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Viewing cable 10PARIS58, EMBASSY PARIS - MINORITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

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Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
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E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/31/2019
 TAGS: PGOV PREL KIRF KISL FR
 SUBJECT: EMBASSY PARIS - MINORITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

REF: A. SECSTATE 127215
 A B. PARIS 1714

Classified By: Ambassador Charles H. Rivkin, Reasons 1.4(b),(d).

A1. (C/NF) SUMMARY: In keeping with France's unique history and circumstances, Embassy Paris has created a Minority Engagement Strategy that encompasses, among other groups, the French Muslim population and responds to the goals outlined in refTel A. Our aim is to engage the French population at all levels in order to amplify France's efforts to realize its own egalitarian ideals, thereby advancing U.S. national interests. While France is justifiably proud of its leading role in conceiving democratic ideals and championing human rights and the rule of law, French institutions have not proven themselves flexible enough to adjust to an increasingly heterodox demography. We believe that if France, over the long run, does not successfully increase opportunity and provide genuine political representation for its minority populations, France could become a weaker, more divided country, perhaps more crisis-prone and inward-looking, and consequently a less capable ally. To support French efforts to provide equal opportunity for minority populations, we will engage in positive discourse; set a strong example; implement an aggressive youth outreach strategy; encourage moderate voices; propagate best practices; and deepen our understanding of the underlying causes of inequality in France. We will also integrate the efforts of various Embassy sections, target influential leaders among our primary audiences, and evaluate both tangible and intangible indicators of the success of our strategy. END SUMMARY.

 BACKGROUND: THE CRISIS OF REPRESENTATION IN FRANCE

A2. (C/NF) France has long championed human rights and the rule of law, both at home and abroad, and justifiably perceives itself as a historic leader among democratic nations. This history and self-perception will serve us well as we implement the strategy outlined here, in which we press France toward a fuller application of the democratic values it espouses. This strategy is necessary because French institutions have not proven themselves flexible enough to adjust to the country's increasingly heterodox demography. Very few minorities hold leadership positions in France's public institutions. As President Sarkozy's own Diversity Czar Yazid Sabeg told Ambassador Rivkin in December, the National Assembly "serves as a mirror of the crisis of

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representation in France" (reftel B). The National Assembly, among its 577 deputies, has a single black member from metropolitan France (excluding its island territories), but does not have any elected representatives of Muslim or Arab extraction, though this minority group alone represents approximately 10 percent of the population. The Senate has two Muslim Senators (out of 343), but no black representatives and only a few Senators hail from other ethnic or religious minorities. Sabeg also noted that none of France's approximately 180 Ambassadors is black, and only one is of North African descent. Despite Sarkozy's appointment of leaders such as Rachida Dati, Fidela Amara and Rama Yade, minorities continue to confront a very thick glass ceiling in France's public institutions. The French media remains overwhelmingly white, with only modest increases in minority representation on camera for major news broadcasts. Among French elite educational institutions, we are only aware that Sciences Po has taken serious steps to integrate. While slightly better represented in private organizations, minorities in France lead very few corporations and foundations. Thus the reality of French public life defies the nation's egalitarian ideals. In-group, elitist politics still characterize French public institutions, while extreme right, xenophobic policies hold appeal for a small (but occasionally influential) minority. Post will continue to explore other underlying causes of the social, political and economic barriers impeding the advancement of minorities in France (see Tactic 6, below).

¶3. (C/NF) France suffers consequences when its leading institutions fail to reflect the composition of its population. We believe France has not benefited fully from the energy, drive, and ideas of its minorities. Despite some French claims to serve as a model of assimilation and meritocracy, undeniable inequities tarnish France's global image and diminish its influence abroad. In our view, a sustained failure to increase opportunity and provide genuine political representation for its minority populations could render France a weaker, more divided country. The geopolitical consequences of France's weakness and division will adversely affect U.S. interests, as we need strong partners in the heart of Europe to help us promote democratic

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values. Moreover, social exclusion has domestic consequences for France, including the alienation of some segments of the population, which can in turn adversely affect our own efforts to fight global networks of violent extremists. A thriving, inclusive French polity will help advance our interests in expanding democracy and increasing stability worldwide.

A STRATEGY FOR FRANCE: OUR AIMS

¶4. (C/NF) The overarching goal of our minority outreach strategy is to engage the French population at all levels in order to help France to realize its own egalitarian ideals. Our strategy has three broad target audiences in mind: (1) the majority, especially the elites; (2) minorities, with a focus on their leaders; (3) and the general population. Employing the seven tactics described below, we aim (1) to increase awareness among France's elites of the benefits of expanding opportunity and the costs of maintaining the status quo; (2) to improve the skills and grow the confidence of minority leaders who seek to increase their influence; (3) and to communicate to the general population in France that we particularly admire the diversity and dynamism of its population, while emphasizing the advantages of profiting from those qualities by expanding opportunities for all.

TACTIC 1: ENGAGE IN POSITIVE DISCOURSE

¶5. (C/NF) First, we will focus our discourse on the issue of equal opportunity. When we give public addresses about the community of democracies, we will emphasize, among the qualities of democracy, the right to be different, protection

of minority rights, the value of equal opportunity, and the importance of genuine political representation. In private meetings, we will deliberately direct questions about equal opportunity in France to high-level, non-minority French leaders. Rather than retreating from discussions involving two sacred cows in France -- the concepts of "secularism" and "communitarianism" -- we will engage French leaders directly about the role that their terminology and intellectual frameworks could play in creating (or diminishing) equality of opportunity in France. We will endeavor to convey the costs to France of the under-representation of minorities, highlighting the benefits we have accumulated, over time, by working hard to chip away at the various impediments faced by American minorities. We will, of course, continue to adopt a humble attitude regarding our own situation in the U.S., but nevertheless will stress the innumerable benefits accruing from a proactive approach to broad social inclusion, complementing our French partners on any positive steps they take. In addition, we will continue and intensify our work with French museums and educators to reform the history curriculum taught in French schools, so that it takes into account the role and perspectives of minorities in French history.

