

VEFAMUN'26

HISTORICAL CRISIS COMMITTEE

STUDY GUIDE

CABINET OF CHARLES DE GAULLE

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1. Letter from Secretary-General

Most Special Participants of VefaMUN'26,

As the Secretary-General of VefaMUN'26, I'm absolutely thrilled to welcome you to our 6th edition, happening on March 28-29 right here at Vefa High School.

My journey with this club began on day one of my high school career, and it's been a true passion ever since. I started as an Academy Team Member, climbed to Head of Academy, served as the Deputy Secretary-General, and now stand proudly as Secretary-General. Over these years, I've given my all to this club and this family. We've faced endless obstacles together, and turned "an idea that became reality" from our slogan into our living truth. Every challenge we overcame only made us stronger, more united, and ready to deliver something extraordinary.

Our academy and organisation teams have poured relentless effort into this conference. We tackled every hurdle with grit and designed eight dynamic committees to challenge your minds, spark debates, and create unforgettable memories. From crisis simulations to deep policy dives, each one is crafted for maximum engagement and growth.

But here's the heart of it: none of this shines without you, our incredible participants. Your energy, ideas, and passion are what breathe life into VefaMUN. So come join our family, dive into action, and let's make this edition legendary together.

Best Wishes,

Melis Usanır

Secretary-General of VefaMUN'26

2. Letter from Under-Secretary-General

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the Cabinet of Charles de Gaulle of VefaMUN'26. You are stepping into a moment of profound transformation, where the foundations of the French state itself are under revision. De Gaulle was not merely a leader within the system he challenged it, rejected injustice and reshaped the Republic through strength of vision and executive authority.

In this committee, you will confront constitutional reform, economic strain, sovereignty crises, and the preservation of national prestige. The question before you is not simply how to govern, but how to redefine power itself.

This study guide acts as a brief introduction to the key elements of our committee, thus further research is of course recommended and expected. In case of any questions do not hesitate to reach out to me at +905518125774 or saniyar68s@gmail.com

Vive la République!

Sincerely,

Saniyar Safari

Under-Secretary-General

3. Letter from Academic Assistant

Dear Delegates,

I am truly honored to serve as your Academic Assistant at VEFAMUN'26. It is a great pleasure to welcome each of you to this amazing committee, which will occur and continue with exciting events according to your decisions. I believe that it will be an inspiring and intellectually vibrant conference.

Over these two days together, I hope we all will challenge our perspectives and thoughts and debate upon them, and also work collaboratively in order to find well-grounded, impactful solutions.

Furthermore, I am sure you will have a lot of fun during these two days. Believe in my precious VEFAMUN family for that.

I wish you all a fun, productive, memorable MUN experience.

Wish you luck and see you soon!

Ayşin Kalafat

Academic Assistant of the Cabinet of Charles de Gaulle

4. Introduction to the Committee

France stands at a moment of severe mess. Political instability and the escalating Algerian War had led to the fall of the Fourth Republic. Military unrest grows, the public calls for order, and the threat of national division increases. General Charles de Gaulle returns to power with the full trust of the French to rebuild the nation and its prestige.

Yet the new republic is surrounded by danger. Hardliners oppose change, and the army remains on guard, while each decision is a gamble with the survival of the republic on the line.

This committee is set to the very beginning of the Fifth Republic, where you will work in de Gaulle's cabinet as France deals with war, decolonization, and the pressures of the Cold War.

5. Historical Background

After Nazi Germany easily triumphed over French soil in 1940, the collaborationist government of Vichy France took power, accepting defeat. However, Charles de Gaulle refused to accept surrender and fled to London, where he issued his Appeal of 18 June, urging continued resistance. He coordinated colonial troops, resistance networks, and overseas territories that defied Vichy rule while in exile, forming the Free French Forces.



