

FRENCH PENSIONS

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JMPC SUBCOMMITTEE

14 October 1953

Excerpts

GUARANTEE OF PENSIONS TO FRENCH FORCES IN AFRICA

It is reported, COLONEL DONOVAN stated, that the Joint Chiefs of Staff are not in accord with this proposal, but his conversations with GENERAL EISENHOWER and GENERAL W.H. SMITH in London indicated that they favor the project.

The British have guaranteed the pensions and salaries of both Army and Navy officers and civilian officials who have joined with the British forces in both MADAGASCAR and SYRIA.

COLONEL DONOVAN announced his intention of discussing this proposal with GENERAL MARSHALL.

THE SUBCOMMITTEE:

Took note that the proposal will be further discussed with GENERAL MARSHALL.

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J.P.W.O. 24

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JOINT PSYCHOLOGICAL WARFARE COMMITTEE

GUARANTEE OF PENSIONS TO FRENCH FORCES IN AFRICA

Note by the Secretary

The enclosure represents a proposal made by the Office of Strategic Services. It is presented to this Committee for consideration as to the desirability of a more extensive study of the feasibility of the plan.

A. H. ONTHANK,
Secretary.

SECRETENCLOSUREMEMORANDUM ON SALARIES, PENSIONS, AND FAMILY ALLOCATIONS
OF FRENCH MILITARY AND NAVAL FORCES AND CIVIL SERVANTS,
IN THE MEDITERRANEAN AND NORTH AFRICA

The advent of Pierre Laval to power in France suggests the urgent necessity of intensifying efforts to impede in every way possible the course of French collaboration with Germany. Points of strategic interest in these efforts are:

- (1) The French Navy; and
- (2) North Africa, Madagascar, and other strategic regions in the French colonial empire.

Since the middle ages, security to a Frenchman is represented in terms of money. With the extreme frugality of the French nation, economic considerations are believed to play an important role in the average Frenchman's attitude towards the war. There has already been friction, indeed considerable difficulty, between the Free French and the British over the question of pensions and family allocations for the naval and military forces under General de Gaulle (Source: Admiral Auboyneau). If means could be devised whereby the French Navy, the armed forces in North Africa and, perhaps, the Colonial Civil Service too, could be assured by the United Nations that -- some what may -- salaries, pensions and family allocations would be guaranteed to all those who remained true to the cause of France and the United Nations, it might conceivably have an important propaganda value at this time. French contacts with the Foreign Nationalities Branch insist that the question of financial security among these categories of Frenchmen and their families could almost be the decisive factor in shaping their decisions in a moment of crisis.

The question may now be posed: Cannot our propaganda be substantially fortified by a declaration with respect to the salaries, pensions and family allocations? Would not such a declaration overcome, in some measure, the pecuniary reluctance in the minds of otherwise patriotic Frenchmen to turn against Vichy in the approaching moment of crisis?

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From a financial point of view, the obligation assumed would not be great; from a psychological point of view, the advantages to be derived from such a declaration might be substantial. In any event, we are in a period of the war where no opportunity to improve the situation should be overlooked.

Figures are extremely difficult to get -- at least without prolonged and detailed researches. The following are the best we have been able to obtain so far.

In so far as the appeal is addressed to the Navy, it could probably be addressed to so much of it as is now in commission. It might be possible to estimate the fleet now in North African waters, but these personnel figures represent estimates for the whole fleet for 1941.

Officers' salaries	\$ 3,600,000
Crews' salaries	10,000,000
Family allocations	1,500,000

(Note that all costs are estimated at the present rates of exchange - roughly 40 francs to the dollar. All are in round figures.)

Estimates for the "Colonial Army" (*) for 1942 allow:

Personnel	\$20,000,000
"Social expenses"	1,000,000

It is extremely difficult to get figures for colonial administration. Algeria, Tunis, and Morocco have separate budgets as well as different methods of administration, making comparisons difficult. Figures for the latest years are unavailable. The following figures are given subject to considerable qualifications.

For Tunis for 1939 we have lists of salaries for personnel - including the central administration and Ministers, the "mixed tribunal," the French Justice and Police - totalling about \$470,000. For Morocco for 1939 we have a list of personnel - including the civil list and central administration - totalling

(*) These figures may include West Africa - in which case the figure for North Africa should be a little more than half of those given.

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\$1,000,000. The administrative personnel of Algeria - including the personnel of the central government, the Departments and the Communes, total \$800,000. Various pensions, indemnities and allocations - difficult to classify or characterize - would probably total another million dollars in this budget.

These figures, rough and inadequate though they are, would seem to bear out the suggestion that the problem is not primarily one of economics. Indeed, a declaration on the subject belongs more to the realm of propaganda than to that of financial guarantees. When the United Nations win the war, the French armed forces and civil authorities who are on the winning side will be taken care of anyway. If the United Nations should be so unfortunate as to lose the war, their commitments would have lost all importance.

An item of considerable significance in respect of any financial commitments with regard to France is that the United States is the custodian of frozen French gold reserves to the amount of 501 million dollars.

From a psychological point of view, any propaganda based on such a declaration by the United Nations would have to be delicately shaped in order not to convey the impression that we were attempting to hire mercenaries; the emphasis should be on our complete readiness to see that French soldiers, sailors and civil authorities within specified areas received what was their due under French law. There might be an implication that those of the unformed and civil services who might choose the wrong side in the conflict would not fare equally well.

An objection to the proposal, of course, is the fact that any guaranty made to elements of France might provoke pressure on the part of governments-in-exile to obtain similar commitments for themselves -- unless they could be dissuaded from a dog-in-the-sand attitude towards a maneuver that would be a purely strategic one.