

lieve that it would be better to set up a separate nuclear force to be placed behind the conventional forces and under direct command of SACEUR. The risk must not be taken that a major nuclear conflict would be triggered, by the unauthorized use of tactical nuclear weapons, by subordinate command when threatened by annihilation. It should not be taken for granted that nuclear weapons would be used by NATO forces at the very beginning of any aggression notwithstanding the advocacy of such a policy by West German officials.

51. In Europe, instant retaliation, sometimes referred to as trip-wire theory, as opposed to the concept of flexible retaliation or measured response is widely discussed. The first case envisages the massive and instantaneous intervention of conventional and nuclear forces, including strategic nuclear devices, if the slightest part of the territory of a NATO country has been invaded by enemy forces.

In the second instance, nuclear weapons are not to be used until it becomes clear that the aggression cannot be contained in any other way. In either case the position that may be adopted by the United States gives cause for concern to some Europeans. They feel that the United States might hesitate to use tactical nuclear weapons, with the great risk of all-out nuclear warfare, for the sake of defending parts of European territory. They pose the further question: What extent of aggression would have to occur to guarantee nuclear intervention by the United States?

52. Furthermore, it was apparent that there is an undercurrent of skepticism in Europe that the United States may at some future date consider the withdrawal of a substantial portion of its ground forces from Europe. The coincidence of operation Big lift contributed to his skepticism. In some quarters there was even some doubt whether the United States might restrict or even withhold the use of its ground forces in a European conflict out of fear of encouraging an all-out nuclear war. This Committee was again assured by American defence authorities, on its visit to Washington, that these doubts are not justified.

53. Witnesses before the Committee discussed at length the striking power of France which has decided to acquire an independent nuclear force. Inter alia the reasons for this decision appear to the Committee to be as follows:

- (a) national prestige
- (b) nuclear weapons on French soil shall be subject only to French authority
- (c) guaranteed protection of French territory
- (d) France believes that it is not realistic to depend indefinitely on the protection provided under the present arrangements
- (e) concurrent development of atomic energy for industrial purposes; and
- (f) additional deterrent.

54. The Committee concluded that the French policy of "force de frappe" has wide approval in France, not only for the present but for the foreseeable future. On the political scene, this military strategy of France has created certain stresses within NATO and may seriously affect the idea of political unity in Europe.

55. It must be pointed out that both Great Britain and France, possessing independent nuclear forces, have unequivocally reserved the right, for each of them under certain circumstances, of decision as to when and how each shall use its own independent nuclear force, without the necessity of an agreement with its allies.