

# Looking at WASHINGTON

## U. S. Military Program Means Readiness For War

Final action by Congress on the \$6,098,000,000 foreign aid program followed by ten months the public address of Secretary of State George C. Marshall in which he advocated that the United States extend economic assistance to the friendly nations of western Europe.

Passage of the measure, despite the slow process of democratic government, is encouraging but the chances are that opposition would have been stronger had the Russians not taken over Czechoslovakia. This was the straw that broke the back of the opposition because it highlighted the peril that exists for democracy and freedom unless the march of the Communists is halted.

It may be that the vote of 167 for and 62 against, on the part of the Republican majority, represents something of a permanent shift of opinion on the part of the hitherto isola-

tionist-minded members of the GOP. Nevertheless, we are somewhat cautious in accepting such a conclusion. It will be easier to understand the drift when the House acts on legislation to extend the reciprocal trade treaty program of Secretary Hull.

The long process involved, between the suggestion of assistance and the passage of necessary legislation, illustrates the slowness with which democratic governments act. If the same idea had been implemented by the rulers of totalitarian states, the process of assistance would have been under way three-fourths of a year ago.

While the great republic of the Western Hemisphere deliberated, in democratic fashion, the rulers of Soviet Russia have made tremendous strides on the continent of Europe. This advance has not yet been halted, as one can readily see by reading reports from Finland that the government, although ready to sign a mili-

tary pact with Russia, is strenuously registering Russian insistence that the Soviet should have the right to determine when Russian soldiers are to occupy military posts in Finland.

The major part of the money that will be spent in the first twelve months will, of course, be used to prime the economic pump of the free nations of western Europe. Some of it will go to China, Greece and Turkey and be used for military assistance. It is reasonable to presume, if things develop unfavorably, that more of the money will be used to strengthen the military position of the democratic nations.

The people of the United States should not expect the passage of this law to automatically rehabilitate the western nations. All that the law does is to permit the beginning of a flow of assistance that, it is hoped, will in time enable these countries to reestablish their economic stability and afford the peoples of the nations an opportunity to look hopefully toward the future.

It is not at all certain that the money advanced will accomplish the purpose in mind. In fact, we should understand very clearly that the United States is taking what the military experts call a calculated risk. Nevertheless, it is a risk that should be taken because, without it, the United States would undoubtedly have to spend much more money in preparation for its defense.

**Congress Approves E. R. P.; What Can It Accomplish?**

The prompt passage of the tax reduction bill, over the veto of the President, is no more than expected but the message of President Truman represents, in our opinion, the advice of a statesman in contrast with the peanut-politics played by Congressmen voting to override him.

There are several amazing aspects to the hue and cry for tax reduction. Among them is the argument that people need relief from high taxes and that corporations must be relieved of the tax burden. After all, corporate profits continue to set new records and individual incomes are at a new high for the nation.

The office-holding candidates, about to seek reelection, placate the taxpayers by putting over a bill to reduce what the taxpayer must pay. It is an easy thing to do but the nation faces new and heavy expenditures in connection with its role in world affairs and can ill afford the luxury of cutting down its income. In fact, it is not at all certain that the next fiscal year will produce any surplus, much less an amount sufficient to make a sizable reduction in the national debt.

If the federal government does not pay its debt, when its income is at a record high, one might well wonder when the debt will be reduced. Certainly, if tax reduction is for the good of the nation today it will be for the good of the nation in 1950 when another election year rolls around.

**Eisenhower Not Political In Urging Preparedness**

General Dwight D. Eisenhower has requested Congress to pass legislation to provide for universal military training and the draft of men from nineteen through twenty-five years of age.

The Commander of our armed forces in Europe explained to the members of the Senate Armed Services Committee that the day of push-button warfare has not arrived and that man power is needed, just as it was needed in the invasion of Europe that he conducted.

Declaring that in any future war, "the first thirty to sixty days may determine our ability to carry on," the General pointed out that air power, while of the greatest importance, cannot win a war alone.

The declaration of General Eisenhower in favor of these military

measures gives additional evidence that he is not a pussy-footing politician. As everybody knows, the vote-seekers are burying their ear in the ground in an effort to ascertain whether support for these measures will cost votes in the approaching election.

It is worth calling attention to another declaration, made by the former Commander of our European forces, deriding the suggestion that the military wants to take over the country. The General expressly declared very positively that, in his opinion, "the generation which went into this last war came out of it better than they went in" and that arguments that universal military training will produce militarism are "silly thinking."

**Election Year Reduction Ignores Fiscal Facts**

In his annual budget message, the President requested 10.8 billion dollars for the military services and this amount has been supplemented by a program of expansion outlined by Secretary of Defense James V. Forrestal, which will amount to about \$8,000,000,000.

The American people, who will have the bill to pay, should be interested in the details. The present authorized strength of our armed services is 1,384,500 men. Lagging enlistments have brought down the armed strength to slightly more than one million men. An increase in personnel is recommended to bring these services to a combined strength of

1,734,000 men.

The services will need, therefore, 720,000 men in the first year to give them the strength deemed essential to national security. They expect to get 500,000 as volunteers. To secure the remainder, some temporary use of the Selective Service process is necessary.

Military officials point out that there are about 3,500,000 non-veterans between the ages of 19 and 25. From these the services expect to secure 220,000 draftees to serve for a minimum of two years. If the volunteer contingent does not equal the 500,000 men it is estimated will come in, then the draft will be necessary to make up the deficit. The cost of this addition to the national defense is estimated to be \$760,000,000.

Obviously, selective service is not expected to provide a safe contingent

of trained reserves. At the present time the government has available millions of men who saw service in the recent war. With the passage of years, they will be unavailable and, in order to have the trained military reserve, officials recommend Universal Military Training.

It is pointed out that 3,500,000 young men reach the age of 18 each year. The Defense Department wants to train 850,000 of these annually, with six months devoted to military training and six months given to specialized training. From this pool, the military experts expect to get volunteers after the program gets under way.

The cost of universal military training is estimated at \$400,000,000 for the first year and about \$2,000,000,000 annually thereafter.

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