De Gaulle put forth great effort as the war went on to guarantee that France would not be considered a liberated dependency but rather as one of the winning powers. He had to negotiate tense relationships with leaders like Franklin D. Roosevelt and Winston Churchill, who occasionally doubted his aspirations. Despite this, Free French forces took part in significant campaigns, and by the time Paris was liberated in 1944, de Gaulle was leading the Provisional Government and presenting the country as a sovereign and restored nation. During this time, his leadership developed a strong sense of personal legitimacy based on the honor and survival of the country.



However, major structural flaws in the postwar political order were quickly exposed. The French Fourth Republic's parliamentary system came to be associated with unstable coalition governments and unstable ministries, which limited France's capacity to take decisive action in the face of strategic difficulties. The expensive loss in French Indochina in 1954 severely damaged the country's reputation abroad and sped up discussions about the empire's future.

Tensions in Algeria, which was historically governed as a crucial part of France, increased simultaneously. The National Liberation Front's armed uprising turned the region into the focal point of a polarizing and bitter conflict. Public opinion was split, colonies were radicalized, and the military became more and more involved in politics as a result of the conflict.



6. Political Situation of France in 1958

In 1958, France was experiencing a serious political crisis that led to the collapse of the Fourth Republic, with the main problem being the government's political instability. The system gave most of the power to the legislative branch (French Parliament), while the executive branch (President of the Republic, President of the Council, and the Council of Ministers) was weaker and dependent on parliamentary support. Before this crisis, more than twenty governments fell. This made long-term decision-making almost impossible.

The ongoing Algerian war wasn't helping either, as Algeria wasn't just a colony; it was considered part of France, legally accommodating approximately one million European citizens. When the FLN (National Liberation Front) began its independence movement, France responded with military force against it. French society was split into two: those who wanted to keep Algeria French and those who supported negotiations or independence after these acts.

One of the biggest dangers in 1958 was the conflict between the army and civilian politicians. Many military officers in Algeria believed that the government in Paris was too weak and perhaps would not support the idea of Algeria being French. Later, military leaders and settlers in Algiers, the capital, took control of local government buildings and formed basically a modern "Committee of Public Safety." They wanted Charles de Gaulle to return to power, seemingly initiating a military coup.

France was now facing two risks:

1. Political collapse in Paris.
2. Possible military takeover or civil war.

This crisis was taking place simultaneously with the Cold War, and France, being a key NATO member, meant instability could affect Western security as well.

Charles de Gaulle was seen as the savior and the symbol of unity. However, he agreed to return only if he was given his well-deserved executive power and the authority to write a

new constitution. The Parliament accepted this condition wholeheartedly, and soon after, a new constitution was approved, establishing the Fifth Republic.

The crisis showed that a parliamentary-dominated system had failed to provide stability in 1958. The new constitution strengthened the executive branch, especially the President. This marked a shift from parliamentary supremacy to a semi-presidential system with a powerful executive.



7. Key Parties and Roles of Foreign Powers

French Army factions: Split between loyalty to the government and determination to keep Algeria French, creating the risk of military revolt.

Constitutional Reformists: Supported replacing parliamentary fragility with a durable presidential framework.

Parliamentary Traditionalists: Opposed the expansion of executive authority and defended legislative primacy.

French Military Leadership: Held substantial influence amid security fears, colonial tensions, and concerns over national prestige.

Labor Unions: Capable of organizing large-scale strikes that could disrupt productivity and social order.

Organisation Armée Secrète (OAS): Conducted bombings and insurgent attacks to prevent independence.

National Liberation Front (FLN): Led the armed struggle and diplomatic campaign for Algerian independence.

United Nations (UN): Internationalized the conflict by hosting debates on self-determination and colonial legitimacy.

North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO): Closely monitored the crisis to prevent strain on Western defense coordination during the Cold War.

International Monetary Fund (IMF): Encouraged fiscal discipline and monetary stability during economic restructuring.

Pieds-Noirs: European settler community living in Algeria that exerted political pressure on the government to maintain French sovereignty.

The United States (US): Encouraged a stable, economically resilient France as a central pillar of the Western alliance and stability within a key ally, while gradually accepting independence for Algeria as inevitable.

