

REACTIONS TO ALLIED INTERVENTION IN NORTH AFRICA

June 25 to July 7

When the French Committee of National Liberation met on June 21 the main question before it was how to compose the mutually incompatible proposals of Generals Giraud and de Gaulle concerning control of French armed forces. General Giraud desired to be Commander in Chief, subject to no superior authority except that of the Allied High Command. General de Gaulle, on the contrary, wished to be appointed Commissioner for Defence in the Committee of National Liberation, in which capacity under French law he would have enjoyed power of direct removal, with the consent of the Committee, over the Commander in Chief.

The compromise worked out on the following day was said to have been decided upon partly as a result of an Allied demand that General Giraud be definitely retained as Commander in Chief of French forces in North Africa and that General de Gaulle cease agitating for a purge of officers under General Giraud's command. Since the Allies insisted, on the ground of military necessity, the Committee of National Liberation consented to make General Giraud's appointment definitive. To General de Gaulle it assigned command of French forces in the Levant and in all parts of the French Empire outside French North and French West Africa, leaving the problem of unification of the army to be dealt with by a committee of eight, itself divided equally between Giraudists and de Gaullists.

This decision, and more especially the Allied démarche which was partly responsible for it, have occasioned an outburst in the press. It is true that some of the opinions summarized in this issue of the Review were expressed in a mood of uncertainty deriving from the knowledge that censorship restrictions had prevented publication of a full factual statement of what actually took place. The opinions are none the less important, however, as