

powers with respect to Berlin and to insist that the freedom and viability of West Berlin be maintained, including access by air, water or land.

Military Build-Up

The most important conclusion the Conference drew from the Berlin crisis was that the NATO countries needed to strengthen their military forces not only to meet that crisis but also to prepare for similar crises created by the Communists elsewhere in the next few years. General Norstad said that he had placed before the NATO Council last summer a plan to increase the military strength of his command by greatly speeding up the time-table for achieving present goals. He had found that the fastest and most effective way of doing so was to raise the personnel and equipment levels of the existing combat units. The NATO countries had reacted promptly to his proposals. Taking ground forces as an example, the General said that, because of manning, equipment and supply deficiencies, the Central European region had until recently had an effective force of 15 or 16 divisions, though 21 divisions were assigned to it. The new commitments already made would, within the immediate future, raise the number of available divisions to approximately 25, almost all of which would be combat effective.

The Conference unanimously recommended that, before January 1962, the strength of the NATO divisions be raised to meet the requirements of the Supreme Commander and that in future this strength be maintained.

In these discussions, the military build-up was linked with questions of military strategy. The United States Secretary of the Army, Mr. Elvis J. Stahr, Jr., said that one of the major responsibilities of NATO in the event of a war in Europe would be to prevent the armies of the Soviet bloc from turning Western Europe into a devastated area under enemy control. In doing so, he said, "we will use the level of counter force clearly sufficient to halt aggression in its tracks; we will certainly use nothing less." He added that it had been the determination of the United States during the military build-up in 1961 to give themselves, in the words of President Kennedy, "a wider choice than humiliation or all-out nuclear action".

The United States forces in Europe were being increased by 40,000 trained soldiers and given increased tactical air power and more modern armour, weapons and equipment. Additional air-lift capacity was being provided, as were additional stockpiles of supplies in Europe, in order to equip the additional divisions whose personnel could be air-lifted to Europe in a matter of days. Six regular army divisions were now available in the United States in a strategic reserve that could move at once to any place on earth.

In conclusion, Secretary Stahr said that, while it was true the United States could afford to devote a greater share of its national income to defence without serious economic consequences than could some small nations, "nevertheless, the American people feel strongly that some of the nations could and should do considerably more to strengthen the common defence".