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TWELFTH PRESS CONFERENCE HELD BY GENERAL DE GAULLE
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IN PARIS AT THE ELYSEE PALACE
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Indian-Pakistani Conflict

Question: General, what do you have to say about the current crisis between India and Pakistan?

Question: I would like to broaden by colleague's question on the Indian-Pakistani subject. I would like to know if France, which is allied with Pakistan in the framework of the SEATO Treaty, for example, should take a stand for its partner or, on the contrary, preach conciliation?

Answer: On the question you have asked me about the deplorable conflict that is now taking place between Pakistan and India, I will simply say this to you today: once again, it is deplorable. For the time being, a procedure has been started in the normal way by the United Nations Organization, and particularly by its Secretary General who is on the scene, and it can be hoped that his steps will lead to the establishment of a cease-fire. This will, of course, be only a temporary solution.

Question: General, after the summer, we hear conflicting judgments on the country's economic situation. Some are optimistic, the others pessimistic. Could you tell us what you think about it, and, more precisely, what prospects the Fifth Plan could open up in this respect?

Answer: I do not think that the studies, the discussions, the conclusions on our economic and social situation, on the conditions of our development, on the goals that we must attain, on the action that we must therefore take, have ever been so methodical and so thorough as they have been this year. The formulation of the Fifth Plan by the General Commissariat and its various committees, the collaboration of the Regional Economic Development Committees, the decisions taken by the Government, the debates which have been held or which are going to open in the Economic and Social Council so that it may formulate its opinion on the proposed provisions to Parliament, so that this body can make them into law--all this followed closely by all the information media--this has made it possible to establish, with full knowledge of the facts, the direction and the choices that will determine our national activity for five years.

There has undoubtedly been decisive progress made in planning such as we adopted and instituted it at the time of the Liberation, in the wretched state in which we then found ourselves, which was then fairly neglected during the time when our economic life depended to a great extent on loans from abroad, and which was finally put into effect and honored since we regained our independence in this field as in the others.

But, one can be independent in two very different ways. Either by closing oneself in behind ramparts and, when it's a matter of economics, behind customs barriers; or by confronting the means and capacities of others, that is, when speaking of trade, by opening and multiplying commercial relations. Because, for us, accustomed as we are to protectionism out of long facility, the needle of rivalry is healthy in our effort of transformation; because, on the other hand, the new markets are outside our country; because, lastly, throughout the world, presence follows merchandise and we want to be present everywhere; because of this--provided that precautions are taken toward one or another country that is encumbered by its surpluses, and while practicing preference with respect to our partners in the European Common Market or those of the African States to which we are linked by special agreements--we have chosen to live henceforth in competition.

Still, we must meet this competition and derive profit from it. That is to say everything depends on what our production system is worth in terms of the others. Thus, our collective effort over the next five years will have the primary goal of making this system decidedly competitive. France's independence and economic strength directly depend on it, while the rise in the national income and in the standard of living will be its consequences. Now, in face of the industrial and agricultural capacities that surround us, adapting our means requires a vast investment effort.

Investment: at the State level, that implies that what it devotes to operating the government and public services be reduced as much as possible in relation to what it does for the country's equipment. In addition, among the expenses in this last category, priority must be given to those that improve national productivity the most directly, I mean principally scientific research, all types of transport and communications, technical education, vocational training.

Yes, in the years to come we shall see France in a good position among the leading nations in the world in terms of personnel and means for invention and experimentation. We shall see her actively push forward the construction of her highways, however exceptionally good and numerous her secondary roads are, and develop her telephone network. We shall see her place her technical collèges, lycées and institutes on the same level as her classical schools, as befits a country that wants to have numerous and high-caliber trained personnel at all levels of its activity. We shall see her guarantee more broadly to her youth and her adults the possibility, either of learning a trade well, of changing it, or of improving skills, for modern evolution requires constantly improving the output of businesses, employing as best possible the ever-growing numbers of young people, increasing the mobility of French workers between regions and occupations, and, in particular, offering fast and worthy outlets in industry or the tertiary sector to those who find themselves unneeded in agriculture. Of course, what is already progressing in other branches--housing, hospitals, sports, etc.--must be actively continued, but taking into account what must be first done for infrastructure and the human and material equipment of national production, upon which, in the long run, everything depends.