The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR): Provided political backing to anti-colonial movements to expand influence in the developing world.

Tunisia: Allowed nationalist fighters to organize near its borders and supported diplomatic efforts.

Morocco: Offered sanctuary and logistical depth to the independence forces.

United Kingdom (UK): Prioritized NATO cohesion and regional balance rather than direct participation.

Harold Macmillan: Promoted managed decolonization and signaled that independence movements reflected an irreversible global trend.

Winston Churchill: Represented an earlier era of imperial strategy that shaped Western perspectives, though Britain avoided direct intervention.

8. Important Figures

8.1. Charles de Gaulle

A general and statesman, and the main political force behind modern France. He first gained prominence during World War II as the leader of the Free French Forces from exile, who refused to accept France's surrender to Nazi Germany. Following years away from politics, he returned to power in 1958 at the time of a national crisis and established



the French Fifth Republic. He inspired both deep loyalty and fierce opposition. To supporters, he was the savior of the nation; to critics, an imposing figure whose vision left little room for dissent.

8.2. Georges Pompidou



A political leader and intellectual who became one of the leading political forces in modern France. He first rose to national prominence as de Gaulle's right arm and later served as Prime Minister during a period of rapid economic expansion and social transformation. He was elected president in 1969 and gained broad executive powers under the framework of the Fifth Republic, rapidly modernizing France in many aspects.

8.3. Michel Debre

Jurist and one of the principal architects of modern France's political structure. He first gained a reputation as a devoted supporter of de Gaulle and had a decisive role in drafting the constitution of the Fifth Republic. He was appointed the Republic's first Prime Minister in 1959, during the collapse of its colonial empire, with the most significant crisis being the Algerian War of Independence. Despite his initial support for French rule, he was forced to accept negotiation to deal with the unrest as decolonization became inevitable.



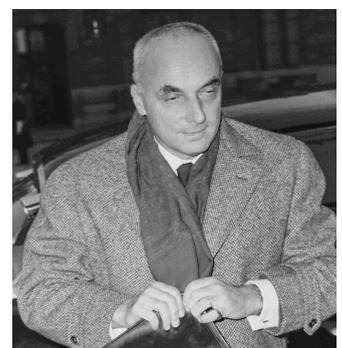
8.4. General Raoul Salan



A general and powerful military leader who advanced through ranks during colonial campaigns and eventually became Commander in Chief of French Forces in Algeria during the Algerian War of Independence, where he had notable control over security. Despite initially supporting de Gaulle, he grew fiercely opposed to the idea of Algerian independence and played a key role in the generals' putsch in 1961, while also later helping direct armed resistance against government policy.

8.5. Pierre Guillaumat

Technocrat and senior administrator who became a key figure in determining the strategic course of France. He was given responsibility for leading significant defense and energy projects. Later, he held



substantial authority over national security and military organization as Minister of the Armed Forces. While working mostly out of the public eye, he played a critical role in the growth of France's industrial capacity and nuclear deterrent, helping to establish the groundwork for French strategic independence.

8.6. Maurice Couve de Murville



A diplomat who emerged as a key player in shaping France's foreign policy in the years following World War II. He was appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs, where he oversaw France's foreign policy during a time of tension and change in the world. Given significant control over diplomatic tactics, he sought to bolster France's voice in Europe and defend French independence internationally. He assumed executive authority to help restore stability during a period of domestic uncertainty when he was appointed prime minister in 1968, amidst widespread civil unrest.

8.7. Pierre Pflimlin

A political figure whose brief reign during the height of the country's crisis was a watershed in modern France. In 1958, as the country was increasingly growing unstable, mainly due to the Algerian conflict, he was named prime minister. However, in the face of political collapse and military insurrection, his government found it difficult to establish authority. His brief administration was unable to control the worsening situation, which led to de Gaulle's return and the creation of the Fifth Republic. He joined the first government of de Gaulle as a Minister of State, a senior cabinet rank typically granted to prominent political figures without tying them to a single departmental portfolio. This allowed him to remain involved in shaping policy during the early years of the Fifth Republic.



