

Military Strategy

In the military debate there was much comment on the thesis advanced by Mr. Stahr. A number of representatives and, in particular, the rapporteur of the Political Committee, Mr. Goedhart, and Mr. John Strachey of Britain, endorsed wholeheartedly the emphasis placed on conventional forces in the United States military build-up. Mr. Strachey said "one battalion of those forces strikes me as being of far more importance than any amount of verbal denunciation of Russia." He took issue with the leader of the French delegation, M. Palewski, who had expressed the fear that, by concentration on conventional forces, the NATO countries had given the impression that they would hesitate to use every means at their disposal to repel a Communist aggression in Europe. Mr. Strachey argued that in Berlin, as elsewhere, the Communists would always take care to act well below the level of aggression at which a nuclear response from the Western side could conceivably be justified. He argued: "It is for these reasons that an over-reliance on nuclear strength to the neglect of the conventional forces far from being, as Mr. Palewski supposed, for example, a firm or strong policy, in my opinion, is a road to defeat by means of a progress of limited but successive and cumulative reverses."

For the French delegation, Senator Joël le Theule said that France, after recognizing that it was the United States that had for so long protected the alliance with its atomic striking force, was justified in developing such a force. The decision to do so, he said, was intended to support NATO and at the same time to maintain the role of France on the international scene.

Mobile Reserve

The Conference heard a report from General Norstad about the mobile reserve forces he had created from among the existing units under his command. The Supreme Commander recalled that the Parliamentarians had long been urging the creation of such a "fire brigade", which could be transported rapidly to any part of the NATO area that might be menaced, and particularly to the Northern and Southern flanks. He said one of the incidental advantages of this force was that, by drawing on units from a number of NATO countries, it could lend a truly NATO flavour to an incident that otherwise might have involved only the troops of one nation. The Conference welcomed the progress made in the creation of these forces and urged that all member states should contribute to them either by providing support units or through financial assistance. The Parliamentarians also expressed their hope that mobile forces would contribute to further integration and standardization among the NATO forces. They adopted two other resolutions urging that the boundaries of the territories assigned to some of the NATO commands should be revised, that truly integrated NATO commands should be established, and that further efforts be made to obtain a higher degree of co-ordination of research development and production of weapons and equipment.