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Washington Report

The Supply Priority Question. Shades of 1942. General Ike Not Yet In Race. The MIG Menace and U. S. Priority Supplies.

1952—Abundance or Shortages? WASHINGTON — Any lull in the Korean fighting will eventually be translated into a surplus of supplies going to Korea and Japan, and this thought is now paramount in the minds of many Americans in Washington and Europe. The Far East will not need the same volume of supplies if fighting is not all-out in Korea as it has in recent months.

After an adequate emergency stockpile is built up in Japan, there will be considerable sentiment in the Pentagon to shift some of the steady flow of supplies to Korea to home units of General Dwight Eisenhower's European command. This, of course, depends on a Korean lull, which may or may not prove lasting. But if it does General Eisenhower will welcome any increase in military supplies. Other officers in the Pentagon will favor putting that equipment in the hands of home units, for training programs.

The problem appears similar to that of 1942—when the Europe or Far East argument was the great disagreement among military men concerned with global strategy. At that time President Roosevelt decided the issue, favoring Germany as first foe to be reduced. Today Europe still seems to be the number one consideration, with the exception of

Korea, where actual fighting necessitates a top priority. An end to the war there and Europe might soon get first call on military supplies.

This winter and early spring are crucial seasons for the West Europeans because of the recently-announced NATO program of a rapid military build-up. The increased tempo of preparedness will call for more U. S. aid than originally contemplated and thus any surplus resulting from lessened Korean activity will be urgently requested by SHAPE. The NATO command hopes to build a respectable army by the middle of 1952, rather than 1954, under the new, speeded-up program.

Even though General Eisenhower has his eye on the presidential nomination in 1952, there is still a good chance he will remain in the military service and stay out of politics. Such chances being overlooked by most politicians these days, and though odds may be against it, there are several factors which could induce Ike to stay at his command post in Europe.

First possibility, of course, is that Senator Robert Taft wins the nomination in spite of Ike's known "availability." Second possibility is that of war in Europe, which must be considered. Third possibility is that Ike will decide on his own that no one else can do the job he's doing in Europe. This decision might be encouraged if the General is faced with a choice of sticking to his post or running against his Commander-in-Chief.

It is generally accepted in Europe that no one could replace Ike, and that no one else would receive the amount of European co-operation Ike receives. In spite of all these possibilities—that the General will not run—it is true that right now Ike appears to be flirting purposely with the presidential idea. And while he is obviously available, under the right circumstances, those circumstances have not yet developed and may or may not. The General can't be counted out in Europe yet.

The air power problem in the Korean area is causing some concern in Washington. While the Reds continue to build up their MIG strength, U. S. pilots continue to fly F-80s, F-84s and F-86s. The latter fighter is the only one of the three which can give the MIG a good battle, and therefore many airmen in the area wish we had more F-86s.

Production in the U. S. of fighters able to cope with speedy MIGs is not encouraging, however, and meanwhile the latest report from Janes Fighting Ships shows the Russians now have several fighter models faster than the MIG. These reports are ominous though U. S. pilots continue to shoot down MIGs at a three-

to-one, or better, ratio. It seems that it will be some time before we draw even with the Russians in both fighter quantity and quality.

Some government officials in Washington are saying that earlier predictions of acute shortages and scarcities in 1952 may have been pessimistic. They believe the U. S. buying public will be able to find about everything it wants, with a few exceptions, in the coming year. Food, hard goods and clothes are all to be plentiful, they say. And while there may be a wait for some automobiles, those who want one, can get one, they believe.

If these predictions prove accurate, 1952 may not be the year of sacrifice it was earlier expected to be.

WRONG CUSTOMERS. Virginia, Minn.—Gabriel Maki, 33, of Ely, Minn., had the wrong goods for sale and selected the wrong customers. Maki had two deer for sale, which, in Minnesota, is illegal. He picked two customers — two game wardens. He was fined \$500—\$150 for illegally possessing the venison and \$350 for putting it on the market. As a final blow, the judge ordered Maki to return to the state the \$60 officers paid for the deer.

U. S. DEBT Under the pressure of defense spending the national debt next year may reach, if not pass, the present legal limit of \$275,000,000,000. Congress may be asked to increase the ceiling. The top ceiling on the debt during World War II was \$300,000,000 and the actual debt reached \$279,200,000,000.

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