Are We Prepared?-Politics Linked to Mobilization

7th of 10 Articles

forces—and these requests up to now activate enough naval air reserve of the planning. cent events.

timetable of the other.

The modesty of the Defense Department's requests since the Koresult of honest bafflement over the gency. But it also has some appear- extra margin. ance of a political coloration. . . .

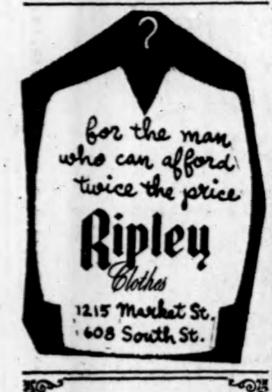
phrase-might turn into a four-planned, let alone accomplished. it might not.

running for re-election at the incon- partial mobilization with no firm over-all farm production is not asveniently impending campaign sea- idea as to where the next step leads, sured if farmers can get fatter son importune the President not to or when it can be taken. be hasty in taking any four-alarm Such haphazard approach al- defense industries. Again, defense mobilization action-not yet, any- ready is creating difficulties that will production inevitably looses infla-

fort is off to a slow start. The tim- toward full effort. Of all the short-The Nation, as in the last war, goes power is the worst. It is a shortage into mobilization not by plan but far more serious than in the Second by piecemeal improvisation. If the World War. tion planners.

stave off disaster in a global war, ices and the defense industries nor perhaps be sufficient to win the would be far harder put for man-

The department's current requests



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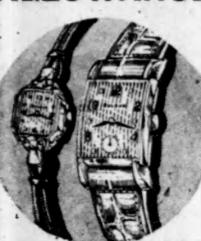
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sions we had before the Korean war into action. Then, as the Admin- tionary pressures which unbalance By ROBERT S. BIRD and

OGDEN R. REID

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Nitrates also are ingredients of high explosives are give the Navy two more Essex class on the competing priority claims of the competing that they can't hold their skilled miners against the partment of Defense?

Nitrates also are ingredients of high explosives, and high explosives, and high explosives, are complaining that they can't hold their skilled miners against the partment of Defense?

equipment to bring the armed forces' evolve into an operational agency. rean war started could be partly the real strength up to their paper

Korean one-alarm fire-their own why so little can be effectively rein.

Meanwhile Congressmen who are on mobilization, is embarking on to failure in advance. For example,

hamper the next steps if mobiliza-As a result, the mobilization ef- tion continues on down the path ing remains in a state of indecision. ages that afflict the country, man-

man in the street or the leader in Because of the low birth rate durindustry wonders where mobilization ing the depression of the thirties, is leading today, so do the mobiliza- there were 120,000 fewer males who became 18 years old last year than in 1942. But the phenomenal rise in DY THE yardstick of the Defense birth rate since the depression has D Department's own top planners withdrawn several million women the timorous requests to date would from the men's jobs they were doing. not make the country strong, nor In a major war, both armed serv-

would only bring the 10 Army diviserious concern to persons who must find defense workers with spe-cial skills for key positions. Each new day more draftees and members of the reserves and National Guard are being called up with no regard for considerations that might make them far more valuable to defense

power than ever in the last war.

The mobilization authorities are worried enough about this to be giv-ing major emphasis right now to the shaping up of a national manpower policy for the President's approval a policy that would embody a de-ferment standard for those key workers in a variety of skills.

Such a policy is easier to shape than to enforce under partial mobilization. It is not enough to say which person should be deferred because of a particular skill; it is also necessary to decide which of industry's competing claims for his skilled services shall have priority.

To DECIDE this, means giving control of the labor force to a centralized authority. Such control would have to be exerted - unless there were a rigorous labor draftthrough control of production, that is, through the ordering or with-holding of priorities, allocations and requisitions that would close up unessential plants and encourage essential ones. No such central authority exists in the present mobiliza-

This same lack of urgency in the defense effort has left the Nation's stockpile of strategic and critical materials in a dangerously low state after years of supposed effort to

Stockpile policy is part of the National Security Resources Board's mobilization responsibility, but its procurement is left to the Munitions Board. There are 71 scarce or hardto-get items on the list, most of them minerals of vast metallurgical importance, some of them chemicals and pharmaceuticals that would be vitally needed in war.