8.8. Louis Joxe



A diplomat and political leader who was instrumental in overseeing one of the most delicate changes in modern France. Before being appointed Minister for Algerian Affairs during the Algerian conflict, he first rose to prominence in high-level diplomatic positions. Given significant negotiating power, he oversaw negotiations that finally resulted in Algeria's independence, making him the central focus of a major change in French strategy. He worked closely with Charles de

Gaulle and went on to hold important cabinet posts where he had extensive administrative control during a time of national change.

8.9. Jean-Marie Querville

Naval commander who, during a moment of strategic crisis, possessed considerable control within the nation's maritime forces. He rose through the Navy's ranks, distinguished himself as a leader, and was named Commander in Chief for the Mediterranean, where he protected vital maritime lanes and maintained operational control over vital naval zones. His influence over naval strategy and defense readiness was further cemented when he was appointed Chief of Staff of the French Navy. He helped fortify the nation's military posture, and his leadership put him among the senior military officials tasked with defending French interests in a difficult regional climate, despite his lack of public visibility compared to political leaders.



8.10. General André Martin



Military leader who rose to prominence in the country's air forces during the Cold War. He rose through the ranks steadily, was recognized for his strategic expertise, and was given top command duties over France's aerial defense system. Later, he served as the Chief of Staff of the French Air Force, where he had a significant impact on modernizing air capabilities and operational preparedness. He strengthened France's autonomous defense stance while working under Charles de Gaulle, especially as the nation increased its military autonomy and strategic deterrence. His leadership placed him among the senior military commanders tasked with ensuring national security in a world growing more divided by the day, despite his lack of public prominence compared to political leaders.

8.11. Antoine Pinay

Conservative politician known for his ability to maintain stability during unstable economic times. As prime minister in 1952, he enforced strict control over financial policy and restored public trust through budgetary restraint and currency stabilization. He then worked under Charles de Gaulle as Minister of Economics and Finance, and in the early years of the Fifth Republic, he had a significant impact on the country's economic course. He continued to be one of the Republic's most trusted economic leaders despite being admired for his cautious pragmatism and occasionally criticized for his conventional approach.



8.12. Emille Pelletier



A political leader and administrator who held considerable power during a tense national moment. He was appointed High Commissioner in Cameroon, where he was in charge of French rule in the face of growing political pressure and independence movements. He was in charge of upholding law and order while directing the region through a challenging period of transformation. Later, he was appointed Minister of the Interior, where he had broad authority over internal stability, public administration, and domestic security. His positions put him among the authorities tasked with preserving state power during France's broader decolonization process, despite the fact that he was not as well-known in the public eye as famous national politicians.

8.13. Roger Frey

A political figure who rose to prominence as a key figure in upholding domestic order at an unstable point in modern France. He was given delicate government responsibilities. During the early stages of the French Fifth Republic's development, he was first appointed Minister of Information in 1959, where he oversaw government communications and media policy. Later, during the period of the ongoing Algerian conflict, he was named Minister of the Interior, where he had extensive authority over public administration, law enforcement, and internal security. Few could dispute his significance in preserving the power and stability of the French state, despite his occasionally harsh methods.



8.14. Bernard Cornut-Gentille



Colonial administrator who exercised notable authority during France's transition away from empire. He initially rose to prominence in high-level administrative positions abroad, most notably as the High Commissioner in French West Africa, where he ruled over governance amid a wave of institutional reform and growing nationalist protests. He was given extensive executive authority and was in charge of preserving stability while preparing the environment for political change. He eventually held important positions in colonial policy and military affairs under de Gaulle as Minister of Overseas France and then as Minister of the Armed Forces. He was one of the main leaders leading the Republic through the last phases of decolonization, despite occasional criticism for protecting French strategic interests.

