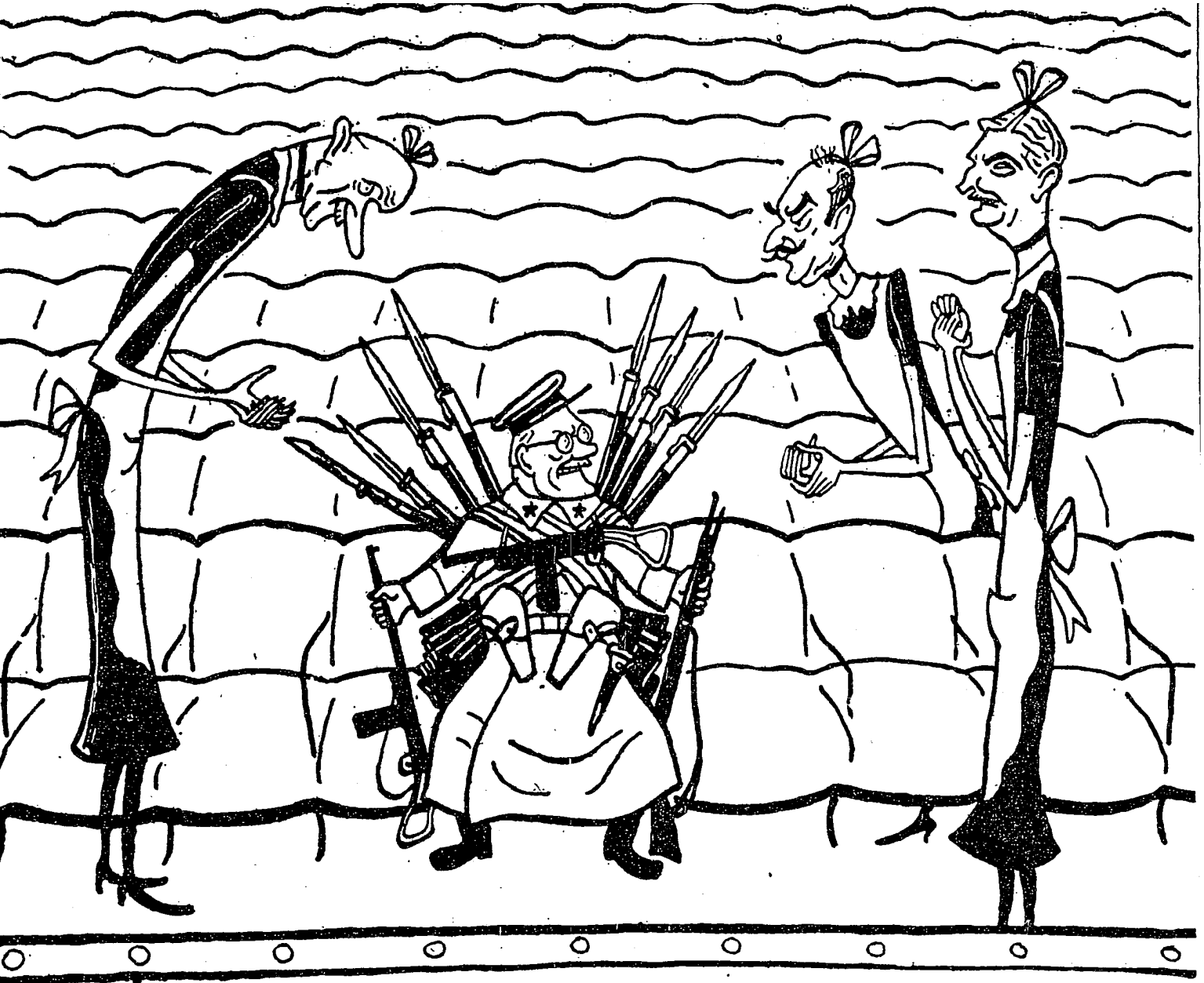


THE USHERS AT THE UNITED NATIONS



“Won't Monsieur leave his things in the cloakroom?”

N.A.T.O.'S FIRST YEAR: EUROPE NOW HAS DEFENDERS

By C. L. SULZBERGER
Special to THE NEW YORK TIMES.

ROME, Nov. 24—It is almost a year since the Allied powers met in Brussels and decided to ask President Truman to name General of the Army Dwight D. Eisenhower as their Supreme Commander in Europe. Since then the North Atlantic Treaty Organization has become a concrete body.

The forces available to the contributing powers have been coordinated into one unified defensive army, with various regional responsibilities assigned to generals and admirals of divers nations. Plans have been drawn up for defending different areas at different dates against possible sudden assault. A huge fleet—the United States Sixth—has been placed directly under General Eisenhower to cover his Mediterranean flank.

The North Atlantic defense area has been extended eastward to the Black Sea and the Caucasus by the inclusion of Greece and Turkey in the over-all structure. Additional troops have been raised by various member nations.

U. S. Forces in Europe

The United States is completing the process of bringing up its forces in Germany to the six divisions permitted by Congress. American depots and communications lines dot the French countryside. The British have strengthened their units in Germany, and Canadian troops are now beginning to come over. By the end of this year France will have ready the five standing and five swiftly mobilizable divisions pledged and Italy is gradually getting her small army into condition to be of some help.

Thus, looking back upon the past year, remarkable accomplishments have been registered.

The Occident is on the way toward attaining that position on which it has sought to base its diplomatic attitude—to negotiate from strength. The beginning of that strength is visible. But it will still be a long, long time before it is indeed a powerful enough force to be reckoned as a balance to the preponderant armed might that the Soviet bloc maintains permanently in Europe.

