Norstad Would Give NATO Control of Tactical A-Arms

By Chalmers M. Roberts
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Retired Gen. Lauris Norstad, the former Supreme Allied Commander in Europe, offered a formula yesterday to solve the knotty problem of nuclear sharing in the Atlantic Alliance.

The slim, gray 59-year-old general started from the premise that NATO is in a crisis, threatened "from within" after having "withstood so well every external attack." Its key need, he declared, is a solution to the problem of control of the use of nuclear weapons.

This problem antedates the current row with French President de Gaulle, he told a Senate Government Operations subcommittee, Norstad is now president of Owens-Corning Fiberglas Corp.

Would Empower Council

What Norstad proposed was this: NATO should vest in its 15-member Council, the controlling political arm, authority over nuclear as well as conventional weapons for use in time of war. Involved would be a part—from 5 to 200, he suggested—of the more than 5000 tactical American nuclear weapons now in Western Europe.

The Council should create an executive committee, probably made up of the President of the United States and his opposite numbers in Britain, West Germany and France, if de Gaulle would join, and perhaps one other NATO nation. These men would make the political decision on the use of tactical nuclear weapons already in Europe in case of a Russian attack of a limited nature, the President alone would control, as he does now, the use of American strategic weapons based outside NATO.

Majority Vote Suggested

A decision by the executive committee would be made, Norstad suggested, by majority vote; that is, the European members could order use of tactical nuclear weapons despite an American objection. Only by removal of the American veto, he said, could the European allies feel they had real power within the alliance.

The President would be committed to make the nuclear weapons available for use. The executive group would act "within established policy" pre-agreed to by all NATO nations.

If "political expedience" currently denies German membership in the group, he added, that country "must, as a minimum, have access to the information and intelligence essential to the preparation of plans and the taking of decisions."

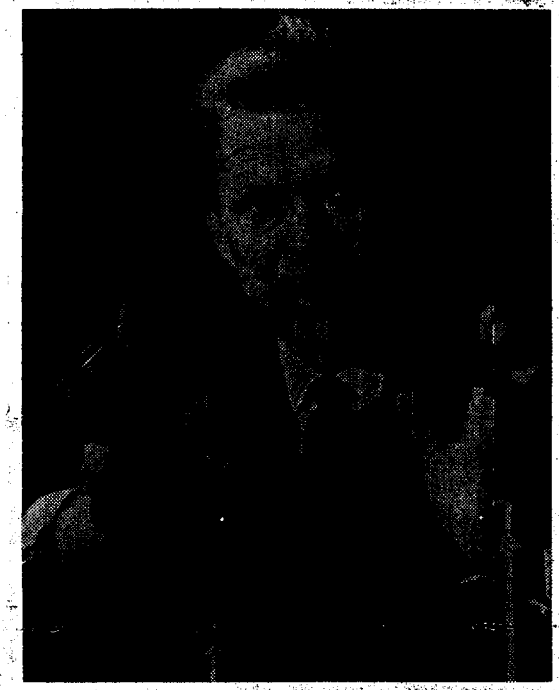
Norstad said he had made suggestions along these lines during his 1956-63 term as boss of SHAPE, but had never before put the idea forward in such complete form.

A Chair for France

As to France, Norstad favored the "empty chair" approach for possible return to full NATO partnership. He said he was not so sure that the Council should be moved from Paris, despite de Gaulle's attitude, and that to move it as a "punishment" would be petulant and silly.

Norstad reacted strongly when asked about Senate Majority Leader Mike Mansfield's suggestion that the United States pull several of its divisions out of Europe. To do that, said Norstad, would be to "take the heart out of conventional defense and substitute nothing."

If ground forces were cut back severely, he went on, then the United States would



United Press International

RETIRED GEN. LAURIS NORSTAD
. . . offers plan for NATO atom-sharing

be forced back to the doctrine of "massive retaliation," leaving "no choice between all-out thermonuclear war and nothing." Norstad added a warning that the Soviet Union would surely test Western defenses if they were so reduced on the ground.

"If we reduce our forces," he said, "we lower the threshold for introducing greater power in the form of nuclear weapons."

Norstad reiterated his opposition to the socalled "hardware" solutions to the nuclear sharing problem, either the multilateral or the Atlantic nuclear force schemes. He said he was against putting nuclear weapons in the individual custody of any additional nations.