

NATO Held Able to Stall Invasion

By Drew Pearson

WHILE THE WORLD has been anxiously watching Korea, Gen. Matt Ridgway reported quietly to the Pentagon on the



Pearson

chances of holding off a Russian invasion in Europe.

He predicted confidently that the NATO forces could withstand the first shock of a Russian attack and could fight a rear-guard

action for some weeks. This would give the Allies time to throw in additional reinforcements, particularly atomic bombers.

Ridgway warned, however, that the 45 NATO divisions are far below the minimum needed for "military security." The absolute minimum, he said, would be 132 divisions, with 25 special supporting regiments.

The newly appointed Army Chief of Staff reported that Russia has four million men under arms, organized into the "most effective land army in the world today." This is about the same size as the Soviet armed forces have been since the end of World War II. However, he stressed that the combat effectiveness of these forces has been increased.

Ridgway also reported that the European Soviet satellites have built up between 65 and 70 divisions, half of which are up to Soviet standards. The most powerful satellite army, he said, is Bulgaria's. In other words, he warned that the satellites, alone have enough military power to match the combined strength of NATO.

GEN. Hoyt S. Vandenberg gave the first official tip-off to what hitherto has been an official secret—Russia's growing stockpile of A-bombs. This was one reason for Vandenberg's urging that we not curtail air power.

Behind this, in turn, is information sent to the White House by the Atomic Energy Commission that the Russians plan to explode new atomic bombs this summer.

It's now been three years since the Russians tested their last atomic weapons, and the strange silence has puzzled our experts. However, the White House has been informed the Russians have deliberately avoided staging any tests big enough for our Geiger counters to pick up.

Instead, they've been working day and night to construct bigger atom plants; and some time this summer this construction program will be far enough along so they can test a considerable number of new bombs.