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SUMMARY WITH EXCERPTS of a campaign speech by Gen. De
Gaulle at Bayonne on 7 September 1947:

General De Gaulle opened his election campaign with a speech at Bayonne on September 7 in which he reiterated his earlier condemnations of Communism, spoke of the present situation in Europe, and appealed for a strong régime which would put the interests of France above those of the political parties.

"France today," he said, "eats less bread than she has ever eaten, has less gold than she has ever had, burns less coal than she has ever burned, and furnishes less work than she has ever furnished since the beginning of the modern economic era. Eastern and Central Europe is cut off from the world by the Soviet system, which exploits its resources. Western Europe, where Britain is enfeebled, Italy ruined, and the German States deeply disorganised, is not in a position to lend us any except reciprocal assistance. America, it is true, is intact and prosperous, but is torn between the desire to help and inquietude as to the results of such help...."

"Under the iron rod of the Soviet régime we see two-thirds of Europe isolated in an enormous bloc of peoples and resources where little by little the liberty of men and the independence of nations is being suffocated. Nobody can discern what are today, and what will be tomorrow, the limits of the ambition of the leaders of this colossal enterprise. They themselves perhaps do not know, for dictatorship often becomes the plaything of those forces which it has used to establish itself. But what we can see only too well is that a heavy threat is taking shape for our country. This threat is aggravated by the action taken in our midst by a group of separatists blindly devoted to this foreign domination. They cleverly exploit each of our difficulties to increase the confusion, hoping that the irritation and despair of the nation will finally result in what they want to impose--namely, their hold on the levers of power in the Republic and the subordination of France to the system of slavery of which they are the vanguard."

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"Fortunately for the liberty of the world, the United States intends to act as a counterweight to the totalitarian ambitions of the Soviet régime. But the U.S.A. is, nevertheless, exposed to errors vis-à-vis the old Continent. Failing to find in a disunited Europe any light to guide it or any agreement to reassure it, the U.S.A. might be drawn into committing a mistake which would compromise the union of the Western world, a union necessary to re-establish equilibrium. The Americans seem at the moment inclined to oppose vital French interests in the settlement of German problems. If they persist in this course they risk sacrificing something essential to immediate convenience. Western Europe cannot organise itself except around a solid and secure France--a France provided with what it needs to live. That is why everything concerning France's part in the control and distribution of the coal of the Ruhr moves the nation to its depths and commits the future of the world....

"France can and must take part at the top level in the organisation of Western Europe, to which the U.S.A. is at this moment offering its help. There is no other way open to the Old World until, perhaps, one day the whole of Europe links up in freedom and the system of the United Nations becomes a living reality.... To rise again we must submit ourselves to a long and hard national discipline. We need a State with a Head who is really a Head, a régime in which there will be a real Government, a real Parliament, and real justice. Events are pressing on us and destiny does not wait."