

# Today and Tomorrow . . . By Walter Lippmann

## The New Europe Emerging *Post 6/1/66*

The opening days of the Brussels meeting of the NATO powers have given an impressive and gratifying exhibition of responsibility by all concerned. This is most evident in the fact that, faced with General de Gaulle's strike against the principle of an inte-



grated military command, the other 14 governments are choosing to act with what might be called judicial restraint. They have set aside a great confrontation about the Western Alliance and, like good judges, they are proceeding to make only such decisions as are practically and immediately necessary.

First, it is necessary to find a new location for the NATO command establishment which is now in France. But while the 14 expect the new location to be in Belgium, they have not attempted as yet to make a final decision on this point. For there are many problems to be solved, there is much negotiation with the Belgians to be carried out, and all of this will take time.

Simultaneously, the 14 have refrained from having a showdown which might involve not merely the integrated command structure, but the existence of the Al-

liance itself. The 14 have made no decision, so it appears at this writing, to move the NATO Council, which is a political organ, away from Paris. This is a strong indication of their hope and belief that, in spite of appearances, the Western Alliance, which exists by virtue of the original NATO Treaty, will survive.

IF THIS MOOD prevails and endures, we shall have avoided the temptation to cut off our nose to spite our face. For as long as France continues to be, as she says she is, a willing member of the Alliance, the working out of planning and liaison arrangements to replace the integrated command is not at all an impossibly difficult problem.

But if France withdraws from or is pushed out of the Alliance itself, if as a result France becomes a neutral like Switzerland and Austria, the military consequences would be enormous. The closing of the French air space to NATO planes would in effect cut the Alliance into two parts—a northern part consisting of West Germany, Great Britain and the Low Countries, Denmark and Norway, and a southern part centered on Italy and the Mediterranean members of NATO. This would be an impossible military situation, and it is therefore vital to the existence of any kind

of Western military alliance that France should remain a member of the Alliance. This fact has nothing to do with the character of any French government. It results from the geography of Europe.

THE PRUDENCE and caution of the 14 reflects, we may assume, their growing realization that an historic process has begun in Europe which points to an end of the cold war between eastern and western Europe. The political intercourse between the two parts of Europe has become increasingly lively in all manner of official visiting back and forth.

In many ways the most striking of the developments is the agreement between West and East Germany to hold uncensored live television debates. For this may turn out to be the harbinger of the kind of intercourse among Germans which will, in the course of time, bring about a settlement of the German problem.

It can be said, I think, that if the general prospects in Europe continue to be favorable, the basic reason for this is no particular act of statesmanship by any government. The basic reason is the historic fact that the Europeans are outliving the cold war which has divided them for a generation, and that a new post-war and post-revolutionary generation is moving in.

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