

# Lessons of De Gaulle's Algerian Exit-Strategy

by Pierre Beaudry

The dramatic situation facing President Bush in Iraq, is similar to what French President Charles de Gaulle faced on April 23, 1961, when he was forced to take the crucial decision of putting a stop to the military insurrection in Algeria, and decided to pull French troops out of that country. Just as today's quagmire in Iraq is under the control of the Synarchist International, so, too, was the French Algerian mess.

The Algerian War began on Nov. 1, 1954, when the National Liberation Front (FLN) guerrillas launched a series of attacks against French military installations and police posts throughout Algeria. The French Minister of the Interior, François Mitterrand, responded with this infamous apostrophe: "The only possible negotiation is war." A cycle of revenge and counter-revenge went into effect, a seemingly unstoppable escalation of violence.

But then, in February 1959, Charles de Gaulle was elected President of the Fifth Republic. He started to use the words "self-determination," which he said was going to lead to independence, majority rule, and general welfare for a sovereign Republic of Algeria. This sparked a French Army insurgency in January 1960, by right-wing renegade generals and colonels, altogether about 8,000 men, who started to mobilize the *pieds-noirs* population of Algeria in support of a military coup against the government of President de Gaulle, in favor of maintaining the colonial status of *Algérie française* ("French Algeria"). The *pieds noirs* ("black feet") represented about a million French citizens whose families had lived in Algeria for several generations, and wished to keep their colonial heritage and maintain the native Arabs and Kabyls under French rule. The renegade officers and men were led, among others, by Gen. Jacques Massu, who became openly defiant, attempting to take control of the military forces against de Gaulle's leadership. Massu made a public announcement that he would "never abandon French Algeria"; de Gaulle fired him on the spot. (Massu became de Gaulle's ally; the insurrection's real ringleader was Gen. Raoul Salan.)

After a revolt broke out in the capital city of Algiers where 22 *pieds-noirs* were killed, for which the French Army was blamed, de Gaulle decided to address the nation in very stark terms. Appearing on French television, he told the nation: "So! My dear and old country, we are again facing a heavy ordeal. By virtue of the mandate that the people have given me, and because of the national legitimacy that I have embodied for 20 years, I ask each one of you to support me, and to support me regardless of what might happen."



*President Charles de Gaulle addresses the nation on April 23, 1961, on the insurrection by French military renegades in Algeria: “Men and women of France, think of the risk for the nation. Men and women of France, help me.”*

During the Spring of 1960, the rebel Army officers in Algeria continued challenging de Gaulle. Many had been trained personally by Nazi SS commando leader Otto Skorzeny, and his Belgian Synarchist associate Leon Degrelle, who was living in Tangier, Morocco, at the time. Skorzeny was the notorious Nazi murderer who trained the death squads of Ibero-America and terrorist insurgency in the Middle East, including the French Secret Army Organization (OAS).

By December 1960, the French government had organized an election campaign in Algeria, in which the entire Algerian population was to choose between the status quo and independence. President de Gaulle personally travelled to Algiers and made an extraordinary statement in favor of independence. He proclaimed before hundreds of thousands of cheering Algerians: “France is resolved to bring you its support and cooperation in the great task of development, which is beginning in your country. Long live Kabylia! [a Berber group]. Long live Algeria! Long live France!” This was the end of *Algérie Française*. This meant, in no uncertain terms, that the French military had to leave. The vote for the independence of Algeria took place in January 1961. In response, and as a last-ditch effort, the colonialist French military faction launched even more terrorist violence.

The issue was that either de Gaulle was going to give in to the plan of the Synarchist International—whose purpose

was perpetual war worldwide—in which France would enter into interminable wars in all of its African colonies, as per the script of the Martinist, Alexandre Saint Yves d’Alveydre; or, de Gaulle was going to give Algeria its independence, abandon the centuries-old colonialist looting of Africa, and begin a development policy for sovereign, republican nation-states. If North African countries became independent, it was the Synarchist Lazard Frères Bank, which stood to lose most of its oil and raw materials concerns in North Africa.

Skorzeny had very clearly stated the objective of the Synarchist International in reaction to the convictions of war criminals at the Nuremberg Tribunal. In Cairo, on Jan. 30, 1953, Skorzeny asserted: “Future wars will be so filled with horror, that each leader will wage war like a demon in order not to be the loser and become, consequently, a criminal. All the atrocities that can be imagined by man, will be committed during this next war, in order to prevent the enemy from achieving victory.”

The Synarchist International attack against de Gaulle was aimed at destroying his capacity to make personal decisions and was calculated to weaken his resolve to the point that his government would become run by the fear of horrendous reprisals against the French people by these terror specialists.

Gen. Maurice Challe continued deploying terrorist violence and atrocities until, in April 1961, he went too far and led his renegade Army against de Gaulle. This was the *punctum saliens* for Algeria, as well as for the future of France and the leadership of President de Gaulle.

### **De Gaulle’s Sublime Moment**

On Sunday, April 23, 1961, the President went on French national television in full military regalia, stating in a dramatic and stern voice: “An insurrectional power has been established by military pronouncement. That power has an appearance. It has a reality: a quartet of retired generals and ambitious and fanatical officers. Now the nation is challenged, it has been humiliated, our position in Africa is compromised, and by whom? Alas, alas, alas, by the very men whose duty and whose honor it was, and whose reason for being it was, to serve and obey. In the name of France, I order that all means—I repeat, all means—be taken to bar the route to these men, until we reduce them. I forbid every French citizen, and first of all, every soldier to execute any of those orders. . . . Men and women of France, think of the risk for the nation. Men and women of France, help me.” This was the most sublime moment for France and for Algeria.

De Gaulle had struck the right emotional chord and was able to mobilize the entire nation with his two-minute speech. On the next day, everywhere across France, and Algeria, thousands of citizens brigades were formed spontaneously, to resist the military coup and give their support to their President, Charles de Gaulle. Within one week Challe was arrested, along with about 200 other officers, and the rebellion was quashed. On July 3, 1962, Algeria voted its independence.