A S OF Aug. 1, the over-all stock-pile stood at 50 percent of its goal. That was the figure for materials "on hand and on order"; the measure that is commonly given in the periodic public reports. Actually a considerable time lag may intervene before an item on order from some distant country becomes an item on hand. The more realistic 'on hand" figure stands at only 38.4

percent of the goal. On two materials, no stockpiling whatever has been done. Seven are at less than 10 percent of their quotas: 15, at from 10 to :0 percent; 16, at from 20 to 40 percent; 9, at from 40 to 60 percent; 8, from 60 to 80 percent; and 3, above 80 percent. The rest are at full quota.

In THE leisurely, part-time mobilization planning of the Administration today, priorities and allocation powers art to be parceled out to various of the existing Government departments. Labor would have manpower, or some part of it; Agriculture, food; Commerce, plant facilities, and Interior, coal, oil and

These would become the operaional agencies for turning plans



strength, and increase the Air Force his stripes—inter-department rival- \$4,000,000,000 plane program. The significant decision has been made that mobilization planning is not to outstrip military planning.

Strength, and year from now—an abundance of competitive questions to be referred. This is the centralized mobilization authority for all-out mobilization, ask critics of Administration. In other words, the Defense De- tional Security Resources Board partment has asked for men and today. The planning agency would

strength as it was supposed to be DUT a powerful school of opinion, seriousness of the present emer- before the Korean war, with a small, D of which Bernard M. Baruch is the leading exponent, is giving voice to criticism of this concept of na-THESE are not bold demands in tional mobilization. This school PROFESSIONAL military leaders I the light of day-to-day develop- holds that partial mobilization is not I take a grave view of the Nation's ments on the battlefronts of the hot enough, is unworkable, and is downmilitary weakness as the peril of full-scale war mounts higher. Their civilian chiefs in the Defense Denow become the measure of the partment acknowledge that the control acknowledge that th partment acknowledge that the mobilization effort, and they explain the country's economy under tight

Under partial mobilization, acalarm fire; but on the other hand. The National Security Resources cording to their view, control of the Board, which shapes national policy national economy fails. It is doomed wages by moving to higher paying

up to their full strength, and fur- istration gropes its way into farther- the economy and hike up the cost are essential to food production.

the Department of Defense asks for the necessary cruisers, destroyers Even this hasn't been decided; it is competing wages of other industries. Proponents of full mobilization men and equipment for the armed and submarines to screen them, and only in the thinking-out-loud stage The price of military planes has argue that if the economy is brought jumped from 20 to 60 percent, de- under tight control and the onehave been strangely laggard in the to service them; bring the two Maface of weaknesses uncovered by rerine divisions up to full combat

If this comes to pass—and if the bureaucratic tiger has not changed fense Department announced its bigger conflagration, then that will

tion mobilization policy, who will decide competing priorities for nitrates? Nitrates are essential ingredients of fertilizers, and fertilizers

be the time to relax the tight curbs where they can be relaxed safely, and IN THE absence of a central opera- this relaxing of controls would it-