8.15. Andre Boulloche

A resistance veteran who became a powerful administrator in the Republic after the war. After participating in the French Resistance during World War II, he went on to become well-known across the country for his technical proficiency and government service. During a time of modernization, he had a significant impact on state administration and educational policy while serving as Minister of National Education. Known for his methodical approach and dedication to institutional growth, he was among the authorities tasked with strengthening the French Fifth Republic's institutions.



9. Algerian War of Independence

Algeria had been a French colony for many years. European settlers (Pieds-noirs) in the region enjoyed political and economic privileges. Algerians, on the other hand, were relegated to second-class citizenship; they faced restrictions on voting rights, land ownership, and public office. The war began on the night of November 1, 1954, with attacks by the National Liberation Front (FLN). This date is considered the start of the war. The FLN was a national resistance movement founded for independence and sovereignty.

France initially sent a strong military force to suppress the conflict. Harsh measures were implemented, including expansion, enlargement, and destruction campaigns by the French army. While these measures seemed to quickly achieve the desired results for the FLN, they provoked a strong reaction in international public opinion and within French society.

Political instability prevailed in France when the war began. De Gaulle, defending Algeria's French identity, further emphasized the Algerian right to sovereignty and steered the process towards a diplomatic solution.

In 1962, the Évian Agreements secured a ceasefire. The agreement recognized the Algerian people's right to self-sovereignty and played a role in achieving peace. Subsequently, Algeria officially declared its independence.



Death and Damage:

- Many civilians lost their lives in Algeria (estimates vary, ranging from hundreds of thousands to over 1 million).
- Thousands of French soldiers and settlers also died.

Migration and Social Impact:

- Immediately following independence, approximately 1.5 million Pieds-noirs and other European settlers migrated to France.
- Local Algerians who supported the French army during the war faced post-war violence; thousands were killed.

To summarize:

The Algerian War was an armed conflict between France and the Algerian independence movement. The war was a struggle for independence launched by the National Liberation Front (FLN) against France's colonial rule in Algeria. It ultimately resulted in Algeria's independence from France and also profoundly shook the political structure in France.

It began in 1954 with large-scale armed actions by the National Liberation Front and represented the independence movement that sought to end colonial rule in Algeria.

The French army was forced to take measures against popular uprisings, armed groups, and urban conflicts. Both soldiers and civilians suffered in this process.

The war led to the collapse of the existing French government, the Fourth Republic, and the establishment of the Fifth Republic.

Charles de Gaulle initiated negotiations with the FLN, resulting in the signing of the Evian Accords. After the French people ratified the agreement, the Algerians accepted independence.

10. Economic Situation of France

France has carried out its political revolution in an orderly manner: it has regained stability and established new political institutions to maintain it. However, without economic renewal, last year's political renewal would have been meaningless. Therefore, from the outset, General de Gaulle's government emphasized economic and fiscal policies that would expand production while maintaining monetary stability.

The government's primary goal was to make the French economy capable of withstanding the effects of the necessary austerity measures. The most urgent needs were:

- controlling the rise in domestic prices,
- limiting the trade deficit,
- securing a large public credit line.

As the government faced the economic challenges of the time, it was confronted with several alternatives:

- either seek new aid from abroad (which could be difficult to obtain),
- significantly reduce import volumes (which could deprive the industry of essential raw materials).

11. Constitutional Reform: The Fifth Republic

In 1958, France was experiencing significant political instability due to the Algerian War. The prevailing system at the time was the Fourth Republic, with a very powerful legislative body. The military crisis in Algeria and the power vacuum within France nearly led the country to internal conflict. In this environment, the demand for strong leadership arose as a political solution. Charles de Gaulle was seen as the solution and was called upon to take office. De Gaulle's condition of creating a new and strong constitution (strengthening the executive) was accepted, and the Fifth Republic was established with the 1958 Constitution. With the 1958 Constitution:

- The continuity of the state was strengthened.
- The President gained the power to dissolve Parliament.
- The President was granted special powers in times of crisis.
- The government was given the power to directly pass laws in certain situations.

The 1958 Constitution was designed as a solution to the problems of weak state authority and government crises experienced in the late Fourth Republic. A semi-presidential system was also used.