The current Rome meeting will probably not be of any special historical importance in terms of what the current council chairman, Lester B. Pearson of Canada, calls “headline decisions.” However, he felt that it was especially advisable for the N. A. T. O. ministers to get the habit of consultation on a regular basis even if final actions concerning major issues would almost certainly have to be postponed

Eisenhower's Command Is Taking Form but Goal Is Still Far Distant

poned until later sessions. Nevertheless, the Rome conference is likely to bring into the forefront for the first time some of the most important long-range economic and political problems which N. A. T. O. will have to face throughout its lifetime.

Looking backward upon its fledgling history, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization can feel proud of what has been accomplished.

But to arrive at the eventual goals set by the military planners—that is, to bring into being a force considered sufficient to stave

States arms and munitions scheduled to be shipped to European powers have not come so rapidly or in so much quantity as desired. This was partly due to the larger requirements in Korea. It was partly due to the shortages of certain key raw materials, such as manganese, which held up the manufacture of vital parts and thus created bottlenecks on the American assembly lines. It was partly due to the great economic strain on world markets when prices skyrocketed as the world set about rearming seriously.

Likewise, there has been keen

the ultimate goals. In other words, by 1954 it is hoped that both a minimum covering force will be solidly in being and that adequate reserve units will be trained and at hand—for as long as the critical conditions may require—possibly for decades.

But, on the other hand, there will be a strong effort here to speed up full preparedness of such divisions and air units as are already in being. Furthermore, new methods of developing reserve divisions, behind the covering force, are being put into practice. Each such unit will have a nucleus of regular soldiers so that it can train and assemble more swiftly.

Matter of Costs

All these plans—to adhere to long-range goals and at the same time accelerate immediate preparations—are going to cost money. Therefore, probably the most important phase of this meeting will not be listening to reports from the Chiefs of Staff. They—as the Military Committee's preliminary sessions showed—are basically in full agreement.

It will only be when W. Averell Harriman's committee of the “three wise men” can report just how much it believes each nation can and should do that the generals will know what they can count on next year or any other year. Mr. Harriman's final report will not be ready for this Council but the ministers should, at any rate, get some idea of the situation from his progress report.

In the meantime, everyone is agreed that there has been no change in the goals set for itself by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization—only an awareness that in the past there has been too much emphasis on such long-range concepts as plowing more and more pilots back into training and not enough on the immediate combat readiness of available units. Certainly, even if the treaty organization members agree that they can and will do much more about swift preparedness, there is no overconfidence. The Soviet Union still has on hand its 175 divisions, tens of thousands of tanks and aircraft—an army ready for immediate action.

But the democracies of the West never have nor ever will plan to build a force equal to that in power. You cannot do that and have democracy—and their first goal is the preservation of that system. The emphasis will always be on establishing a minimum covering force that will permit the civilian soldier to come rushing, fully trained and equipped, to its aid. The task of the current North Atlantic Council is how to facilitate that program.



off any threat of attack—may take years.

Furthermore, although the SHAPE planners have selected certain dates by which they hope to achieve certain minimal forces, they do not consider any of these years in terms of a “D-Day”—either in terms of ceasing all defensive preparations after such a date or of abandoning their basic philosophical intentions of preserving the peace for a more jingoistic attitude.

The entire theory of building this North Atlantic Treaty Organization army—as it has been evolved during the past year—is founded upon voluntary cooperation by the members of the alliance and upon the concept of civilian defense forces. The Western powers have no intention of getting into a race with Russia.

Thus, the military philosophy of the West is being crystallized and the plans that result are founded upon utterly different premises from those drawn up in the Kremlin. What General Eisenhower must do is create a sufficiently strong “couverture” force of the minimum number of divisions and aircraft necessary to hold off a surprise attack and permit rapid mobilization of reserves from the civilian populations behind this cover.

The covering force now existing—largely in Germany across whose flat plains a possible attack is most feared—is far larger and more efficient than was the case a year ago.

Still Far From Adequate

Nevertheless, it has become apparent that those forces that have been created are still far from adequate to do the emergency job that might some day face them. Nor has the process of preparing for their swift reinforcement by adequate reserves gone as far or as fast as had been hoped.

There are all kinds of reasons for this. To begin with, United

disappointment with some lack of progress in Europe. The program for constructing new airfields on the Continent—above all in France—has been badly retarded.

France's armed forces are not in the condition one would like. The Indo-Chinese war has constituted a terrible drain on her economy (she spends more there annually than she receives in United States aid) and her manpower.

Diplomatic stumbling blocks have arisen. There has been scant progress toward an actual beginning of German rearmament.

The question of national pride has still held up settlement of the North Atlantic area command dispute. The Middle East crisis promises to delay indefinitely a final decision on how Turkey's forces should be allocated defensively.

Financial Problem Acute

Above all, the financial problem has been acute and much worse than had been foreseen. Rising prices have made the cost of re-equipping so high that the military budgets simply are not going so far as had been anticipated. And an inflation of such dangerous potentiality has started that great care is being taken to avoid launching anything that might crack the very political structures the West is preparing to defend.

Looking backward, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization statesmen who meet here this week-end can record with satisfaction what has actually been accomplished. But, looking forward, they must shudder at all that remains to be done—especially if they happen to glance eastward at Russia's 175 ever-ready divisions.

The purpose of the current North Atlantic Council session is really to balance the picture—to take stock of what has been done and what can be done in the near as well as the distant future. There is no intention of changing