 TACTIC 2: SET A STRONG EXAMPLE

¶6. (C/NF) Second, we will employ the tool of example. We will continue and expand our efforts to bring minority leaders from the U.S. to France, working with these American leaders to convey an honest sense of their experience to French minority and non-minority leaders alike. When we send French leaders to America, we will include, as often as possible, a component of their trip that focuses on equal opportunity. In the Embassy, we will continue to invite a broad spectrum of French society to our events, and avoid, as appropriate, hosting white-only events, or minority-only events. We will be inclusive, working in this way to break down barriers, facilitate communication, and expand networks. By bringing together groups who would not otherwise interact together, the Embassy will continue to use its cachet to create networking opportunities that cut through traditional cultural and social barriers in France.

 TACTIC 3: LAUNCH AGGRESSIVE YOUTH OUTREACH

¶7. (C/NF) Third, we will continue and expand our youth outreach efforts in order to communicate about our shared values with young French audiences of all socio-cultural backgrounds. Leading the charge on this effort, the Ambassador's inter-agency Youth Outreach Initiative aims to engender a positive dynamic among French youth that leads to greater support for U.S. objectives and values. Some

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elements of our Youth Outreach Initiative have particular importance for minorities, including:

-- Drawing heavily on new media, we aim first to build trust and gain understanding among French youth from diverse backgrounds.

-- While reinforcing mutual trust and understanding, we seek to help France's next generation improve their capacity to lead in their communities, while also conveying the importance of transcending the bounds of their own communities in order to make a broader, national impact.

-- To achieve these aims, we will build on the expansive Public Diplomacy programs already in place at post, and develop creative, additional means to influence the youth of France, employing new media, corporate partnerships, nationwide competitions, targeted outreach events, especially invited U.S. guests.

-- We will also develop new tools to identify, learn from, and influence future French leaders.

-- As we expand training and exchange opportunities for the youth of France, we will continue to make absolutely certain that the exchanges we support are inclusive.

-- We will build on existing youth networks in France, and create new ones in cyberspace, connecting France's future leaders to each other in a forum whose values we help to shape -- values of inclusion, mutual respect, and open dialogue.

TACTIC 4: ENCOURAGE MODERATE VOICES

¶8. (C/NF) Fourth, we will encourage moderate voices of tolerance to express themselves with courage and conviction. Building on our work with two prominent websites geared toward young French-speaking Muslims -- oumma.fr and saphirnews.com -- we will support, train, and engage media and political activists who share our values. As we continue to meet with moderate leaders of minority groups, we will also expand our efforts to facilitate grass roots inter-faith exchanges. We will share in France, with faith communities and with the Ministry of the Interior, the most effective techniques for teaching tolerance currently employed in American mosques, synagogues, churches, and other religious institutions. We will engage directly with the Ministry of Interior to compare U.S. and French approaches to supporting minority leaders who seek moderation and mutual understanding, while also comparing our responses to those who seek to sow hatred and discord.

TACTIC 5: PROPAGATE BEST PRACTICES

¶9. (C/NF) Fifth, we will continue our project of sharing best practices with young leaders in all fields, including young political leaders of all moderate parties so that they have the toolkits and mentoring to move ahead. We will create or support training and exchange programs that teach the enduring value of broad inclusion to schools, civil society groups, bloggers, political advisors, and local politicians. Through outreach programs, Embassy officers from all sections will interact and communicate to these same groups our best practices in creating equal opportunities for all Americans. We will also provide tools for teaching tolerance to the network of over 1,000 American university students who teach English in French schools every year.

TACTIC 6: DEEPEN OUR UNDERSTANDING OF THE PROBLEM

¶10. (C/NF) Sixth, through focused contact work, reporting and analysis, we will deepen the USG understanding of the underlying causes of inequality and discrimination in France. We will break new ground by examining how the very structure of some French institutions may limit minority representation in elected office and the high ranks of the civil service. Examining significant developments in depth, such as the debate on national identity (reftel B), we plan to track trends and, ideally, predict change in the status of minorities in France, estimating how this change will impact U.S. interests. As our awareness expands and deepens, we will adjust, accordingly, the minority outreach strategy described here.

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TACTIC 7: INTEGRATE, TARGET, AND EVALUATE OUR EFFORTS

¶11. (C/NF) Finally, a Minority Working Group will integrate the discourse, actions, and analysis of relevant sections and agencies in the Embassy. This group, working in tandem with the Youth Outreach Initiative, will identify and target influential leaders and groups among our primary audiences.

It will also evaluate our impact over the course of the year, by examining both tangible and intangible indicators of success. Tangible changes include a measurable increase in the number of minorities leading and participating in public and private organizations, including elite educational institutions; growth in the number of constructive efforts by minority leaders to organize political support both within and beyond their own minority communities; new, proactive policies to enhance social inclusion adopted by non-minority political leaders; expansion of inter-communal and inter-faith exchanges at the local level; decrease in popular support for xenophobic political parties and platforms. While we could never claim credit for these positive developments, we will focus our efforts in carrying out activities, described above, that prod, urge and stimulate movement in the right direction. In addition, we will track intangible measures of success -- a growing sense of belonging, for example, among young French minorities, and a burgeoning hope that they, too, can represent their country at home, and abroad, even one day at the pinnacle of French public life, as president of the Republic.

RIVKIN