Investment, which from budget to budget thus absorbs an increasing part of the public sector's expenditures, is also the categorical imperative for all private enterprises. Whether the latter move by self-financing or by recourse to the financial market, this is the only opportunity--but what an effective one--for them to acquire machinery that will make them competitive, since our economy is open to international trade. Now, while in this regard inflation and higher costs in the past could offer certain unhealthy facilities, to the point that our entire economic, financial, monetary and social system was tottering on the edge of the abyss, the necessary is now being done and will continue to be done so that henceforth these poisoned springs will run dry.

On the contrary, savings--revived by price and currency stability and by a balanced budget, are again becoming the great reservoir from which prosperity is drawing. It will naturally be, for the next few years, one of the State's vital tasks to encourage the growth of savings rather than that of consumption, to help make the resources thus formed more active through profit-sharing and more easily accessible to the businesses that are worthy of it, with the essential criteria for them being concentration and organization. Let us remark that this broad action by the State to increase the capacity of national equipment--either in the private sector, in the public or semipublic business sector or in the sector directly under its administration--implies that the information furnished to its highest bodies must be more comprehensive and better coordinated. Three high committees, composed of a very small number of

qualified people, will be set up for this purpose as soon as the Fifth Plan begins to be implemented.

As the threat of general war ceases to smother the world and brutal conquest to tempt the strongest, progress will become a world-wide aspiration. Science, technology and industry will open up to each developed country the opportunity to strengthen this hope and to spread it. The speed of communications and the multiplicity of contacts among peoples will create in all a growing desire to deal with one another. Thus, competition will more and more be the springboard of a legitimate ambition. That is why France wants to have the means for this.

The Common Market

Question: What, in your opinion, are the causes of the Common Market crisis and how do you think it can be ended?

Answer: What happened in Brussels on June 30 with regard to the agricultural financial regulation has brought to light not only the persistent reserves of most of our partners toward the inclusion of agriculture in the Common Market, but also certain basic errors or ambiguities that appear in the treaties on the economic union of the Six. That is why, sooner or later, the crisis was inevitable.

The three treaties, which respectively set up the E.C.S.C., Euratom and the Common Market, were concluded before France's recovery in 1958. They therefore made allowance primarily for what the others requested. Thus the E.C.S.C., independently of the French-German rapprochement which it was meant to express, consisted basically in restoring to Germany the disposal of its coal and steel and in giving Italy, which has a natural lack of coal and iron, the opportunity to obtain them inexpensively so that it could, in turn, provide itself with a large metallurgical industry. As regards Euratom, that institution was designed to pool everything that had been or was to be done in the field of atomic energy--of which France, owing to the early start she had made, was to provide the greatest share--and then to control the production of fissile materials with a view to preventing their military use, although, of the Six, our country alone was in a position to manufacture nuclear weapons. As for the Treaty of Rome, lastly, it fully governed the conditions for the industrial community that was the prime concern of our neighbors, but in no way governed those for the agricultural common market, in which we were the most interested.

On the other hand, each of the three treaties instituted an appearance of an executive in the form of a commission independent from the States--although its members were appointed and remunerated by them--and an appearance of a legislature in the form of an Assembly bringing together members of the various parliaments, yet without their electors having given them any mandate that was not national. This claim held by a technocracy, for the most part foreign, destined to infringe upon France's democracy in settling problems that dictate the very existence of our country, obviously could not suit our purposes once we were determined to take our destiny into our own hands.

