French Consul General Has Array of Experience

He Visits New Orleans to Strengthen Ties

BY JOE MASSA

He arrived in New Orleans from his post in Paris to fulfill a visit to the Crescent City.

Jean-Jacques Peyronnet, newly appointed as consul general of France in New Orleans, was the son of a French consul general who had been stationed in New Orleans. Peyronnet was educated in France and has served in various diplomatic postings around the world. He has been described as a fluent speaker of four languages: French, English, Spanish, and German.

Peyronnet says he looks forward to strengthening ties between France and the United States through educational, cultural, and business exchanges.

One of the goals of his tenure in New Orleans is to increase the number of French-speaking students in the city. Peyronnet plans to work closely with schools and universities to promote the French language and culture. He is also interested in fostering business relationships between French and American companies.

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After participating in the campaigns of Italy and France, he was sent to the war front in Southeast Asia. Peyronnet was interviewed at International House Thursday during a luncheon with members of The Times-Picayune editorial staff. The luncheon was preceded by a visit to The Times-Picayune plant at 3800 Howard Ave.

Peyronnet, who arrived in New Orleans four days ago to assume his new role as consul general, says one of his first chores here will be to preside over the official reception held annually on July 14 to celebrate France's Bastille Day.

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CHINA, which included the colonies of Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia.

SHORT-LIVED

Peace for the French was short-lived, however, and Peyronnet found himself and other Frenchmen involved in a war with Vietnamese nationalists under the leadership of the Communist Ho Chi Minh.

In the beginning of the Vietnamese war, Peyronnet recalls, there was a great deal of confusion among the French residents of colonial Vietnam. The initial French opinion was that there was no organized group of Vietnamese rebels and Frenchmen did not take into account the fierce desire of the Vietnamese for independence.

After years of jungle warfare, Peyronnet says, the French people were disgusted with the whole affair and were more than willing to wash their hands of it. At the Geneva conference of 1954, which ended French domination of Indo-China and partitioned Vietnam into north and south portions.

Of the present situation in Vietnam, Peyronnet maintains that the same mistakes and misunderstandings which took place in the early years of the Vietnamese conflict are being repeated today by the Americans. He says the feeling of disgust with the war is dominating the American atmosphere much as it did in France in 1954.

FOUR LANGUAGES

Peyronnet, who speaks four languages, has traveled widely across the United States, and once served, from 1960 to 1962, at the U.N. in New York. He was associated with UNICEF and was in charge of the departments of Europe and Africa.

He also served UNICEF as a representative in Ankara, Turkey, and Abidjan, Ivory Coast.

At 68, Peyronnet is an avid sportsman, the lean and youthful-looking consul general lists among his "participating" sports tennis, horseback riding, scuba-diving, skiing, water-skiing, light plane piloting, and parachuting.

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