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Country: Yugoslavia

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Subject: Discussion of Serbian Position in event of Armed Yugoslav-USSR Conflict

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1. While I believe that Tito would be one hundred per cent reliable in Western terms should there be an armed conflict between Yugoslavia and the USSR, past and present indications lead me to believe that there is grave doubt as to whether the mass of the Serbian population would support any such action.
2. When the "White" Army under Denikin approached Nikola Pasic and the Yugoslav government for support, Pasic replied that no Serbian peasant could be sent to fight against Russia. Pasic was an anti-communist of Serbian peasant stock.
3. In the war between Greece and Turkey, Pasic was asked to station Yugoslav troops in Salonika as a deterrent to Turkish aggression. Pasic replied that Kemal was backed by Russia and that no Serbian would fight against the interests of Russia.
4. Discussions with Serbian peasants and members of the Serbian Orthodox Church over the past 30 years have more than borne out the reverence of Russia held by Serbs, even those who are violently anti-communist.
5. During WW II, the fact that Tito openly espoused the Soviet cause gained him numerous followers, who were not necessarily pro-communist but who were pro-Russian. Of course, many refugees from Croatia joined Tito because he was geographically closer to them than were groups under Mihailovic. Tito, though a Croatian Catholic by birth, was thus supported by masses of Serbians.
6. Tito's quarrel with the USSR has certainly lost him followers, even among Serbian non-communists. His release of Stepinac has even further revolted the Serbs, who blame Stepinac and Rome for the evils that beset them during WWII.
7. Another point that still rankles in the hearts of many Serbians is the Allied bombing of Belgrade during WW II. Unfortunately, the bombing took place on an Orthodox Holy Day. Few firm Serbian Orthodox Church members have forgotten this fact. To them it appears that all of their troubles have been generated in the West.