Who can ignore that the idea of grouping the States of Western Europe together from the economic and, I might add, political standpoints, has long been ours? To verify this, one need only turn back to the statements I made on this subject during and immediately following World War II, at a time when no one else was speaking about it, and then on numerous solemn occasions, but also to all the deeds actually accomplished toward this end by my Government. As far as the economy is concerned, we indeed think it is true that the organized adjustment of the respective activities of the countries located on both sides of the Rhine and the Alps corresponds to the fact that they are close neighbors; that, from the standpoint of production, they are both similar and complementary; and that it is in keeping with the conditions

of our times to create entities more vast than each of the European States. In addition, France, who is making great strides forward and whose currency has become one of the world's strongest, has every reason to cast off her former protectionism and open herself progressively to competition. That is why, for seven years, we have very actively helped to build the Economic Community, which was created in theory in 1957, but until 1959 existed only on paper, because the chronic deficit in the French balance of payments prevented the organization from taking a start on anything other than its discussions. But, what we wanted yesterday and what we want today is a community that is fair and reasonable.

Fair: that means that agricultural products, allowing for their own particular conditions, should be included in the Common Market concurrently with industrial goods. Reasonable: that means that nothing which is important at present in the organization, and later in the operation of the Common Market of the Six, should be decided and, even more, applied, except by the responsible public authorities in the six States, that is, the Governments controlled by the Parliaments.

Now, we know--heaven knows that we know!--that there is a different concept of a European federation in which, according to the dreams of those who conceived it, the countries would lose their national personalities, and in which, furthermore, for want of a federator--such as, in the West, Caesar and his successors, Charlemagne, Otto I, Charles V, Napoleon and Hitler tried to be, each in his fashion, and such as in the East, Stalin tried to be--would be ruled by some technocratic, stateless and irresponsible Areopagus. We know also that France is opposing this project, which contradicts all reality, with a plan for organized cooperation among the States, evolving, doubtless, toward a confederation. This plan alone seems to France to be consistent with what the nations of our continent actually are. It alone could one day make possible the adherence of countries such as Britain or Spain which, like ours, could in no way accept the loss of their sovereignty. It alone would make the future entente of all of Europe conceivable. However--and whatever the ulterior motives concerning political theories might have been--it could seem that the very long and meticulous negotiations in Brussels were on the verge of a successful conclusion. Of course, we had the utmost difficulty in persuading our partners to agree in practice to making agricultural products an integral part of the Community. Now, everyone knows that this is a sine qua non to us, for, if this condition is not met, we would remain burdened with the very heavy weight that supporting our agriculture represents for us--more than for our neighbors--and we would consequently be handicapped in industrial competition. We therefore felt obliged, in January 1962, to agree to passage to the second stage of the Treaty, that is, to a substantial reduction in customs barriers, only on condition that the commitment to settle the agricultural problem be formally entered into by the Six, particularly from the financial standpoint, no later than June 30 of that year, on terms and according to a timetable that were explicitly stipulated. While there were some tears and some gnashing of the teeth at that time, we were able, at the last minute, to gain the support of our partners and we had reason to believe that they would honor their commitments on schedule.

On the other hand, while noting that the very heavy international apparatus built at great cost around the Commission was often overlapping with the competent services of the six Governments, as the work progressed we had officially recognized the competence of the Community's civil servants and had noted that they refrained from excessive infringements on the only responsibilities that were valid, that is, those of the States.

It was too good to continue to the end. For, in Brussels on June 30, our delegation came up against a refusal with regard to final drafting of a financial regulation in accordance with the commitments made. A little earlier, moreover, the Commission, suddenly emerging from its political reserve, had formulated on the subject of this regulation conditions intended to give itself its own budget, which would have amounted to as much as four billion dollars, with the States handing over to it the levies and customs receipts that would have made it literally a major independent financial power. It is true that, according to the authors of the draft, this enormous budget, which the States would supply at the expense of their taxpayers but which they would not control, would be subject to examination by the European Assembly. But the intervention of this body, which is essentially consultative and whose members have never, in any country, been elected for that purpose, would only aggravate the usurpatory character of what was demanded. Be this as it may, the combination--premeditated or not--of the supranational demands of the Brussels' Commission, of the support that several delegations declared themselves ready to give them and finally of the fact that some of our partners at the last moment went back on what they had previously accepted, forced us to bring the negotiations to a close.

