

DREW PEARSON

ON

THE WASHINGTON MERRY GO ROUND

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DREW PEARSON: U. S. CHIEFS OF STAFF CONSIDER WAR STRATEGY IN CASE BERLIN EXPLODES; ADMIRAL LEAHY URGES U. S. WITHDRAWAL FROM GERMANY; OTHER WAR CHIEFS OPPOSED.

~~Washington. -- Due to the dynamite-laden Berlin crisis, the U.S.~~ joint Chiefs of Staff have held some of their most crucial meetings recently. It is no secret that it is their duty to discuss every eventuality facing the United States--including war. And as the Russians have become cockier in Berlin, American faces have become graver around the joint chiefs' conference table.

The American public, which probably does not fully realize how serious the Berlin situation is, has a right to know that at a recent meeting, Gen. Omar Bradley, Army Chief of Staff, outlined U. S. policy in case of war. He tabulated what the Russians already know--that we have about 300,000 troops in Europe, though only 30,000 combat troops. And, counting heavily on French and British support, General Bradley figured that the Allies could fall back on the Rhine.

Adm. William D. Leahy, President Truman's own Chief of Staff, interrupted at this point with a skeptical question, which illustrates how U. S. military chiefs follow the democratic principles of rough-and-tumble debate.

"How long did you say we could hold the Rhine, Omar?" he asked.

General Bradley said he didn't want to make any promises, but he believed we could hold the Rhine for some time--long enough to bring up reinforcements.

-- FRENCH WOULD RETREAT --

Admiral Leahy continued skeptical. The Russians, he pointed out, had 40 divisions in Germany or about 600,000 men. He doubted that we could hold the Rhine for more than ten days.

"The French will start for home," added Leahy, who once served as Ambassador to Vichy, "and they won't stop until they get to the Pyrenees, where they'll start an anti-Franco revolution.

"You've got three or four good bridges across the Rhine," Admiral Leahy continued, "and the French will keep them open to get their mistresses across."

Leahy did not exactly say so, but the insinuation was that this would give the Russians time to take the Bridges.

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The Admiral concluded by warning that the United States couldn't hold the Rhine; in fact, couldn't hold more than Spain and perhaps Turkey.

One of his Army colleagues suggested that Leahy was echoing the Navy's point of view.

"And it's not such a bad point of view," countered the venerable sea dog, who once served as Commander of the U. S. Fleet and as Chief of Naval Operations. He went on to point out that the United States had to keep its line of communications open through the Mediterranean. "You're the ones who are always talking about that," he reminded the Army.

One of the air generals present then suggested that, given sixty days and the atomic bomb, the Air Forces could stop the Red Army dead in its tracks. Leahy disagreed. He argued that the United States should have left Berlin long ago.

-- U.S. SHOULD LEAVE BERLIN --

"If war breaks now," he maintained, "we'll be sending raw, untrained National Guardsmen just as we did to the Pacific in the early days after Pearl Harbor. The only thing is to get out of Berlin and out of Germany. If we did that, I think, from the many talks I've had with Stalin, we'd have no more trouble.

"They call me a reactionary and an isolationist," Leahy concluded, "but I believe in being realistic.

General Bradley asked how democratic forces could have won the Italian elections if U. S. Army had been withdrawn from Europe. Others pointed out that the exit of U. S. troops from either Berlin or Germany would be just the victory the Kremlin was pushing for, that it would have a disastrous psychological effect on the European democracies, would be comparable to the appeasement Chamberlain gave Hitler at Munich.

After this free and open American type of debate, it was the unanimous opinion of everyone else at the joint Chiefs of Staffs conference that there would be no appeasement of Russia. There would be no withdrawal from Germany.

-- "DEMOCRATS-FOR-DEWEY"

Barren-beaned Bill Bullitt, once an avid Roosevelt fan, is now busy organizing "Democrats-for-Dewey" clubs. Bullitt is the man who persuaded FDR to appoint him special assistant to Secretary of State Hull--without Hull's knowledge, and who also persuaded Roosevelt to recognize Russia.

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Later, Bullitt became Ambassador to Russia, then to France.

Today, the millionaire Philadelphian is just as hot for Dewey as he once was for FDR.

"I suppose," remarked a friend, "that you won't be averse to serving your country under the Republicans if Dewey is elected?"

"It's the duty of every man to serve his country," replied Bullitt. "If I am called, I shall make the sacrifice."

"I suggest," advised the cynical friend, "that you also contribute \$50,000 to the Dewey campaign."

-- MERRY-GO-ROUND --

Lovely Peggy Palmer, widow of Woodrow Wilson's Attorney-General A. Mitchell Palmer, got a generous job offer from the Republican National Committee. A lifelong Democrat, she turned it down, later went round to offer her services to the Democratic National Committee. The grateful Democrats kept Mrs. Palmer waiting in an ante-room all morning, never let her see anyone....It was the Los Angeles Daily News which goaded U. S. District Attorney James Carter into prosecuting housing frauds against veterans. It took some hot editorials to do it....Ham Moses, Arkansas utility tycoon and the man who gave away nylon stockings to influence utility voting in Congress, is out to defeat forthright young Congressman Jim Trimble of Berryville, Ark. Moses, a Democrat, is masking part of his operations behind Arkansas' GOP leader, Wallace Townsend, whom Moses put on the Arkansas Power and Light Company payroll. Besetting sin of Congressman Trimble is that he worked for rural electrification, flood control and public power projects.

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