39

CONFIDENTIAL

Friday, July 28, 1967 - 9:25am

Pres file

Mr. President:

Sec. Rusk recommends for evening reading this thoughtful analysis of de Gaulle's somewhat disturbed frame of mind on foreign policy.

W. W. Rostow

REU-40, July 26, 1967

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

WWRostow:rln

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE
DIRECTOR OF INTELLIGENCE AND RESEARCH

Research Memorandum

REU-40, July 26, 1967

To : The Secretary
Through: S/S
From : INR - Thomas L. Hughes Thomas L. Hughes

Subject: De Gaulle's Stepped-Up Anti-Americanism and The Crisis of French Foreign Policy

During the last two months General de Gaulle has acted as if his foreign policy faced a crisis which might prove fatal to it. This paper analyzes the dimensions of that crisis as seen by de Gaulle and its implications for his future course of action.

ABSTRACT

It has been clear since the Israeli-Arab conflict that General de Gaulle has been profoundly disturbed by the implications of the Middle East crisis. For a time it appeared as if he were reacting to the failure of his own plan for four-power action in the crisis, or to the danger of an open conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union, or to the prospect of an abrupt halt in that movement toward detente on which his European policy is based. More recently, however, it has become clearer that he has been less alarmed by the prospect that the Big Two might clash and more concerned by the prospect that they might decide to work together to impose their authority in troubled areas, such as the Middle East and Vietnam, and to reimpose it in Europe, where it has recently--to de Gaulle's satisfaction--been relaxing.

In the Middle East itself, de Gaulle has had to face the fact that his hope to maintain a balance of power in the area, whereby the local states could maintain their "independence" of the two blocs, vanished as a result of the recent conflict. Since Israel now looks to Washington, in his view, and most

This report was produced by the Bureau of Intelligence and Research. Aside from normal substantive exchange with other agencies at the working level, it has not been coordinated elsewhere.

of the Arab states to Moscow, the area will now either be torn by the conflict of the Big Two or will be divided between them. De Gaulle's undisguised effort to demonstrate French partiality toward the Arabs is a frantic and forlorn attempt to try to restore the previous power balance in the area.

Far more ominous to de Gaulle than the fate of the Middle East is the prospect that the Soviet Union, after backing down, as he sees it, before the United States in the Middle East, and advertising its rout at Glassboro and at the United Nations, may now decide to reconfirm the "Yalta" status quo in Europe. He now fears that the USSR may abandon hope of success for its policy, complementary to de Gaulle's, of driving the US from Western Europe by encouraging France and West Germany to assert their "independence" of Washington. Instead, the General is concerned that Moscow may now accept continued American "hegemony" over Western Europe in return for reciprocal recognition of its own sphere in Eastern Europe, or at least for the consolidation of the East-West status quo. This, of course, would be checkmate to de Gaulle's policy of "detente, entente and cooperation" from the Atlantic to the Urals.

De Gaulle's answer to what he must view as an imminent threat has been to redouble his warnings about the danger of American "hegemony," a danger which he sees strengthened by Soviet weakness in relation to US strength. In particular, he is trying harder than ever now to convince the Germans that prospects for reunification can be preserved only if they follow France's path and reject US leadership, since the US is likely to sacrifice those prospects in order to maintain the American position in Europe. The effect of this on the Germans cannot yet be fully gauged. But for de Gaulle the matter is urgent. He seems to believe that if he fails now, prospects for weakening the hold of the two superpowers on the two halves of the continent which are under their

shadows will dwindle away, and the nations of Europe will be as far as ever from attaining that "independence" (under general French leadership) for which he has fought.

R-76

During the last two months there has been a marked change in the tone and mood of French foreign policy if not in its basic substance. General de Gaulle's sharp switch from a "balanced" position in the Middle East to a strongly pro-Arab and even, it might be said, pro-Soviet line, and the stridently "anti-American" tone that has accompanied this shift, have led many to conclude that, whether from age or pique, the General's policy has become much more emotionally guided than before. While this may be true to some degree, it is nevertheless possible to tie these events together in a pattern which is consistent with French foreign policy as it has developed over the last several years. Thus analyzed, his sharp tone can perhaps be better understood as a sign of frustration, since all the bases of de Gaulle's foreign policy appear to have been placed in jeopardy by recent events.