I must add that in the light of this event, we more clearly measured the situation in which our country would risk finding itself if one provision or another initially provided for by the Rome Treaty were actually applied. Thus, in the terms of the text, the decisions of the Council of Ministers of the Six would, beginning on January 1, 1966, be taken by majority vote; in other words, France would be prepared to see her hand forced in any economic matter--therefore social and often even political--and, in particular, what would have seemed gained in the agricultural area could be, despite her, placed at stake again at any moment. In addition, from that time on, the proposals made by the Brussels Commission would have to be adopted, or not, as is by the Council of Ministers, without the States' being able to change anything, unless miraculously they were unanimous in drafting an amendment. Now, we know that the members of the Commission, in the past appointed by agreement among the Governments, are from now on in no way responsible and that, even at the end of their mandate, the unanimous consent of the Six will be required to replace them, which in fact makes them irremovable. We see where we could be led by such a disposal of ourselves and of our Constitution, which stipulates that "French sovereignty belongs to the French people, which shall exercise it through its representatives and by means of referendums," and makes no provision for any kind of exception.

This is where things stand. Of course, it is conceivable and desirable for work to start again one day on that great undertaking, the Community. But this will happen, possibly, only after a delay whose extent cannot be foreseen. For who knows if, when and how the policy of each of our

five partners--considering, of course, certain electoral or parliamentary situations--will finally be adapted to the requirements that have, once again just been evidenced?

Whatever the case, France, for her part, is ready to participate in all exchanges of views that would be proposed to her on this subject by the other Governments. If necessary, she envisages resuming the Brussels negotiations, once the inclusion of agriculture into the Common Market is truly adopted and there is a desire to put an end to the claims that abusive and fanciful myths are setting against common sense and reality.

Question: Mr. President, France's diplomacy is based on the principle of national independence. The opponents of this principle say that it is outdated. Can this policy of national independence be reconciled with the aspirations of the peoples for greater unity in Europe?

Other questions were asked on NATO, Europe, the Eastern countries and Southeast Asia.

Answer: We are in a century that has reached the two thirds mark in its course, no more. However, since the turn of the century, the world has undergone changes unprecedented in their pace and their scope. Everything leads one to think that the trend is going to continue. For a whole series of facts of far-reaching significance is in the making to reshape the world.

In this series of facts, there is: the accession to sovereignty of a large number of States that have been created or restored since the war and, simultaneously, the unfolding of their reciprocal quarrels; the preponderant power acquired by two countries, America and Russia, which induces them to compete with each other and to align under their respective hegemonies the peoples within their reach. The extremely profound gestation that is taking place in enormous China and that destines her for a leading role in the world; the existence and increase in nuclear weapons capable of destroying great nations suddenly and utterly; finally and above all, the general driving force for progress that the opportunities of the modern industrial age are opening up in each region of the earth. In short, the world, in full evolution, is filled both with almost infinite hopes and gigantic dangers.

Confronted with this situation, what can France's role be? But first, must France have a role? There is no lack of people, as you know, who think not. According to them, we--no longer being able to act by ourselves politically, economically, technically and militarily--should henceforth allow ourselves to be led by others. Moreover, the ideologies are there to cover up this renouncement. Thus some in our country, employing the screen of the International, would like to submit us to Moscow's obedience. Others, invoking either arbitrary theories or the convenience of interests, profess that our country should efface its personality in international organizations made in such a way that the United States can exercise in them, from within or without, a preponderant action with which, by definition, we have only to conform. It is in this way that those people conceive of our participation in the United Nations or NATO and desire that we see ourselves dissolved in a federation called "European" which would actually be "Atlantic."

