

Germany's Fate If Russia Strikes Subject Of Military Speculation

By BRUCE BLOSSAT
NEA Editorial Writer

Germany is the Korea of Europe, divided in control between East and West. And Europeans, watching U. S. military reverses in Korea, wonder about Germany's fate should Russia decide to strike there.

Time was when Europe took great assurance from the 150,000 American soldiers in West Germany. No one believed such a force could stand off an attacking Russian army, but it was felt America would swing in quickly with tremendous power if her troops were fired upon.

U. S. withdrawals in the Far East have altered the outlook

sharply. In revealing America's unpreparedness for even a little war, they have shaken the faith of all Europeans who are depending on us in event Moscow marches.

Germany of course is the richest prize Russia could possibly grab outside of the United States. With the industrial Ruhr in the Soviet fist, she would soon be master of all Europe.

The U. S. and the West can't allow this to happen. But it's doubtful we're doing enough to prevent it.

Big Plans

Present U. S. mobilization plans certainly go beyond anticipated needs of the Korean war. It is a clear American purpose to create a sizeable armed force able to move into new trouble spots when and if the Soviet Union strikes again.

But most official thinking assumes Moscow won't do anything for a while at least that would involve her own soldiers. The belief is Soviet satellites, like the North Koreans, would be asked to do the dirty work.

Yet this kind of reasoning could be as foolish as our notion that the South Koreans, equipped only for internal police action could beat off a well-armed North Korean force. The seasoned statesmen of Europe are looking beyond the satellites to a herself, we ought to be doing the same.

Pres. Truman's proposal to seek vastly bigger funds for arming western Europe is a vital step toward real defense against the might of Russia proper. But it's only a starter.

Another Problem

Another move that must be considered promptly is whether to include West German forces in an overall European defense plan. Right now we're stalling on this. Soviet-controlled East Germany has a 100,000-man police force that is an army in all but name; meantime our occupation officials talk of possibly permitting a special force up to 12,000.

We can't ride along on the glib assumption Russia has no early designs on Germany, and then quickly whip a German force into shape if she does act. Soviet action there certainly would mean Russian troops as well as East German "police."

A Russian move in Germany would undoubtedly bring America's strategic air force into action, with the atom bomb its biggest threat. But we couldn't drop the bomb on the cities of western Europe, including West Germany. For there live the peoples whose help we need, whom we are trying to keep on the side of freedom.

Only great military manpower thrown against the Russians could save these lands from being swiftly overrun. There is no excuse for delaying the critical decisions as to where we shall get that manpower.

If we really want German forces included, the time to settle the point is now. If we don't, then we should get on to other arrangements. A sound defense plan for Europe, one good enough to give the Russians pause, is the greatest military challenge now facing the free countries of the West.

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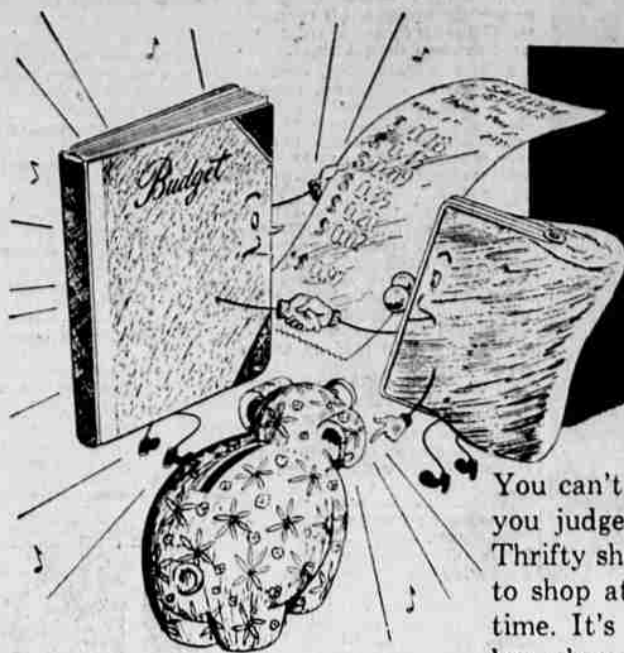
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