

Air Secretary Warns On Meaning of War

Defined as the momentary air capital of the world, as the annual meeting of the Air Force Association brought air brains and air plans together here, Dallas was the logical location for the solemn warning Air Force Secretary James H. Douglas gave Red China Saturday. He made it simple, to the point. If necessary, atomic weapons will be used to defend the physical integrity of Nationalist China.

The importance is not in the plan itself but in the re-emphasis of the statement for the record. In the absence of any international commitment against the use of atomic weapons, the nation naturally assumes that, if we are forced into the disagreeable business of war, we will use the quickest and most effective means to get it over with. Certainly we hope that we learned our lesson in Korea.

But it is important that there should be no doubt in the minds of any nation, least of all of Red China and of Red Russia, that continued aggression will precipitate war, that war will be fought as wars must be fought, by the means of survival.

Will the knowledge deter Red China? It will, if the Peiping Government knows that it will lose by the process. Callous to human life, Communism would not hesitate to subject millions to the horrors of atomic destruction if convinced that the Red bosses would survive to rule. But in any clear understanding of what the atom bombs can do, there can be no such assurance.

At least they have had their warning. They know where we stand.