I do not think--as you can well imagine--that this sort of national abdication would be justified. I do not think that it would be useful to the others, even to Russia or America. I do not think that the French people, in its overwhelming majority, holds this as consistent with with awareness it has of its own worth, nor even with simple good sense. Doubtless, France no longer appears to be the gigantic nation that she was in the times of Louis XIV or of Napoleon I. Doubtless also, the brutal collapse of 1940--although it was preceded, during the First World War, by an admirable deployment of the capacities and merits of our country, and

although it was followed, during the Second, by the impetus of the Resistance, the success of the Liberation and the presence upon victory--this collapse left, in many minds, the imprint of doubt, if not of despair. Doubtless, the unsubstantiality of yesterday's regime had thwarted the national recovery. But this recovery is now evident, even impressive. We are a people that is rising, as are rising the curves of our population, our production, our foreign trade, our monetary reserves, our standard of living, the spread of our language and our culture, the might of our arms, our achievements in sports, and so on. Our government shows evidence of a stability and an effectiveness that, for so very long, had not been known of it. Lastly, throughout the world, France's capabilities, what she does, what she wants to do, are at this time arousing an attention and a consideration that sharply contrast with the indifference or the commiseration which, in the past, too often surrounded her. In short, we can, and consequently we must, have a policy that is our own.

Which policy? Above all, it is a question of keeping ourselves free of any vassalage. It is true that, in many areas we have the best reasons for associating with others. But on condition of retaining our self-determination. Thus, so long as the solidarity of the Western peoples appears to us necessary for the eventual defense of Europe, our country will remain the ally of her allies but, upon the expiration of the commitments formerly taken--that is, in 1969 by the latest--the subordination known as "integration" which is provided for by NATO and which hands our fate over to foreign authority shall cease, as far as we are concerned. Thus, while working to unite the States on both sides of the Rhine and the Alps, from the economic, political, cultural and strategic viewpoints, we are making sure that this organization does not deprive us of our free will. Thus, believing it right for an international system to regulate monetary relations, we do not recognize that the currency of any particular State has a any automatic and privileged value in relation to gold, which is, which remains and which must remain, under the circumstances, the only real standard. Thus, having been, with four other powers, founders of the United Nations, and desiring that it continue to be the meeting place of the delegations of all peoples and the open forum for their debates, we do not accept being bound, be it in the financial area, by armed interventions which contradict the Charter and to which we have not given our approval.

Moreover, it is by being this way that we believe we can, in the final analysis, best serve the alliance of free peoples, the European Community, the monetary institutions and the United Nations.

Indeed, the independence thus regained is enabling France to become, despite the ideologies and hegemonies of the colossi, for all the racial passions and prejudices, above and beyond the rivalries and ambitions of nations, a champion of cooperation, failing which the troubles, the interventions, the conflicts that lead to world war would go on spreading. Now, France is, par excellence, qualified to act in this way. She is so by her nature, which leads her to human contacts. She is so through the opinion that has historically been held of her and that opens to her a sort of latent credit when the universal is involved. She is so by the fact that she has freed herself of all the colonial holds she

formerly exercised over other peoples. She is so, finally, because she appears to be a nation with free hands whose policy is not being determined by any pressure from without.

Moreover, we do not limit ourselves to extolling cooperation in principle. We put it into practice everywhere we can under conditions that are naturally appropriate to the situation of our various partners. This is true for almost all the nations of Africa that were formerly linked to us, as well as for Rwanda and the Congo (Léopoldville) and, in Asia, for Cambodia and Laos--each of these States having become independent and having determined its relations with us through special agreements for its development, agreements among which the most recent, but not the least important, governs French-Algerian petroleum relations. Our goal is that this also be true for the various countries of Latin America--toward which so many deep affinities incline us, and whose advent to the ranks of an economically powerful, a politically independent and a socially free continent is henceforth necessary for the balance and the peace of the world; where already Mexico, and two months ago Chile on the occasion of President Frei's visit, decided to link their progress more closely to ours. We hope that this will be true, to an increasing extent, as we recently pointed out during the trips to Paris of King Hussein and President Helou, for the peoples of the Orient, from Istanbul to Addis Ababa and from Cairo to Kabul, in accordance with the human and natural reasons that have woven between them and us a traditional friendship.

It is true that, in order to provide in turn the means for living with dignity and for progress to the two billion men who do not have them, an effort that goes far beyond the possibilities of France is required. Very fortunately, among the well-supplied countries, others besides us are also doing their share, although ours is the largest in proportion to our resources. But how much this aid, which is scattered and often opposed, would gain if it were combined on a large scale. In particular, what role could be played in this regard by a Europe that would want to unite. Specifically, the appeasement of our old torn continent, then the rapprochement of all the peoples that inhabit it, and finally their cooperation for their own development and the development of others--these constitute the essential goals--even if long-term ones--of French policy.

