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CENTRAL

INTELLIGENCE

BULLETIN



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LATE ITEM

The situation in Algeria as of 0630 EST remains unclear beyond the fact that a military revolt against De Gaulle's liberal Algerian policy was launched in Algiers last night. The Paris government admits the insurrection, but insists this morning that the "coup" is confined to the city of Algiers. The insurrectionists, in a communiqué signed by four well-known French generals, claim they control all Algeria and the Sahara. However, the only military units publicly identified as supporting the revolt are the First Foreign Legion Parachute Regiment and the predominantly Moslem Seventh Regiment.

The timing of this move against De Gaulle by military partisans of "French Algeria" is connected with the widespread belief that a negotiated settlement involving Algerian independence was about to be achieved. Although the rebel Provisional Algerian Government (PAG) refused to initiate public negotiations with the French government as scheduled at Evian on 7 April--because of De Gaulle's refusal to recognize the PAG's claim to represent all Algeria--the fact that behind-the-scenes PAG-French talks have continued has been an open secret. Moreover, De Gaulle's 11 April press conference--in which he emphasized more clearly than ever before his intention to negotiate Algerian independence--appeared to have dispelled PAG doubts as to his intentions and it was expected that negotiations would soon be announced. The PAG has not yet commented on the situation, and will probably take a cautious attitude until the picture becomes clearer.

The outcome of the insurrection will depend largely on the reaction of the European settlers, Moslems, and other military units in Algeria, but also on the reactions in France itself. The settlers and their rightist sympathizers in France are expected to welcome the coup as a blow to the "abandonment" of Algeria by De Gaulle. The Moslem population of Algeria, which was reportedly discouraged by De Gaulle's 11 April press conference because of fear that it had reduced chances for an early end of hostilities, could react violently--with or without PAG incitement--to any indications that the French army intends to prolong the war.

De Gaulle's skillful management of military sensibilities and his firm stand during the January 1960 insurrection in Algiers,



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in which some army paratroop units wavered in their loyalty, had for some time apparently discouraged active military plotting against him. The four generals heading the new insurrection--retired Army generals Henri Zeller and Raoul Salan (a former French commander in Algeria), retired Air Force General Edmond Jouhaud, and Air Force General Maurice Challe (who resigned early this year from the position as NATO-commander for Central Europe)--are prominent largely because of their anti-Gaullist sentiments and activities. They are not believed to enjoy widespread support in the armed services, although much of the French military have sympathized with their "French Algeria" views. The current insurrection appears more serious than the settlers' revolt of 1960 in that this time some army units are overtly opposed to the government, and thus openly pose the problem of "unity of the army." The new French Chief of Staff of National Defense, General Jean Olie, who took office on 1 March, lacks the prestige of his predecessor, General Paul Ely, who had played a major role in maintaining the armed services' loyalty to De Gaulle.

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