

# Swiss defence in the atomic age : an N.S.H. lecture

Autor(en): **[s.n.]**

Objektyp: **Article**

Zeitschrift: **Helvetia : magazine of the Swiss Society of New Zealand**

Band (Jahr): **20 (1957)**

Heft [3]

PDF erstellt am: **25.05.2024**

Persistenter Link: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-942444>

## **Nutzungsbedingungen**

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Inhalten der Zeitschriften. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern.

Die auf der Plattform e-periodica veröffentlichten Dokumente stehen für nicht-kommerzielle Zwecke in Lehre und Forschung sowie für die private Nutzung frei zur Verfügung. Einzelne Dateien oder Ausdrucke aus diesem Angebot können zusammen mit diesen Nutzungsbedingungen und den korrekten Herkunftsbezeichnungen weitergegeben werden.

Das Veröffentlichen von Bildern in Print- und Online-Publikationen ist nur mit vorheriger Genehmigung der Rechteinhaber erlaubt. Die systematische Speicherung von Teilen des elektronischen Angebots auf anderen Servern bedarf ebenfalls des schriftlichen Einverständnisses der Rechteinhaber.

## **Haftungsausschluss**

Alle Angaben erfolgen ohne Gewähr für Vollständigkeit oder Richtigkeit. Es wird keine Haftung übernommen für Schäden durch die Verwendung von Informationen aus diesem Online-Angebot oder durch das Fehlen von Informationen. Dies gilt auch für Inhalte Dritter, die über dieses Angebot zugänglich sind.

### ENQUIRY FROM INTENDING MIGRANT

A Swiss national, married, with two children, cabinet-maker, at present living in Tanganyika, British East Africa, would like to come to New Zealand. Anybody able to offer accommodation or employment, or better still, both, please communicate with the Consulate of Switzerland, G.P.O. Box 386, Wellington.

### SWISS DEFENCE IN THE ATOMIC AGE

#### An N.S.H. Lecture

(From "The Swiss Observer.")

Recently Lieut.-Colonel W. Koch, Military Attache at the Swiss Legation, gave a fascinating discourse on the Swiss Army in the present age at a meeting of the Nouvelle Societe Helvetique at Park Lane House. The new weapons of incalculable power and effect in the hands of potential aggressors present the defenders of our country with infinitely more difficult tasks than heretofore. Not being in possession of such weapons, so far as can be foreseen, our Army must make do with the best of conventional weapons it can obtain, combined with a skilful exploitation of the natural aids for defence afforded by the mountainous configuration of Switzerland intersected by numerous lakes and rivers.

It does not seem unreasonable to assume for the purpose of planning our defence that the aggressor, whoever he may be, is unlikely to use the big destructive atom weapons meant for much bigger concentrations of industries and inhabitants than are met with in our country. Even so, it is difficult to visualise beforehand where and how the attack is likely to come and develop. Our defence will therefore have to adapt itself to the aggression when it comes. It requires above all a wide distribution of forces and arms to be brought up promptly at the point of attack. The light units, formerly covering the outer regions of Switzerland beyond the lines regarded as tenable, are today largely replaced by armoured units and light tanks. Even merely tactical atomic weapons could breach defensive lines over areas of 6-8 square kilometres. Only large and highly mobile reserves could seal and later fill the gap thus created. In order to minimize the danger of surprise attacks also the watch on the frontier must be reinforced and amply furnished with RADAR apparatus. This might at least assure sufficient time to mobilise the frontier forces, the armoured units and the civil defence.

Regarding the disposition of troops and arms a compromise solution might be decided on, covering the country with a web of small observation and action units, establishing barriers and blocking forces wherever possible routes of attack

converge, and holding highly mobile tactical reserves ready in basic areas for deployment in any direction required to counter the enemy moves. The Swiss Army is relatively well supplied with armour and 100 Centurion tanks. But at all times the people's will and courageous determination to resist attack by all means remains the most essential condition for an effective defence by our people's army. The world situation is perhaps more serious than ever. To stint on defence expenditure seems to be the most foolish economy imaginable. It should not have needed the agony of the Hungarian people to kill the Chevallier initiative, misguidedly seeking to deny our Army the indispensable tools to make our democracy's will to survive in freedom and peacefulness effective.

Lt.-Col. Koch's thoughtful lecture, of which these few lines can only give some inadequate indications, was received with warm applause of the large gathering of compatriots and evoked a lively discussion.

### NEWS FROM SWITZERLAND

#### Switzerland and the OEEC

Switzerland has given proof of the interest she felt in the recent Session of Ministers of the O.E.E.C. by delegating to it two members of her Government, the Federal Councillors, Mr. Petitpierre and Mr. Holenstein. Mr. Petitpierre announced that the Swiss Government is taking a positive attitude in regard to the creation of a free trade area. The Swiss Government hopes that this free trade area may come into force at the same time as the Common Market adopted by the "Six," so as to avoid the existence of any intermediary period which might be prejudicial to the trade relations between all the member-countries of the O.E.E.C. Switzerland is ready to make the sacrifices implied by the creation of a European free trade area, but she also hopes that the Agreement comprises clearly defined principles and norms that are sufficiently rigorous to ensure a smooth development of the system. Mr. Holenstein, for his part, explained what were the particular problems arising out of this project, for Switzerland. This is why Switzerland favours, in principle, a special statute in respect of agriculture, within the framework of the future European free trade area.

#### Coming Swiss Exhibition Devoted to Women's Work

In 1928, various Swiss women's organisations arranged a big exhibition, devoted entirely to women's work. Under the same title of "SAFFA," the organisers are now preparing a fresh edi-