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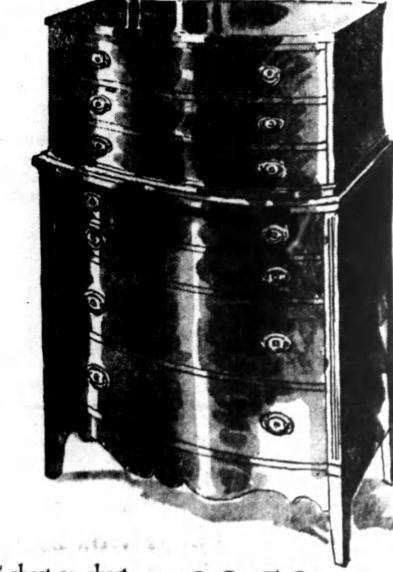
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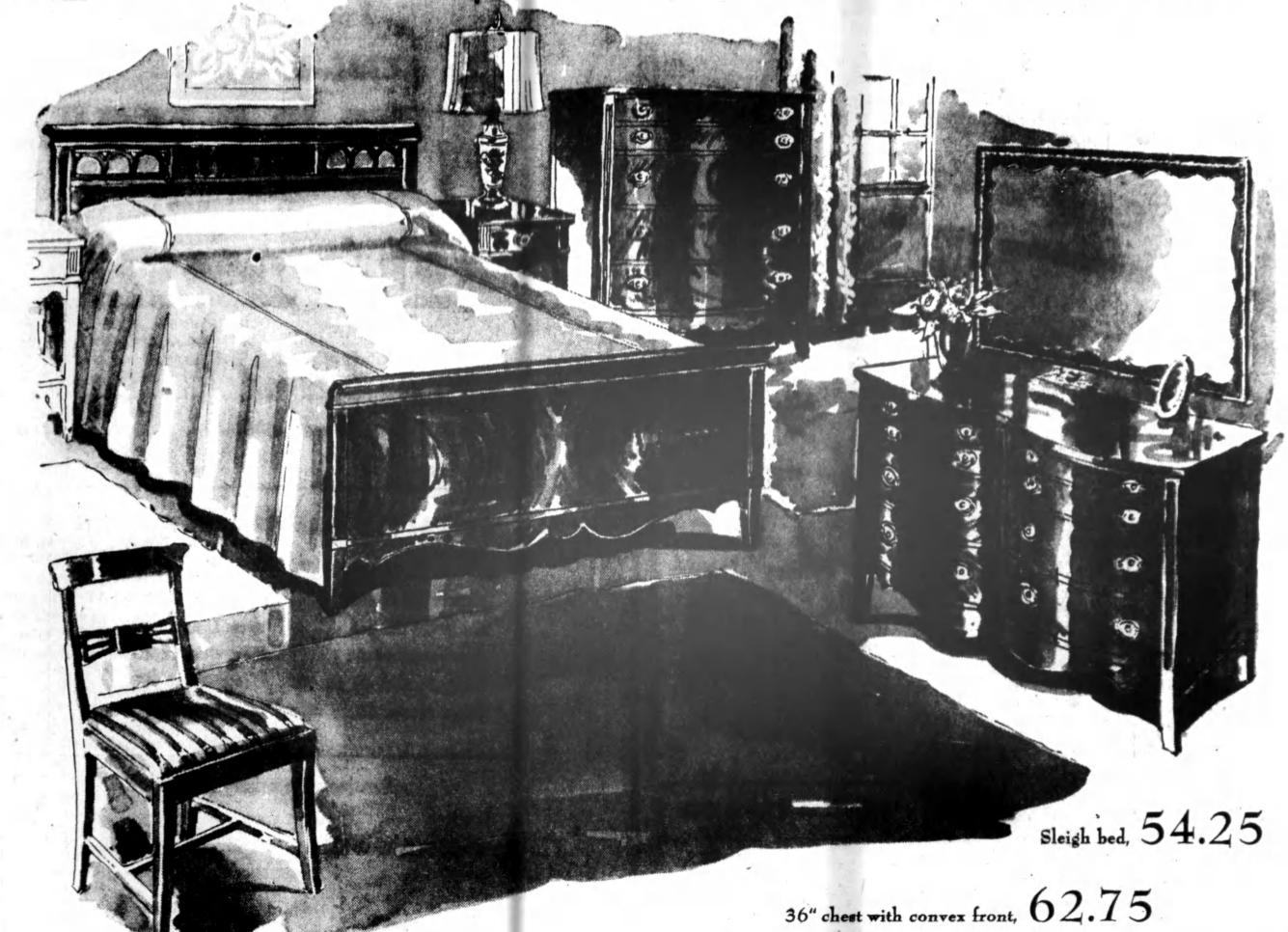
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