Thus with Germany, despite so many wounds suffered and grievances accumulated, we have concluded a treaty that--even if up to now it remains in a stage of cordial potentiality in many domains--however provides for periodic meetings between the two Governments and is bearing fruit in such areas as culture and youth contacts. Thus with five of our neighbors we have formed the beginnings of an economic community, which we want to hope it will one day be possible to complete, and we have proposed to them organizing at least political cooperation.

Thus our contacts and our exchanges are multiplying with the countries of the East, each of them, of course, being treated only in consideration of its national personality. In this respect, we attach great importance to the new trend of our relations with Russia. We are pleased with the results achieved on the occasion of President Maurer's visit with respect to French-Rumanian relations. With great pleasure we are going to receive President Cyrankiewicz, hoping that his presence here

will serve the practical rapprochement of the French and Polish peoples, friends and allies at all times in their history. We do not hesitate to envisage that the day will come when, in order to achieve a constructive entente from the Atlantic to the Urals, all of Europe will wish to settle its own problems and, above all, that of Germany, by the only means that will make it possible to do so--that of a general agreement. On that day, our continent could once again assume in the world, for the good of all men, the role which is worthy of its resources and its capacities.

Under very different conditions, but guided by the same inspiration, we believe that in Asia the end of the fighting now going on, then the satisfactory development of peoples, can be attained only by establishing relations, by opening negotiations and by achieving a "modus vivendi" among the powers whose direct or indirect responsibility has since the end of World War II been committed to the events of the southeast of that continent, that is, China, France, America, Russia and Britain. But we also believe more firmly than ever that the primary condition for such an entente would be the effective end of all foreign intervention, and therefore the complete and controlled neutralization of the zone in which there is fighting. This is what France, for her part, subscribed to in 1954. This is what she then strictly observed. This is what she considers necessary, since the United States intervened in Indochina after the departure of France's forces. But it is all too obvious that this is not the road being followed.

That is why all speculation on the hypothesis of mediation by France is groundless. At present, she has nothing else to do but reserve herself for later, and if it happens that the time ever comes to do so, for the possibility of being useful, particularly in Peking, Washington, Moscow and London, with regard to the contacts which would be necessary to reach a solution, to the controls that would be needed to guarantee it and to the aid that would then have to be given to the unfortunate countries that she has certainly not forgotten.

Moreover, the same entente of the same powers that have the means for war and peace is, for the historic period in which we are living, indispensable to the understanding and cooperation that the world must establish among all its races, all its forms of government and all its peoples, without which it will sooner or later head for its own destruction. It happens, actually, that the five States on which the destiny of Southeast Asia depends, in the final analysis, and which, moreover, are those that possess atomic weapons, together founded twenty years ago, the United Nations Organization and are the permanent members of its Security Council. They could tomorrow--if they so desired and naturally once they came together--see to it that this institution, instead of being the theater of the vain rivalry of two hegemonies, becomes the framework in which the development of the whole world would be considered and in which the conscience of the human community would thereby grow stronger. It is obvious that at this time such a project has no chance of coming into being. But if the rapprochement, then the agreement of the leading nations responsible for the world, should ever appear possible toward this end, France for her part would be quite prepared to cooperate in it.

This is, as a whole, the policy of our country. Assuredly the goals which it has set are long-range. This is due to the dimension of the problems which face the world of our times. But this is also due to the fact that France, no longer caught up in fruitless undertakings, nor dependent on what others do, nor induced to run at any moment and in all directions behind passing fancies, is henceforth capable of pursuing extensive and continuous designs. This is what she is doing abroad, while working at home to build her new power.

Question: At the end of your seven-year period of office, and looking toward the forthcoming presidential election, can you pass a judgment on the institutions of the Fifth Republic and particularly on the role of the President of the Republic?

