward France today. We thank you very much for being with us.

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