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- FRANCE AT WAR.

This is Indo-China today. No longer is the fighting there a mere skirmish with terrorists - it is war. French paratroops drop into Dien Bien Phu, the very centre of the conflict. The situation at this fortress-camp clearly indicates how the pattern of the fighting has changed. American 'planes, guns and ammunition are helping the French and Viet Nam forces; Russian and Chinese weapons are aiding the Viet Minh. Thus the clash is between East and West, and the prize is no longer just Indo-China, but all South East Asia.

In Dien Bien Phu, the biggest battle of the war is on; Four of the Communist's seven regular divisions hammer the French defenders day and night. Colonel de Castries, the French Garrison Commander, has ordered his men to die rather than retreat.

Heavy losses in Indo-China are having their repercussions in France, adding to other factors which threaten the Government. Hundreds of veterans of the Indo-China campaign hold a memorial service of their dead comrades at the Unknown Soldier's Tomb under the Arc de Triomphe. The recent dismissal of Marshal Juin who attacked the European Defence Community has caused much criticism by ex-servicemen of Prime Minister Laniel and Defence Minister Plevin.

While the ceremony continues in Paris, at the village of Annevault in Normandy Marshal Juin attends his brother-in-law's funeral. The Marshal, who is an outspoken opponent of German rearmament, recently made a controversial public speech without permission. Ultimately, this led to his dismissal from his French military posts. Following the service in Paris, hundreds of Juin's sympathisers stage a violent demonstration against the Premier and his fellow-ministers. Shouting "Vivi Juin", the mob punch and kick Monsieur Plevin as he struggles to his car.

Most French people, if not so vehement as the rioters, are against the dismissal of Marshal Juin, one of the country's most esteemed figures. This, plus a growing anger at the losses in the Indo-China war, may seriously weaken the Government's chances of survival.