

*The Premier of France*

The Atlantic alliance seems to me even more important today than it was eight years ago at the moment of its creation. Also, it imposes, perhaps more than ever, a perfect entente among the allied nations on strategic and tactical planes. It is necessary that these decisions be taken in common when it comes to effectives and armaments, and if technical developments raise new problems in this domain they must be resolved in common. I insist upon solemnly recalling these requirements before you.

I shall say a few words to you now on a purely French problem but which is such a grave one for us that I want to tell you about it personally. It has to do with Algeria. Your government in the course of the debate in the United Nations has accorded us the loyal and unfailing support which we have asked of it, and I should like to express to it here the thanks of France.

The Algerian problem, unhappily, is too little known outside of France. In completely good faith, many of our friends think that our policy is nothing more than a manifestation of obsolete colonialism. I shall speak to you quite frankly and quite directly. In my eyes, what is most essential in the Algerian affair is not to maintain the links between Algeria and France. That is far too much in the interests of Algeria to be seriously questioned. The aid which France has given to Algeria since the second world war, to cite only one figure, represents twice the sum of all the moneys France herself received under the Marshall plan.

The fundamental element in the Algerian problem is the presence in the country of two groups, each distinct from the other, both important and each indispensable to the life of the other—1,200,000 Algerians of European origin on one side and 8,000,000 Moslems on the other.

The Algerians of European origin began to settle there in 1830. They have their families in Algeria and they have their dead. Algeria is their country—their *patrie*—and, for the most part, it is their toil which has developed its resources. They feel like pioneers, and that is what they are. It is not acceptable that they be oppressed or chased out today by the mass of the Moslems, any more than it is acceptable that they profit by temporary economic advantages to oppress the Moslems. The key to the Algerian problem is to obtain, at one and the same time, full equality of rights for all the inhabitants of Algeria—economic as well as political rights—and the coexistence of the group of European origin and of Moslem origin, without either being able to oppress the other. The first step

toward any settlement is that violence cease. Also, France has proposed a “cease-fire” without any political “strings”. To settle the general conditions, the French government is ready to make direct and official contact with those who are fighting.

Within three months of a return to peace, free single college elections will be organized. Each will be able to vote according to his conscience. We invite the democratic nations to send their representatives to Algeria so they may observe the proper procedure of the vote.

It is with these elected representatives of Algeria, whatever their political opinions, that we would discuss the future organization of Algeria. It will result in the agreement of all the interested parties, that is to say, the populations of Algeria and the populations of France.

This is the contents of the French program for Algeria. You will agree with me that it conforms to the principles of democracy. The play is now to our adversaries. We offer them a cease-fire. Are they ready to renounce violence? We propose free elections, held under the eyes of representatives of the democratic countries, and immediate discussion with the elected representatives of the Algerian populations. Why have they refused up to now? France is not discouraged. She will multiply, tirelessly, the efforts to convince all the inhabitants of Algeria of her will to peace and justice.

You may be surprised that I have not taken advantage of this political survey to say a few words to you about another problem, namely the situation in the Middle East. Whatever may have been our disagreements at one moment, I must underline the positive character and the extreme usefulness of the initiatives taken by the Canadian government, how its interventions, always animated by the most friendly spirit, have often been decisive.

An important step has been taken in the Middle East toward the restoration of an enduring peace, founded on justice and respect for international law, which is the common aim of our countries. France has not been a stranger to the agreements which have been made, and I have the right to say that she has considerably aided in their conclusion.

The retreat of Israel from Gaza and the straits of Sharm al-Shaikh does not constitute an end. The intervention of the United Nations emergency force makes it possible to avoid a return, pure and simple, to the original situation. It is indispensable that we profit by its presence to conclude a general peace settlement. A partial or provisional settlement in the Middle East will always be a bad solution. Our peoples will not permit