Answer: The system of government that the country adopted seven years ago, and to which everything makes it possible to think it hereafter will adhere, is the system of the national majority, I mean, of that which emerges from the nation as a whole, expressing itself through its undivided and sovereign mass.

Once a nation is formed, once there are fundamental geographic, ethnic, economic, social and moral elements within it that are the texture of its life and, once outside, it comes into contact with foreign influences and ambitions, there exists for that nation, despite and above its diversities, a group of conditions vital to its action and, ultimately, to its existence and that is the general interest. It is moreover, the instinct it has of this general interest which cements its unity and it is the fact that the State conforms to it, or does not, that makes its political endeavors worthwhile or incoherent. In a modern democracy, turned toward effectiveness and, in addition, threatened, it is therefore vital that the nation's will be expressed globally when it concerns destiny. Such is indeed the foundation of our present institutions.

Undoubtedly, under yesterday's system, the people were periodically called on to elect an assembly that held the sovereignty; but this was naturally done only on a limited scale, in such a way that the results had a partial significance and, therefore, a debatable and questionable one. Indeed, in practice only the parties, that is, organizations formed to promote special tendencies and to support the interests of one or another category, proposed candidates to the electorate. What is more, they did this in election districts that differed from one another in terms of regions and inhabitants. It is true that they sometimes happened, for the voting period, to combine their hostilities in a coalition in order to exclude adversaries, but these were only negative steps. In fact, Parliament, which was given the right and the duty of deciding alone and without recourse what was vital for the nation and of being the exclusive source of power, consisted in a juxtaposition of rival, even opposed groups, from which a majority could emerge only on condition of uncertain and fallacious combinations. It is understandable that such a system, whatever was the worth of the men who found themselves part of it, was not normally able to do its work and accomplish all the firm and constant designs that constitute a policy, nor, all the more, to bear France in the major contemporary dramas.

Doubtless the Constitution which the French, enlightened by numerous lessons, gave the Republic in 1958, attributes the legislative power and right of control to Parliament. For, in public life, debates and a balance are required. But the entirely new and vital thing that our Constitution includes is, on the one hand, the advent of the people, as such and collectively, as the direct source of the power of the Chief of State and, if need be, as his direct recourse, and, on the other hand, the attribution to the President,

who is and is alone the representative and the mandatary of the nation as a whole, of the duty to trace out the nation's conduct in the essential domains and the means to acquit itself of this task. It is by virtue of this twofold institution and because it has fully functioned, that the present system has possessed the stability, authority and effectiveness which enabled it to solve the grave problems which confronted France and to conduct its affairs in such a manner that today its situation appears, in all respects, as better and more solid than yesterday.

Yes. The fact is that the President of the Republic, called upon and supported by the confidence of the entire nation, acted in conformity with the burdens and responsibility which, in our system, are those imposed upon him by his office; when, during the past seven years, he determined the orientation of French policy within and without; when he controlled its progress; when he took the supreme decisions on the problems which involved destiny and which therefore implied that so many Gordian knots be cut. This was the case with the domains of the institutions, of the security of the State, of national defense, of the country's general development, of economic, financial and monetary stability, and so on; with the Algerian affair, with Europe, with decolonization, with African cooperation, with our attitude toward Germany, the United States, Britain, Russia, China, Latin America, the Orient and so on. On the other hand, in asking the country, on four occasions, to express its approval by means of the referendum, by proceeding once with the dissolution of the National Assembly, by applying, during an alarming crisis, Article XVI, the Chief of State simply used the means which the Constitution gave him in order to see that, under grave circumstances, the nation itself decide on its own fate, and to assure the proper functioning and the continuity of the public powers; all this in opposition to some who think, as Chamfort did, "that sovereignty resides in the people, but the people should never exercise it."

There was mention of "personal power." If what is meant by that is that the President of the Republic has personally taken the decisions which it is incumbent upon him to take, that is entirely correct. In what post, high or low, does the person who is responsible have the right to shirk his duty? Moreover, who ever believed that General de Gaulle, being called to the helm, should be content with inaugurating flower shows? For example, when the Algerian problem preoccupied--this is the least one can say--all of France, to whom else did one assign, in a single voice, the task of solving it? But if what is meant is that the President has isolated himself from everything and everyone and that, in order to act, he listened only to himself, the evidence of how much advice and consultation surround him is being ignored.