To sum up:

The Constitution of the Fifth Republic, although created as a result of the political crisis of 1958 (particularly the Algerian War and government instability), is the fundamental text that regulates the current political system of France (although some changes have been made to date). It was written as a response to government instability and a power vacuum.

It aimed to strengthen the balance between the executive (president and government) and the legislative (parliament).

In particular, stronger powers were given to the president. (The aim: to prevent the legislature from easily overthrowing the government). A strong executive supports state stability and control, thus supporting democracy.

12. Internal Chaos in France

The internal chaos in France in 1958 reflected ongoing political and military crises. To summarize these upheavals, crises, and their consequences:

The political and military exhaustion from the Algerian War, the divisions among the settled population and the military regarding the Algerian issue, The establishment of the "Committee of Public Security" following the May 13, 1958, events, as a result of the uprising of settlers and French soldiers (the army implied it could intervene in Paris if necessary), The collapse of the Fourth Republic, the establishment of the Fifth Republic with de Gaulle as president, gaining expanded powers, and the introduction of a new constitution.

The importance of the crisis:

- The possibility of a military coup arose.
- The parliamentary system in France weakened, leading to a predominantly presidential system.
- The Algerian issue came to the forefront.
- Charles de Gaulle's authority increased.

13. Nuclear Ambitions

Charles de Gaulle saw nuclear weapons as the ultimate safeguard of national sovereignty, not just as tools of war. After seeing France's quick defeat in 1940 and its subsequent reliance on Allied liberation, he came to believe that being a true great power meant being able to defend the country without completely depending on outside assistance.

As a result, nuclear capability became a key component of his larger plan to regain French independence and prestige. Under his leadership, France's atomic program advanced quickly, expanding on previous studies organized by the Commissariat à l'énergie atomique (French Alternative Energies and Atomic Energy Commission). The state made significant investments in the development of weapons, delivery systems, and testing facilities under the administrative and industrial direction of individuals like Pierre Guillaumat. France became the fourth nuclear power in the world in 1960 after this endeavor resulted in the nation's first successful nuclear test in Algeria.



The Gerboise Bleue test was conducted in the Sahara Desert on February 13, 1960, close to Reggane. The isolated area was picked because of its sparse population and the extent of French military dominance over the region during the Algerian War.

But the choice turned out to be highly divisive. Both French personnel and local populations were impacted by radioactive fallout, and the tests later became an ongoing cause of political tension between France and Algeria following their independence. After 1962, France moved

its nuclear test program to the Pacific after temporarily continuing underground testing in the Saharan region.

This arsenal was intended by De Gaulle to be a force de frappe, or an autonomous strike force that might repel any significant aggressor. He argued that a country must be able to react forcefully on its own terms, rather than relying entirely on alliance guarantees. There were times when this way of thinking caused conflict with NATO, which placed a strong emphasis on integrated defense under American leadership.



The Soviet Union's and the United States' massive nuclear arsenals fueled concerns that middle powers might lose their strategic significance. France sought a stronger voice within Europe and freedom of action in international affairs by obtaining its own arsenal.

14. Summarized Timeline of the Events

- 1946: Establishment of the Fourth Republic
- Late 1940s-Early 1950s: Government Instability
- 1954: Start of the Algerian War
- 1954-1958): Escalation of the Algerian Crisis
- 13 May 1958: Algiers Uprising
- Late May 1958: Threat of Military Intervention
- 1 June 1958: de Gaulle Becomes Prime Minister
- Summer 1958: Constitutional Reform Process
- September 1958: Referendum on the New Constitution
- October 1958: Birth of the Fifth Republic
- 1960: Growing Tension in Algeria
- January 1960: “Week of the Barricades” in Algiers
- 1961: The Generals’ Putsch (Algiers Putsch)
- 1961: Creation of Organisation Armée Secrète
- 1962: Assassination Attempts Against de Gaulle
- 1962: Evian Accords & Algerian Independence

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