

Report Soviet Troops Massing in South

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PARIS, June 16.—A series of persistent and disturbing reports that Red Army and Soviet satellite troops were being concentrated in Southeastern Germany and the environs of Yugoslavia were received by the American delegation to the Foreign Ministers' Council yesterday and today. The

reports created a certain amount of anxiety, either that Moscow might be trying to embark on a new type of pressure politics to obtain peace settlements according to its own conceptions or that elements seeking discord among the four big powers were at work.

Because of the difficulty of access behind the so-called "iron curtain" area of Europe, it is difficult to get any exact confirmed details regarding these rumors, but they are sufficiently co-ordinated in time and widespread in source to spread more than a modicum of anxiety.

None Admits Trouble

Nevertheless there is reason to believe that, as the result of such information as has been received, American regiments in Germany and some Allied troops in Northeast Italy have been alerted, and units protectively shifted, despite any official denials of such measures.

No one acknowledges that he expects any trouble. And yet there is nervousness since these reports, coming from sources as far apart as Berlin and the Balkans, are persisting and are tending to confirm one another in broad details.

From Berlin come reports that considerable new Soviet troop formations are being concentrated in the southern part of the Soviet zone in Germany, just northwest of the Czechoslovak border. From the Balkans come reports that, following Marshal Tito's visit to Moscow, Yugoslav Army formations are being moved westward toward Trieste, and that satellite and Soviet units are being concentrated near Yugoslavia's northern and western borders.

This correspondent has confirmed these reports from four sources, all of which have had access to the cables reporting them. They were seriously discussed by Secretary of State James F. Byrnes with top members of his delegation yesterday morning before the council started.

However, there is no reason for alarm, in this correspondent's opinion. The general conjecture seems to be that they arise from four possible divergent reasons.

They may represent a deliberate and well timed effort by anti-Soviet rumor sources in various quarters to spread discord among the Allies as the conference gets under way.

They may represent a deliberate effort by Moscow, after its confer-

Troop Rumors Causing Worry

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ences with Warsaw and Belgrade leaders, to spread alarms among the Western Allied leaders and force political decisions by power politics—by emphasizing the weakness of Western mobilization in comparison with that of the Soviet Union.

They may be mere repercussions of the gradual and slow homeward shift of Red Army troops who, as certain units quit their area of occupation, are replaced by other units withdrawn from other occupation areas.

They may be more serious.

Whatever the source or reason of the reports—which are unfortunately figuring in the behind-the-scenes conference discussions of the individual delegations—they are not upsetting the sang froid of the diplomats here.

Another aspect of these reports is that the Red Armies have very recently received quantities of brand new equipment. This is especially true in the regions where the concentrations are said to be taking place.

Forces Reduced

On the other hand, to retain a sensible balance should this be an effort to exert outside pressure on the Council decisions, it must swiftly be pointed out that the Red Army forces in Eastern Europe, from Germany to the Balkans, have been considerably reduced numerically during the last few weeks.

It is believed by competent observers that Soviet military strength in Eastern Europe is now as follows: In Germany, 700,000; in Hungary, 250,000; in Bulgaria, 140,000; in Austria, 130,000. Large as this may seem it is considerably smaller than it was two months ago and one must always keep in mind the transport problems handicapping the Soviet Union in returning units home and the feeding and housing difficulties facing the USSR if it should desire to take care of such large formations at home.

Several weeks ago Nikolai Shvernik, President of the USSR, had a long talk with certain foreigners in Moscow about the Soviet Union's difficulties in handling the demobilization and housing problem.

Furthermore, in reducing its forces in Austria, which has been a recent development, the USSR sent several thousand troops across Czechoslovakia into the southern part of its zone in Germany. This caused some hostile comments about influencing the recent Czechoslovak elections, but, on the other hand, the units were then being broken up in the Soviet, German zone and the despatch of troops from Austria to replace them could most easily be effected across the Czechoslovak transportation lines.

Position of Mihailovic

The American Army in Europe is very weak but the fact that certain units are reported to have been alerted is significant. At the risk of redundancy this correspondent must emphasize that all this in all probability means nothing but either planted false alarms or diplomatic bluffs following the Polish and Yugoslav State visits to Moscow.

But there it is. Some high officials in the British intelligence service believe that the Yugoslavs soon might attempt a coup de main in Trieste. They also believe that Gen. Draja Mihailovic may be acquitted in his trial and be built up as an anti-Western and pro-Slav leader. Gen. Mihailovic is said to have told one important British liaison officer during the war that if it came to a choice he would rather Yugoslavia "played with Soviet Russia than with Britain."

All these perhaps distantly related events are directly connected with the four-power Council meetings now taking place. This conference may well be decisive one way or another. Important as it is that the habit of the quadripartite Foreign Ministers' meetings has been established, it is not likely that the Council can continue meeting forever if it does not succeed in clearing the atmosphere somewhat. Certainly success this month would check the tendency to split Europe between eastern and western Poles and would terminate fears about troop movements.

But the Western powers do not wish, as the price of agreement, to accord an entirely free hand to Moscow in Eastern Europe. And there are no guiding principles of compromise such as there were in 1919 when differences could be submerged to agreed standards, such as the right of self-determination. There are not now even agreed definitions of "democracy."