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Friday, July 28, 1967
8:00 a.m.

41
Pres. file

Mr. President:

Herewith Bohlen analyses de Gaulle's state of mind, his Canadian performance, and its first effects on French opinion. A summary of French press is also attached.

W. W. Rostow

Paris 1288, July 27, 1967
Paris 1285, July 27, 1967

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E.O. 12356, Sec. 3.4(b)
White House Guidelines, Feb. 24, 1983
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ACTION SS 25

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FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
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EXDIS

DEPT. PASS AMEMBASSY LONDON, AMEMBASSY BONN, AND AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

DE GAULLE HAS ALWAYS BEEN KNOWN AS A MAN OF STRONG AND DEFINITE VIEWS, WHICH HE HAS HAD NO INHIBITIONS IN EXPRESSING. HOWEVER, ALONG WITH THIS DE GAULLE UP UNTIL RECENTLY HAD ALWAYS HAD A SENSE OF MEASURE, OF TIMING, OF PLACE AND APPROPRIATENESS. IT HAS NOW BECOME INCREASINGLY APPARENT THAT DE GAULLE HAS LOST THIS SENSE OF TIMING AND OF APPROPRIATENESS AND HIS PUBLIC UTTERANCES AND INDEED ACTIONS HAVE MORE AND MORE TAKEN ON A PURELY WILLFUL AND PERSONAL CHARACTER. ACCORDING TO OUR INFORMATION, DE GAULLE CONDUCTS COMPLETELY SINGLE-HANDEDLY FRENCH

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FOREIGN POLICY AND IS MORE AND MORE NEGLECTING OTHER ASPECTS OF GOVERNMENT ACTIVITIES. HIS STATEMENTS ON VIETNAM, WHICH HAVE TENDED MORE AND MORE TO FREE HIMSELF FROM THE NORMAL RESTRAINTS, HIS ACTION ON THE COMMON MARKET, AND FINALLY, THE RECENT AND MOST INCREDIBLE OF ALL, HIS BEHAVIOR IN CANADA, HAVE ALL REFLECTED THIS TENDENCY. IT WOULD SEEM THAT DE GAULLE IS SUFFERING FROM TWO ASPECTS OF OLD AGE: (1) A PROGRESSIVE HARDENING OF THE PREJUDICES OF WHICH HE HAD PLENTY, AND (2) A GROWING INDIFFERENCE AND EVEN UNCONCERN WITH THE EFFECT OF HIS WORDS ON INTERNATIONAL AND FRENCH PUBLIC OPINION. THE FIXATION WHICH HE HAS ALWAYS HAD IN REGARD TO THE POWER AND SIZE OF THE UNITED STATES HAS GROWN INTO

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A COMPULSIVE OBSESSION. I HAVE ALWAYS HELD THE VIEW, AND STILL DO, THAT BASICALLY AND ORIGINALLY DE GAULLE'S ANTAGONISM TO THE UNITED STATES WAS BASED UPON HIS VIEW OF OUR SIZE AND POWER, COUPLED WITH THE TRADITIONAL FRIENDLINESS OF THE UNITED STATES TOWARDS FRANCE. THESE, IN DE GAULLE'S VIEW, CONSTITUTED THE CHIEF ELEMENTS OF A POWER WHICH WAS DANGEROUS IN REGARD TO THE INDEPENDENCE OF FRENCH ACTION. HOWEVER, AS I RECENTLY REPORTED

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(PARIS 808), AN ATTITUDE, WHATEVER ITS ORIGINAL MOTIVATION, IF CONSISTENTLY HELD AND ACTED UPON EVENTUALLY BECOMES A SUBJECTIVE OBSESSION. THIS IS CLEAR NOW IN THE CASE OF DE GAULLE'S VIEW OF THE UNITED STATES. WE HAVE NOTED THAT ALONG WITH HIS POWERFUL INTRUSION INTO CANADIAN DOMESTIC AFFAIRS IN FAVOR OF THE FRENCH CANADIANS DE GAULLE FOUND TWO OCCASIONS TO MAKE RELATIVELY MILD CRACKS ABOUT THE UNITED STATES AND ITS SIZE. I FEEL, HOWEVER, THAT NOW WE MUST DEFINITELY RECOGNIZE THAT ONE OF THE MOTIVATING FORCES OF DEGAULLE'S CONDUCT OF FOREIGN POLICY IS HIS ANTI-AMERICAN OBSESSION AND I BELIEVE THAT WE CAN EXPECT THAT ALMOST ANYTHING HE SAYS IN THE FUTURE WILL CONTAIN SOME UNCOMPLIMENTARY REFERENCES TOWARD UNITED STATES. HIS PERFORMANCE IN CANADA HAS COME AS A DISTURBING AND UNSETTLING SHOCK TO FRENCH PUBLIC OPINION. VIRTUALLY THE ENTIRE PRESS HAS BEEN OPENLY AND SEVERELY CRITICAL OF DE GAULLE PERSONALLY. CHARACTERISTIC OF THIS TONE IS AN EDITORIAL IN FIGARO THIS MORNING WHICH AFTER CRITICIZING DE GAULLE VERY SEVERELY, ENDS

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UP WITH "WHY"? THE PREVAILING MOOD AMONG SUCH FRENCH AS CAN BE MET IN PARIS AT THIS SEASON IS ONE OF INCREDULITY AND HUMILIATION BECAUSE DE GAULLE HAS VIOLATED WHAT THE FRENCH REGARD AS ONE OF THEIR CHIEF ATTRIBUTES, NAMELY THAT OF GOOD TASTE. ALSO, NO ONE THERE CAN UNDERSTAND EXACTLY WHAT DE GAULLE WAS DRIVING AT. NATURALLY IT IS THE EFFECT ON THE FRENCH DOMESTIC POLITICAL SCENE WHICH WILL BE OF CHIEF INTEREST. IN ALL PROBABILITY THERE WILL

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BE MORE REACTION THAN ACTION DURING AUGUST WHEN EVERYONE, INCLUDING ALL MEMBERS OF THE GOVERNMENT, WILL BE ON VACATION, AND IT IS YET TOO SOON TO STATE EXACTLY WHAT EFFECT THE CANADIAN FIASCO WILL EVENTUALLY HAVE ON THE DOMESTIC SCENE. HOWEVER, TOGETHER WITH DE GAULLE'S POLICY ON THE MIDDLE EAST, THE CANADIAN FIASCO WILL BE ONE MORE MAJOR ERROR OF DE GAULLE IN THE GENERAL PICTURE. IT IS TO BE ASSUMED THAT EVEN THE MOST HARDENED GAULLISTS MUST BE LEFT WITH A SENSATION OF FRUSTRATION AND BEWILDERMENT. IT IS PERHAPS TOO SOON TO STATE THAT DE GAULLE IS "BECOMING SENILE", BUT CERTAINLY THE RESTRAINT WHICH USED TO ACCOMPANY HIS ACTIONS AND CHARACTERIZES HIS WORDS SEEMS TO BE SLIPPING VERY BADLY.

BOHLEN

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