Up to now, during the seven-year period, the Chief of State convened the Council of Ministers 302 times, the limited interministerial councils 420 times, received in his office the Premier 505 times, the Presidents of the Assemblies 78 times, one or another member of the Government nearly 2,000 times, the Presidents or Rapporteurs of the Parliamentary Committees or the group chairmen more than 100 times, the chief government officials, experts and union leaders about 1,500 times--all this not counting the letters, memoranda and reports that were sent to him by one or another of the persons responsible and the study of dossiers. Again, with respect

to foreign problems, some 600 hours of conversations with foreign Heads of State or of Government and a thousand talks with their Ministers or Ambassadors largely completed the President's information. In any case, no important measure has been taken at his level until after deliberation around him with those who were familiar with the elements for it and would assure its implementation. This was, moreover, quite natural, for public affairs are today too varied and too complex to be treated in any other way. In their respect, the risk lies much less in edicts launched from ivory towers than in endless examination from which no decision emerges.

However, it is above all with the people itself that he who is their representative and guide keeps himself in direct contact. For in this way the nation can know the man who is at its head, discern the ties which unite it to him, be acquainted with his ideas, his acts, his plans, his concerns, his hopes. In this way, at the same time, the Chief of State has the opportunity to let the French people feel, whatever their regions and their categories may be, that they are all citizens of one and the same country in the same capacity; to know, by going there himself, where souls and things stand; and lastly, to gain a feeling, in the midst of his compatriots, of what their encouragement obligates him to do.

I do not believe that such contacts have ever been multiplied so much in seven years. Thirty addresses delivered to the entire country over radio and television; 12 press conferences broadcast in their entirety; 36 speeches solemnly delivered during public ceremonies; a series of trips--apart from at least 200 official appearances in Paris--made to the 94 Departments of Metropolitan and Overseas France, during which the Chief of State saw, with his own eyes, at least 15 million Frenchmen; invited all the members of Parliament, all the constituted bodies, all the General Councillors, all the Mayors of France, to confer with him; visited about 2,500 communes, including all the main ones; responded in the town halls to the welcome of nearly 400 Municipal Councils and 100,000 notables; spoke from the dais in more than 600 localities to the assembled population; talked with so many people that it is impossible to count them and shook countless hands.

In short, the President of the Republic, designated by the national majority, is henceforth the keystone that covers and solders the edifice of our institutions. Could it be disputed that, through this, the public powers are not holding themselves in balance. The cohesion of the Government--which in seven years, moreover, counts only two Premiers, each of them invested, supported and maintained by the confidence of the Chief of State--is a new and exemplary fact in relation to the discordance of the perilous assemblages that the Ministries of the past were. From that, in the public life and in the country's administration, a continuity and an effectiveness the progress of which is evident.

At the same time, and for the first time in the history of the Republic, there is an assured majority in Parliament, because a national majority having been formed in the country around the President, this capital event could not fail to have consequences during the general elections, despite the diversity inherent in tendencies, in people and in election

districts. Thus the legislative work accomplished since 1958, from the economic, social, financial and administrative standpoints, as with respect to civil law, education, equipment, defense and so on, includes a body of exceptionally important and coherent reforms, while the budget has always been adopted before the end of the year, which never happened in the past. Lastly, in the ordered framework in which the powers exercise their responsibilities without jolts, the State bodies, the civil service, the diplomatic corps, the armed forces find themselves able to accomplish their task normally and objectively.

Perfection is not of this world. But, in relation to what existed yesterday, the French State appears at present to be entirely transformed in terms of solidity and capacity. No one in the world mistakes this. Before three months have passed, the country will say, through its vote, if it intends to see again the practices of the past, or if it desires that the new system assure, tomorrow as today, the conduct of the national life. For, each one feels and knows that this will indeed be the stake of the Presidential election.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I thank you and I am honored to salute you.