De Gaulle's Fear. Several weeks after fighting had ceased in the Middle East, and after the first Kosygin visit to Paris, the French government made known that General de Gaulle viewed the world scene with profound pessimism and disquiet. At the time it was widely thought that he had been impressed by Kosygin's firmness and therefore feared a violent confrontation between the Big Two. Whatever de Gaulle may have felt then, it now appears that his concern is quite different: what he fears now is not Soviet firmness but Soviet weakness, not a Big Two confrontation but a Big Two agreement.

The exact nature of de Gaulle's alarm is admirably defined by an article in the July 15 issue of The Economist. This article calls on the United States and the Soviet Union to come to a basic agreement in these terms:

> "But if Russia and America are not going to retire from the world, they will have to do the opposite. They will have to make sure they have a real grip on things. This means, at the very least, agreeing that there are certain parts of the world which are too important to both of them to be allowed to fall wholly under the control of either, or of anybody else. It means a pretty precise definition of their essential spheres of influence in these areas, and an agreement to make these spheres stick. It has already been done in Europe. It needs to be done in south-east Asia and the Middle East too...What it amounts to is the beginning of a loose, informal and indirect condominium over certain specified regions. Put it another way: it amounts to the beginning of a rudimentary form of international government." /Emphasis added/

It would be difficult to find a more precise description of de Gaulle's guiding nightmare than this. For years he has railed against the old Yalta agreements, which supposedly divided the world between the Big Two, and has warned against a new Yalta, which would seek to maintain that division; for years he has urged the nations of the third world to withdraw from Great Power competitions by maintaining "independence"; for years he has worked to loosen the two blocs in Europe and to bring about the fallback of the Big Two from Central Europe, in order to end the "condominium" which deprives the nations of Europe of their independence. All this policy has been called into question by the Middle East crisis--and by the reaction to it of the Big Two.

European states voted for that resolution (Spain and Greece, neither of which was following a French lead), and only six of France's associated African states (of which Congo, Mauretania and Mali would have done so whatever France did), though several of the latter abstained on the Latin American resolution.

But this public advertisement of isolation presumably does not disturb de Gaulle unduly. His purpose was not only to show the defeated Arabs that they had friends other than the Communist bloc (though this is a forlorn policy for the present, as indicated above), but, much more important, to try to right the balance of power which Soviet weakness--as he sees it-- had upset. De Gaulle clearly reads the conflict as an American victory. In that circumstance, his balance of power instinct immediately draws him to the weaker side: that of the Soviet Union. Only thus, in his view, can the natural expansiveness of the greater power--the United States--be checked, as it must be if de Gaulle's policy of weakening both blocs is to have a chance of success.

Going beyond giving diplomatic support to the Russians, de Gaulle is taking every opportunity to point out that the world balance--on which the hopes of independence of all states except the Big Two depend--has been upset and must be righted. Hence, he has redoubled his attacks (by no means new in themselves) on American "hegemony." The Soviet danger, already slight in his view, is now obviously seen as entirely negligible; by definition the increased power position of the other hegemony is the more menacing. Indeed, de Gaulle would apparently deny that there can be several different threats of different magnitude at a given time; according to the logic of his present position, only the strongest is a threat to others, and it is so by definition, whatever its subjective intentions. That this menace happens to come from the United States now, according to this system, suits de Gaulle perfectly well, since, after all, France and the countries whose "independence" he most wants to protect are all members of an alliance system headed by the United States.

Europe: Threatened By A "New Yalta." The greatest threat that de Gaulle sees to his policy is not in the Middle East but in Europe itself. He no doubt now fears that the USSR, in its eagerness to reach an accommodation with the United States, may be inclined to abandon tentative detente dealings with France and instead to try to reconfirm the Yalta division of Europe, thereby giving up its--and his--hope of getting the United States out of Europe. The losers in such a transaction, in de Gaulle's eyes, would be France, West Germany and the states of Eastern Europe, all of which will remain, willy-nilly, in the camp or under the shadow of one or the other of the Big Two for as long as the Big Two are together determined to maintain the status quo.

De Gaulle has loosed this analysis full blast on the Germans. His strong public endorsement of the unification of Germany is meant to remind them that a new Yalta would mean their permanent division, that the US would willingly sacrifice German unity to maintain its own position in Europe, and that only by asserting their own national "personality," as France has done, can they establish those conditions which might eventually bring Moscow around to a deal with Western Europe, on the basis of the reunification of Europe and of Germany, rather than with the United States, on the basis of the continued partition of both.