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SOURCE Argentinisches Tageblatt [anti-Communist].

MORE WAR MATERIEL SHIPPED TO BULGARIA;  
 SAYS BULGARIAN ARMY, ECONOMY DISINTEGRATING

The Bulgarian Army, reputedly the best-equipped and most reliable military force in the Balkans, is disintegrating from within and is utterly incapable of waging a war of aggression against its neighbors, alone or with Moscow's other satellites. The Bulgarian soldier will not sacrifice himself for the Communist doctrine which has brought only misery and starvation to his country. That is the opinion of Turkish officers and political experts in Edirne, where the information supplied daily by some 1,000 Turkish refugees from Bulgaria is systematically checked and processed.

These reports confirm that in recent years every effort has been made by the Kremlin to create a strong Bulgarian army of mercenaries. While the Treaty of Paris allowed Bulgaria an army of only 55,000 men, Soviet General Panchevskiy, Bulgarian Defense Minister, is said to have at his disposal at present an army of 150,000 men, not counting the three Soviet armored divisions stationed within the Burgas-Stalin-Plovdiv triangle. Large shipments of war materiel are continually arriving from the USSR.

In past weeks shipping operations have been at a peak. The Black Sea ports of Stalin, formerly Varna, and Burgas, which are under Soviet military control, have been declared restricted zones. The Soviet weapons shipped to Bulgaria are, almost without exception, of the latest type: T-34 tanks mounted with 7.62-centimeter ZIS guns, some Tiger tanks, and considerable quantities of medium and heavy guns.

Feverish military activity in Bulgaria during recent months has been reported at Edirne. Integrated fortifications are being built along the Greco-Turkish frontier. Strategic railroad lines are being adapted to the Soviet gauge by construction of a third rail. A stretch of 15 kilometers along the Yugoslav border has been transformed into a totally blacked-out, strongly fortified zone in which, according to latest reports, a radar screen is being built for protection against enemy air attacks. Freight trains loaded to capacity with war materiel are rolling from Stalin and Burgas to the Yugoslav border. A short time ago, ships in the Danube ports of Nikopol and Ruse were so heavily loaded with weapons and military equipment that the passengers -- Turkish refugees -- were not even allowed to take their baggage on board.

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Only three Soviet divisions in Bulgaria and two elite Bulgarian divisions are equipped with modern weapons. The officers and noncommissioned officers received their training in the USSR, and the ranks are made up of politically reliable workers. The divisions, which are completely motorized and have great fire power, are made up of the following: an armored regiment, a motorized infantry regiment, reconnaissance units made up of two armored companies and a company of motorcyclists, an antitank battalion, and an anti-aircraft battalion. The Soviet air forces stationed in Bulgaria are equipped with 120 Yak fighters, 80 Stormoviks, and 80 light bombers.

However, the great bulk of the new Bulgarian Army (12 divisions) is equipped with obsolete arms and old weapons captured from the Germans. This materiel includes 100 pieces of mountain artillery, 680 pieces of heavy artillery, 120 pieces of light artillery, 550 antitank guns, and 276 anti-aircraft guns.

According to Turkish military circles, the fact that the Bulgarian Army has been equipped with obsolete weapons proves the Kremlin's lack of confidence in the morale and fighting qualities of the Bulgarian soldier. Indeed, it is widely felt that this suspicion is firmly founded and that most Bulgarians would desert in the event of a Moscow-instigated war of aggression.

Among the Turkish border population which, despite its proximity to the Iron Curtain, is facing future developments with admirable composure, a feeling prevails that the striking power of the Bulgarian Army is being overestimated in Western Europe. The poor morale of the Bulgarian soldier and the disastrous economic conditions are the factors underlying this optimistic view.

Reports of Turkish repatriates from Bulgaria unanimously imply that Bulgaria faces famine and economic collapse. The lines in front of bakeries are growing longer daily. The bread which Bulgarian housewives can buy, after waiting in line for 2 hours, is of poor quality because it is made with flour to which large amounts of corn are added. From time to time meat is suddenly offered on the market in large quantities. However, this meat is barely edible, as it comes from the hundreds of animals dying as a result of the great fodder shortage. Part of this meat is sent to the USSR, where it is canned and returned to Bulgaria under the program of the Soviet Relief for Needy Bulgaria. To some extent the food crisis in Bulgaria is a consequence of the farmers' passive resistance to the regime. In Kyustendil and Provadiya okoliyas not a single egg was delivered to the state in March 1951. On the other hand, neither fat nor flour was obtainable in these provinces. In some instances, all but one kilogram of flour was taken away from the farmers by the state requisitioning brigades. To feed their families, the farmers had to buy their necessities on the black market, paying twice as much as they had received from the government for the same items.

In view of the widespread discontent prevailing among the people, reliable sources view the Bulgarian "saber rattling" as mere bluff, to divert world attention from other crisis centers, where real preparations for military actions are in progress.

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